

SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

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SRFN Chief and Council Meeting
June 1, 2021
Zoom Meeting
Approved Minutes

Chair: Chief Brent Bissaillion
Council: Steven Baranyai, Earl Commanda, Marlene Essex, Shirley McLeod, Tillie McLeod, Michelle Owl, Miranda Pelletier, Nicole Pelletier-Southwind, Jack Trudeau, Steve Meawasige
Regrets: Kerri Commanda, Joey Jacobs
Director of Operations: Candace Martin
Recording Secretary: Candace Martin
Staff:
Guests: John Singleton

1) Call to Order/Opening Remarks:

-The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.
-Focus of tonight's meeting is the presentation from John Singleton with respect to the restructuring project including the Governance and Human Relations Manuals
-Chief Bissaillion opened the meeting with the following statement:
Gichi-apiitendaagoziwag akina abinoonjiying
"Every Child Matters"
Aanii,
Like many of you, I watched and listened to news and stories that began to come out from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Community and the former Kamloops Residential School, one of the largest in Canada. Our prayers, thoughts and spirits are with the community at this time as they welcome those 215 children home. By finding these children and welcoming their spirits home, we hope that the families can begin healing and receiving that much-needed closure.
Serpent River First Nation shares a similar history, being ground zero for two residential schools. St. Peter Claver School for Boys and St. Joseph's School for Girls; both operated by the Jesuits of Canada, the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, and Canada's Government from 1913 - 1965. Many people from all over Ontario came here; communities on Manitoulin Island, the shores of Lake Huron, Lake Superior Communities; Parry Sound, Ottawa Valley, Marathon, Chapleau, Temagami, New Liskeard. The schools at one time had students from as far as Northern Quebec, Akewasnse, Kahnawake, Kanestake and Nelson House. We have heard the stories from those schools and our relatives' experiences they may never have spoken about. We honour their stories, their memories.

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Many people are calling this a “dark chapter” in Canadian history. The truth is that the dark chapter never went away for Indigenous people. Our children are being apprehended into child welfare at rates not seen even during the Residential School Era. We hear of horrifying reports coming out of hospitals about our medical mistreatment and neglect. Environmental violence, water advisories, lead poisoning, deforestation, chemical exposures happen to our people at an alarming rate.

We are still living in the darkest chapter of Canadian history, filled with platitudes and apologies, yet our people continue to suffer, facing the brunt of racist remarks. They are told...to get over it.

The Indian Act is ethnic-based legislation; We are one of Canada’s only ethnically legislated races. Our status cards are not cute, fun symbols of tax-free; benefits; they are reminders that a foreign government dictates who we are. They are a legacy and memory of broken promises, stolen children, loss of language, loss of land, cultural destruction, spiritual and sexual identity oppression, and so much more. Our historical, intergenerational and collective oppression continues today in the form of land disputes, over-incarcerations, lack of housing, child apprehension, systemic poverty, marginalization and violence against Indigenous Women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA peoples. These did not begin or end with residential schools but of systemic Canadian government policies; that continue to this day.

Reconciliation is not the work of Indigenous Peoples. It is the work of every Canadian who supports the government through their taxes and votes. Those individuals are your representatives, pick up a phone and call your local MP and MPP and tell them to do the work of reconciliation. Stop fighting survivors in court, settle land disputes in a timely fashion, fund the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge systems, and reform racist judicial and child welfare systems. These disputes need to be settled before reconciliation can happen; until then, I will continue to fight against injustice.

Chi-Miigwetch

2) Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: 2021-06-01-01	
That Chief and Council adopts the Agenda for the Chief and Council Meeting of June 1, 2021	
Moved by	Tillie McLeod
Seconded by	Marlene Essex
CARRIED	By Consensus

3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

None declared at this time

4) Community Presentations:

a) John Singleton – Governance and Human Relations Project Overview

-John Singleton presented his written report to Chief and Council: Serpent River First Nation Organizational Review, Human Relations Manual, Governance Manual, Salary Grid, Evaluation Process and Training Schedule Report

-John Singleton confirmed that the eighth Human Relations Manual training session with staff was completed in the afternoon prior to this meeting, and that he would provide one more session once a HR Manager was in place

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-John Singleton commented that working with the staff throughout the training sessions and ongoing job description reviews was a healthy and refreshing experience with lots of discussion and questions, and employees were candid, open, honest, and respectful
 -John Singleton will complete the job description reviews, and noted that the project has been eye-opening and challenging but underwent an amazing process and everyone's patience was appreciated
 -John Singleton then requested that the balance of his presentation take place in-camera (salary grid)

5) Next Meeting Dates

- a) C&C Duly Convened Meeting - Tuesday, June 15, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

6) Adjournment:

MOTION: 2021-06-01-02	
That Chief and Council adjourn the Chief and Council Meeting of June 1, 2021 at 6:43 p.m.	
Moved by	Earl Commanda
Seconded by	Steven Baranyai
CARRIED	By Consensus
-Chief Bissaillion made a closing comment to community that the roads project was moving forward and asked community for their continued patience -In Camera to follow	

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