

## **AGNUTMAQAN**

### **Welcome to your fifth edition of *Agnutmaqan***

This edition is a summary of proceedings and matters discussed during the regular Band Council meeting held in March 2014.

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

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Qalipu held its third quarterly Council meeting of 2014 in Stephenville on March 13 and 14<sup>th</sup>. It was a detailed meeting with a heavy agenda that focused on reviewing progress on the 2013-2014 fiscal year activity, and planning and reviewing budgets for the new fiscal year of 2014-15. It was an opportunity for Council members to raise any concerns and or ask questions to the Chief, CEO, Portfolio Holders, and the Program Directors, as Qalipu heads into its third year of operation.

### **ABORIGINAL RELATIONS**

Chief Brendan Sheppard briefed Council on a meeting he held in Corner Brook with Morley Googoo, regional Vice Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for NS/NFLD. Vice Chief Googoo invited Chief Sheppard to speak to AFN Atlantic Chiefs to provide them with a brief history of the Mi'kmaq people of NL, Information on the structure of Qalipu, and details related to the enrolment process and the establishment of the Band.

Chief Brendan Sheppard informed Council of an invitation to present to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in respect to Bill C-25. After discussion, Council supported Chief Sheppard's decision to decline the opportunity.

### **TAKING CARE OF QALIPU FISH RESOURCES**

Central Vice Chief Randy Drover advised Council of concerns about reduced enforcement and monitoring on salmon rivers, and sought direction for proposing solutions to the Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada. Council discussed options including expanding a guardian program, advocating for increased federal and provincial resources, and extending MAMKA to develop a program to increase volunteer river guardians. Discussion took place regarding a volunteer river watch program, Council determined that it should avoid any volunteer involvement given the high risk and liabilities associated with such an initiative. Council agreed that guardian programs should be treated as professional services that provide safe and fair compensation and support to qualified guardians. Council directed that their only advocacy should be to expand Aboriginal Fishery Strategy. They asked for staff to continue to monitor DFO funding programs and to advocate for program improvements and refinements that fit Qalipu conservation values, and continue to build a comprehensive long term aboriginal fisheries strategy.

Council discussed concerns with DFO changes to river monitoring, and removing counting fences from Gander, Salmon Brook and Terra Nova rivers, which also impacts employment of Qalipu members. Chief Sheppard reported on meetings with DFO officials, that data from the Exploits River is being used to

estimate salmon activity on other Central rivers, and fences are being moved to other parts of the province where no such data is being collected.

Council made a draw from the names of members who live in the Management Area of 13B that applied for the non-core fishing licence that MAMKA had available; the draw resulted in Justin Harris being chosen.

### **SERVICE QALIPU – A NEW APPROACH IN THE WORKS**

Council approved the formation of Service Qalipu in their January Band Council meeting. It is a new division of the QMFN Band that combines programs and staff of Community Economic Development, Non-Insured Health Benefits, Aquatic Resources, and Culture and Heritage. In the March meeting, Council was provided with an update on the 2013-2014 Operational Plan for each of those programs, which forms the foundation for the new year plan.

The Aquatic Resources Operational Plan for 2013-2014 was reviewed. Highlighting items in the report, that was circulated in advance, Council was informed about the work on the Traditional Use Study. The time to complete interviews in the areas of Stephenville Crossing, Barachois Brook, and Mattis Point was extended to seven weeks and the number of interviews increased from 200 to 300 which reflected the high volume of people wanting to participate. Using iPads and recorders the interviews allowed for interactive mapping information to be collected and integrated into geographical information system databases.

Staff attended the Atlantic Policy Congress conference to discuss incorporating traditional knowledge in project design and to diversify Aboriginal Aquatic Resource and Ocean Management Program (AAROM) funding source. Staff also coordinated applicants for fishery license draw and worked with Qalipu Development Corporation (QDC) to develop a proposal bid for the Federal Government Sea Watch Program. Staff continued documentation of aquatic freshwater habitats, a survey for eel grass, documented marine benthic habitats, conducted Atlantic salmon redd surveys and documented freshwater habitat obstructions. Staff prepared plans to hire a work term student to work as an Aquatic Field Technician in Central Newfoundland in the coming year; and to start a species-at-risk eel study in early May subject to ice conditions. Council learned that attempts to tag American eel was delayed when salt water impacted the telemetry radio transmitters, and monitoring and reporting on alien and invasive species work on green crab would be shifted to shallower waters as there were no results at depths of 5 meters.

Council approved the renaming of the Aquatic Resource Management division of Service Qalipu division to be Natural Resources. The new name will reflect the work that extends beyond aquatic work to include forestry and wildlife, and would be aligned with other government agencies with similar purposes.

The Community Economic Development (CED) Operational Plan for 2013-2014 was reviewed. The Virtual Business Network has over 100 members, and is connected to the Ginu database. The new Community Economic Development Officer in Central will keep the business network site updated and promote the network.

The annual Business Forum, called Mawio'mi, was scheduled to be held in Gander on March 20 and 21<sup>st</sup>. Council was informed that there were a high number of businesses registered with more expected.

Therefore they expanded the form to a two day session with the first day focused on accessing business support funding and commercial loans, and the second on procurement with presentations from major project developers for Muskrat Falls and the Hebron project.

Work continues on the Mi'kmaq Business Development Centre project. The framework is completed, and potential operating partners are being approached. Meetings continue with potential commercial venture partners, and briefing QDC. Council agreed with the approach to secure active partnerships that provide opportunities for QMFN to be directly involved in management and for Qalipu members to find employment.

Culture and Heritage initiatives reflect the energy being placed in building programs and reaching Qalipu members in meaningful ways. A Culture and Heritage resource coordinator was hired. Plans are underway for a Cultural Authenticity Symposium. After considerable discussion on how to reflect real and current Mi'kmaq values and interests, Council directed that the focus should be on Mi'kmaq culture on the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Traditional Use Study is seen as a powerful way to connect with members and learn of their interests and connections to their heritage and culture.

Two directors of the Cultural Foundation resigned when they accepted employment with the QMFN. Council also accepted the recommendation to appoint a new youth director. The Culture and Heritage Committee reviewed seven applications and unanimously recommended Desiree Luedee of Stephenville Crossing and further recommended Marlene Farrell, noting she was one of the people recommended in the initial list when the Foundation was created.

Tourism is emerging as a focus for future economic development and a way to reflect core values, culture and heritage of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq. A consultant was contracted to find funds, and then to develop a five year tourism sector plan.

The Strategic Partnership Office (SPO) is operating. Key priorities for the Strategic Partnership Office are to secure immediate opportunities in major projects work and to develop partnership policies. Director of SPO, Keith Goulding will also explore and screen potential Band partners, and help determine if the projects should be directed to QDC as profit driven enterprises directly driving revenue to Qalipu projects or be directed to Community Economic Development (CED) initiatives. CED projects may not generate profit back to QMFN, but will be expected to generate opportunities for employment and individual enterprise for Qalipu members. The Community Economic Development Framework is finalized and staff have been assigned. A presentation on its progress will be made to Council at the next Band Council meeting. Council directed that the CED Annual Operating Plan include the action to develop a mission and vision statement to reflect those of QMFN.

Director Ralph Eldridge presented the 2014 – 2015 Annual Operating Plan for Service Qalipu. Work will continue to advance each of the programs as presented in the progress review. In particular, Mr. Eldridge noted that Business Development centre work will need to factor in the level of readiness of Qalipu members in starting and expanding a business. He explained his departmental staff will work to avoid duplication with other government agencies, and focus on customizing services for Qalipu and aboriginal businesses. Council approved the 2014-2015 Annual Plans for Service Qalipu.

## **WORK FORCE QALIPU – ADVANCING QALIPU MEMBER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Director of Work Force Qalipu, Keith Goulding provided an update on the 2013-2014 Operational Plan for Post-Secondary Education (PSE). Highlighting items in the report, that was circulated in advance, Council was informed that there were challenges with federal database and time consuming workload caused by repeated re-entry of data. One-time funding for 30 new students was made possible with funds recovered from deferred and incomplete use of funds approved to other students. Currently there are approximately 300 deferred or unfunded files. Director Keith Goulding explained that given the high number of unfunded applications, a full review was undertaken with an impartial third party group to review our local guidelines. As a result of feedback from our members in this review, it was recommended that Qalipu try to support as many students as possible even with partial funding.. It was felt that the best way to do so was to discontinue awarding living allowances and a formal request was made to change our policy effective September 2014. Council voted to accept this request. As a result of this change Council decided that students approved under Qalipu education programs who are in receipt of scholarships/bursaries will not have their scholarships/bursaries amounts taken into consideration when applying for eligibility for funding.

The review and recommendations of PSE made by PSSSP Ad-Hoc Committee and discussed with Council in early March resulted in removing living allowance from all future approvals, this change will provide more members with funding for tuition and books.

The annual meeting of all Work Force Qalipu staff continues to focus on professional development, and there are plans for staff to take a case management course. Regular reviews of PSE files continue as a way to audit distribution and use of education funds.

Continuing on activities in the previous year, Director Keith Goulding presented the 2014 – 2015 Annual Operating Plan for Post-Secondary Education (PSE). Highlighting items in the report, that was circulated in advance, Council discussed a number of initiatives for the New Year.

A new pre-employment readiness program with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Emera will be a model of best practises for developing opportunities for close to a hundred adjacent Qalipu members from the Bay St. George area who applied to find employment on construction of the Maritime Transmission Link. Qalipu will use this to demonstrate to Nalcor the availability of Qalipu workers for the Labrador Island Transmission Link.

Council directed that investigation be done to develop programs to help Qalipu members to improve literacy, gain high school education and learn to use computers and become more IT literate.

Funding will reflect increased interest in youth and RCMP training. Other partnering work will include working with governments at all levels and especially other aboriginal groups focused on Aboriginal Skills Employment & Training (ASETs) programs and the private sector to expand opportunities and access procurement. Council was informed of the need for a post-ASETS business plan. ASETS is likely to be in its final year in 2015 as changes are expected to include a more partnership driven focus. Director, Goulding believes Qalipu is in a good position to continue receiving labour market funding given the major construction projects in the province for the next three to five years.

The Ginu database is critical to developing the best programs for members, and Council agreed that increased communications are necessary to urge members to keep their files updated. They directed

that promotions be increased and staff provide interactive means for member to register online at every public event. A message will be added to the website with a number to call when members forget passwords.

Council also discussed changes to remove their involvement in identifying, recommending and hiring students for summer employment programs. They want to follow the governance policy to prevent Councilors having direct involvement in operational decisions. Council will advise staff of their priorities for selecting the types of employers in their respective wards, and let the process of hiring be handled by those employers. Each Ward Councilor can set their respective priorities for the type of non-profit organization employment they want for students in their ward. Work Force Qalipu will then promote the availability of funding to those employers, solicit proposals from interested employers, assess the proposals, and then advise selected employers to hire the students and submit reports. The allocation of the number of students per ward and their term of employment will be subject to the amount of funds made available.

Council approved both the 2014-2015 Annual Plan for Post-Secondary Education (PSE) and the 2014-2015 Annual Plan for Aboriginal Skills Employment & Training (ASETS).

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – TAKING INITIATIVE**

In the new position of Director responsible for finance and administration, Lynn Kendall provided Council with update on activities in the Finance Department for 2013-2014. She outlined the new financial processes that reflect the operation of the QMFN as the organization grows with increased programs and responsibilities. Since being hired in late 2013, her work involved learning the QMFN financial system and controls and directing the work of two financial officers and two other staff, including a new Records Management Clerk.

Staff of the Finance Department and QDC, and some administrative staff, will receive updated training in Sage Accounting system. There are regular meetings with Finance Committee, including meetings on the budget for 2014-2015. Work included preparation of financial statement for federal government agencies that involved higher workload due to their requested formatting revisions.

Council was informed about how the new financial systems have added the responsibility for each Director to submit monthly financial reports that will also include explanations for variances that are 10% over budget or greater than \$3000. There is a new policy regarding purchase orders for spending not covered by contracts and salaries. Developing a solid foundation for moving forward is a priority and work was done in several areas. A Business Continuity Committee was formed to plan for disasters, disruptions and crises. A review of pension plans determined that the Band is eligible for federal funding to pay the employer's portion of pension, health and other benefits. An HST analysis led to a process to claim more HST rebates. A review of a Canada Revenue Agency ruling led to a revised T4A system for students after it was determined that PSE contributions are not taxable. ASETs contributions remain taxable because a different federal department issues those funds.

Council approved the 2014-2015 Finance Annual Operating Plan.

## Budget 2014-2015

### Budget Summary

Program	Source	Revenues	Spend	Expenses	Totals
Band Support	ASETS	35,834	Salaries	329,237	
	AFS	20,000	Operations	310,660	
	NIHB	10,400			
	CEDP	55,172			
	FNI	23,537			
	AANDC/BST	494,954			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>639,897</b>		<b>639,897</b>	<b>639,897</b>
PSE	AANDC	4,336,971	Students	3,903,274	
			Salaries	252,239	
			Operations	181,458	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,336,971</b>		<b>4,336,971</b>	<b>4,336,971</b>
ASETS	CRF	832,525	Admin	123,537	
			Core Costs	123,392	
			Agreement Holders	533,398	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>823,525</b>		<b>823,525</b>	<b>823,525</b>
ASETS	EI	405,947	Admin	60,134	
			Core costs	31,780	
			Agreement Holders	314,033	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>405,947</b>		<b>405,947</b>	<b>405,947</b>
CEDP	AANDC	836,400	Salary	447,888	
			Expenses/ balance	388,512	
		836,400		836,400	836,400
NIHB	NIHB	93,068	Expenses	93,068	93,068
IRA	AANDC	91,264	Expenses	91,264	91,264
AFS	DFO	200,000	Expenses	155,086	
			Salaries	44,914	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200,000</b>		<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>
MAMKA	DFO	240,341	Expenses	240,341	240,341
					<b>6,844,000</b>

Director Lynn Kendall presented the 2014 – 2015 Budgets for Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band and MAMKA, which was analyzed by, revised for, and recommended by the Finance Committee. The budget reflected a new approach to engaging each department in reviewing the full budget as a group. She highlighted items in the report that was circulated in advance and Council took the opportunity to consider certain elements of the budget in detail.

The total budget for the new fiscal year is just over \$6.8 million. It is built on revenue from multiple sources, most of which are government funded programs, each of which provides a minor percentage for administration.

The Band Support budget of \$639,897 is split between salaries and costs of operating the Council and executive. It includes a 2 ½ % salary increase to come into effect in October 2014 as the second phase of the 5% increase approved by Council last year.

The PSE budget of \$4.3 million is the largest program by far, with \$3.9 million allotted directly to students, and the remaining 10% for salaries, operations and administration. The budget does include \$2 million to cover living allowance commitments made in earlier contract agreements with students prior to the change.

Council discussed the distribution of funding into communities, and clarified that the term community refers to the full community of Qalipu members, noting that Traditional Use Study and some other programs are place-specific at times.

The MAMKA budget will reflect a name change "the Western MAMKA project" a project that is focused on, science-based programs in cooperation with DFO and Conne River.

Council approved the 2014-2015 Annual Budgets for Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band and MAMKA as recommended by the Finance Committee. They also approved the 2 ½% salary increases.

## **REGULAR BUSINESS MATTERS**

Along with the review of programs and plans, Council took care of some administrative and management matters. They approved the selection of the Auditing Firm Bonnell Cole Janes.

Council agreed to send a letter of support to the Western Memorial Regional Hospital Action Committee for their efforts to ensure adequate medical equipment and services are provided in the new hospital as committed in the original plans.

Council continued work on finalizing its governance policy, and reinforced their intention for productive Band Council meetings by amending the governance manual.

Council also directed that QDC By-Laws to be accepted once clarification is sought on Section 27.

Council discussed the By-Laws of the Qalipu Cultural Foundation however did not approve at this meeting seeking clarification on a number of issues. This matter will be discussed at another Council meeting once clarification is provided from the foundation.

Councillors also praised the Management Team for the professional manner the reports were developed and presented, and directed that this format of presentations by the responsible Directors be continued at future Band Council meetings.