

AGNUTMAQAN

Welcome to your second edition of *Agnutmaqan*

Chief Brendan Sheppard and the Qalipu Mi'kmaq Band Councillors are continuing with their commitment of transparency and communications, and present this second summary report of proceedings and matters discussed during the regular Band Council meeting held in June. The first edition included comprehensive overviews of the strategic plan and program plans for the next year, and can be referenced again as background to this report.

Agnutmaqan will help keep you as Band Members informed and will enable you to engage in the ongoing discussions of your Band Council.

Pronunciation: *a-gê-nu-dê-ma-hgan*

Meanings: story; news; report; message; discussion

SECURING THE FOUNDATION

Building on the groundwork set at the first quarterly meeting held in April 2013, the meeting held on June 24 in Corner Brook was primarily a business focused meeting, a time to take measure of the programs and the work completed in last year and to confirm plans for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Chief Brendan Sheppard led Council through a detailed review and inquiries on audited reports for the fiscal year 2012-2013. The reports were for QMFN, the Qalipu Development Corporation, and MAMKA/AFS (Mi'kmaq Alsumk Mowimsikik Koqoey is Mi'kmaq Aquatic Resource and Oceans Management in the Mi'kmaq language). There were a number of points noted throughout the detailed financial review.

Some of the programs that were initially funded through the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) have been transferred to QMFN. This allows for clarity and continues the establishment of QMFN as a new entity.

This includes the investment in Mi'kmaq Commercial Fisheries, which will eventually be moved to Qalipu Development Corporation (QDC). Members of Council learned that seafood revenues can be volatile. While crab sales remained the same, and the quota was filled, crab prices dropped. Increased maintenance and fuel costs also impacted revenue, fortunately high shrimp revenues brought balance.

Crab revenues for 2013 are expected to be better as the price increased this year. Members reinforced the importance of the fishery to Qalipu, and its potential to be an asset for QDC. They discussed options to lobby for delayed dragging to avoid damage to crab pots until the Qalipu commercial fishery is completed.

The MAMKA program includes revenue and cost sharing with Conne River, and it allowed for the purchase of some equipment for Qalipu. Environmental research continues to evolve. After close to six years, research on the piping plover was not approved, but research will continue in another way. A traditional lands study is of interest to many partners, including College of the North Atlantic.

QDC, with assets that include office buildings, will be seeking new ways to manage costs and generate rental revenue as the federal enrolment committee reviewing membership applications moved out.

Program budgets, which depend in part on administration contributions, are being refined and centralized to maximize funding for direct program delivery. Post secondary education is the largest core program, and continues to be managed to ensure efficiencies. This includes making sure money committed to students and not utilized is redirected to other student supports.

The in-depth presentations and discussions continued to inform members of Council and reaffirmed the plans and directions set earlier in the year.

MOVING AHEAD

After spending considerable time on the financial review, Council moved to planning the first General Assembly to be held in central Newfoundland in the fall, and directed preparation of a first annual report for the assembly. Council wanted to make sure QMFN members were given time and opportunity to review the financial reports and to ask questions on QMFN matters.

Council members then took the time to seek clarity and provide comments to the responsible Council portfolio holder and program manager on each of the updated annual plans provided in advance.

The Cultural Foundation continues to be developed. A list of prospective directors was presented, based on their participation in Qalipu cultural meetings as well as experience with other cultural organizations. They will be invited and considered for appointment at a future meeting. Council also considered some preliminary economic development opportunities.

SETTING BENCHMARKS AND TAKING MEASURE

In continuing to set benchmarks and processes for operations and governance of the QMFN, Council directed the organization of a

separate session for Council members to have a clearer understanding of best practises for governance and their leadership roles for the new QMFN. The Indian Act is now a driving force in the operations of QMFN, previously Qalipu operated as a corporation. The retreat will also give members of Council an opportunity to get to know each other. The session will focus on governance policies in several areas, from financial management and accountability to information technology and communications, and establishing committees of council. Council members will be given policy documents to review in advance to prepare and to direct any revisions in the session.

Council approved training for senior program managers in evaluation of programs and services, to ensure accountability and performance in the delivery of programs and services. This will also enable the Band to achieve the stated goal within the Strategic Plan to carry out formal external evaluation of all aspects of the Band's activities. QMFN applied for a contribution from Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada.

Council was informed that a Finance Director will begin in the fall, bringing experience in auditing, federal government programs and educational programs.