

SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

195 Village Road
Cutler ON, P0P 1B0



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SRFN Chief and Council Meeting
Tuesday, August 26, 2025
Approved Minutes

Chair: Wilma-Lee Johnston

Council: Kerri Commanda, Shirley McLeod, John (Jack) Trudeau (zoom), Steve Meawasige, Michelle Owl

Regrets: None at this time

Director of Operations (DOO): Tracey Seabrook

Staff: Valle Trudeau, Membership Coordinator; Christopher Weatherley, Director of Social Services and Culture; Chasity Toulouse, Director of Housing & Infrastructure; Leila Macumber, Director of Health and Wellness; Mark Foden, Tenant Liaison

Recording Secretary: Madelaine O’Neill, POLEA

1) Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Remarks:

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The duly convened Chief and Council of Tuesday, August 26, 2025 was called to order at 6:04pm - The Chief welcomed Council and community members - Opening prayer by Councillor Trudeau |
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2) Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: 2025-08-26-01	
That Chief and Council adopt the Agenda for the Chief and Council Meeting of Tuesday, August 26, 2025 as presented	
Moved by	Shirley McLeod
Seconded by	Steve Meawasige
CARRIED	By Consensus

3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

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| - Councillor Trudeau declared conflict on item 10. c) Membership Clerk Appointment – Vallee Trudeau |
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4) Community Presentations

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| - None at this time |
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5) Approval of Previous Minutes

a) Tuesday, July 8, 2025

MOTION: 2025-08-26-02

Recording Secretary:	Madelaine O’Neill	Date Approved	2025-09-23
2025-08-26 APPROVED CHIEF AND COUNCIL MINUTES		Motion of Approval	2025-09-23-02

That Chief and Council approve the Chief and Council Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, July 8, 2025 as presented	
Moved by	Steve Meawasige
Seconded by	Michelle Owl
CARRIED	By Consensus

6) Reports

a) Business Arising From Previous Minutes:

- Quarterly Chief and Council Engagement tentatively rescheduled for October 6, 2025
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7) Reports:

a) Chief's Report:

MOTION: 2025-08-26-03	
That Chief and Council approve the Chief's Verbal Report dated Tuesday, August 26, 2025 as presented	
Moved by	Shirley McLeod
Seconded by	John (Jack) Trudeau
CARRIED	By Consensus
<p>- The Chief presented her verbal report providing updates on past engagements as well as recent and upcoming activities. Report as follows:</p> <p>"I would like to start by saying thank you Council for continuing your duties throughout the summer break. I hope you did make time to rest and enjoy time with your children and grandchildren.</p> <p>The past month has been busy with Leadership from various organizations:</p> <p>July 22 - North Shore Link Open House in SSM. The Waasmoowin Partnership did a Community engagement with the City of Sault Ste Marie. Garden River has left the partnership however Waasmoowin and Hydro One remain committed to dialogue with Garden River regarding the routing</p> <p>July 25/26 - RHTLF Anishnaabemowin Revitalization was held in Sudbury. Linda Assiniwe is the lead for this joint project between the 21 Nations. Work continues on curriculum development and planning for community engagements tong.</p> <p>July 28 - Council had a follow up discussion regarding the Governance Manual review. Discussion involved Accountability for Chief and Council. How outdated some policies are and that some current laws would overrule some of our Manual. Discussion included Leadership perspectives on confidentiality, ability to meet or exceed expectations of the community and team building with past and present Chiefs and Councils. Also discussed was how incorporating Anishinaabe values and traditions could be done.</p> <p>July 29 - Nog services Committee</p> <p>July 30 - SRFN Education Gala. Congratulations to all of our Graduates and future leaders.</p> <p>July 31 - Tribal Council, Bembowopka, Mamawesying Board of Directors meeting. The two Boards of Mamawesying/ Bembowopka and Mamweswen NSTC were amalgamated into one board. Tribal Council is continuing work on their Albert Street purchase for the new Withdrawl Management Clinic, services are continuing as they have retained a new Doctor for the clinic Dr. McLeod has been servicing the clients to ensure their care needs are met.</p> <p>August 01 – Notice to Vote for the referendum for the Trust was issued.</p>	

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August 06 Waasmoowin Board meeting, The RHTLF held a Community engagement on the Go Forward Initiatives.

August 7 – The Blessing of the Grounds was well attended

August 8 – final preparations for Pow wow at the grounds.

August 9-10 our annual powwow took place and was an excellent event with high attendance on day 1. Day 2 we had less dancers as the exceedingly hot weather the day before probably took their tolls on people.

August 13 - Economic Development review of proponents in the territory. Discussion on Lands department and need for additional staff.

August 14 – Tek Elders traffic slowdown at the trading post, supported by the OPP. Tek Elders have been successful, as reported in yesterday’s CTV Northern News in having the aerial glyphosate spraying stopped. The MNR says for “the time being” however this is a success. Congratulations!

August 19 – Serpent River First Nation held the AGM for 23/24, twelve community members attended in person. There were some questions asked and the responses will be posted to the members’ portal by the end of this week. Additionally, a request for the last three years of Audits from The SRFN LP will also be posted to the portal. Overall, a \$406, 920,953M surplus was reported. Excluding Robinson Huron Monies, the surplus is \$28,959, 573 M for Serpent River First Nation. The Finance department is finishing up the work for the final audit owing to the Members, and hope to have this complete in October. Once completed, all audits will be up to date.

Yesterday August 25, we held a groundbreaking ceremony in Elliot Lake for our urban housing project. Lee Simpson-Johnston conducted the ceremony, and the Elliot Lake Mayor and some of his Council as well as some staff and members of both communities. The project will commence this week, and is expected to be fully complete by the late fall of 2026. We will be issuing an RFP for a potential Property Manager so that rental application processes can begin.

Tomorrow August 27, there will be a breakfast for the Elders held at the portable for engagement regarding economic development And August 28 I have a virtual Chiefs meeting to discuss the upcoming Treaty Gathering and duties the Chiefs, staff and flag carriers will have throughout the gathering

A reminder to register for the gathering directly, Which is September 7, 8 and 9th in Sault Ste Marie taking place at the Roberta Bondar Pavillion, located at the big tent next to the Delta, in Downtown SSM

I would also take a moment to acknowledge the passing of two more of our members. Grief runs high throughout the Community; we have had many deaths over the last year, for various reasons. Many times, we forget that people are going through life at their own pace. Grief takes its own time, for some it may be immediate but for others it is a slow realization. As we are a small community, I hope that we can each be there for our families when asked and understand that some will not ask for help but that it be offered anyway. If you see someone struggling and are unsure of what to do, please let us know, we are here to help.”

8) Doodem & Committee Minutes & Reports

- None at this time

9) Standing Items:

a) Audit Update

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- Refer to item 7. a) Chief's Report

b) Community Safety Update

- None at this time

10) New Business:

a) Certificate of Possession – Beverly Fanjoy

MOTION: 2025-08-26-04	
That Chief and Council approve the issuance of a Certificate of Possession to Beverly Fanjoy for the property located at Lot #02, 57385 CLSR (#10 Sleepy Hollow Rd)	
Moved by	Steve Meawasige
Seconded by	Michelle Owl
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beverly Fanjoy has applied for a CP on Lot #02, 57385 CLSR (#10 Sleepy Hollow Rd) - Fanjoy has been attempting to obtain a CP for her inherited home for over 2 years - There have been historical misunderstandings on if a CP was in effect for this lot - There is no competing interest in that land or the house 	

b) Council Fire Declaration – BCR

- Item deferred in response to Community input

c) Membership Clerk Appointment – Vallee Trudeau

MOTION: 2025-08-26-05	
That Chief and Council appoints Vallee Trudeau as a Membership and Lands Registry clerk for the Serpent River First Nation effective August 26, 2025	
Moved by	Kerri Commanda
Seconded by	Shirley McLeod
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor Trudeau declared conflict and exited Zoom meeting. Technical issues – did not return to the meeting. Quorum sustained - Vallee Trudeau has been on boarded to fill the Membership & Lands Registry Clerk temporary full-time position vacancy fro Serpent River First Nation; - It is critical to be able to access current membership information from Indigenous Services Canada to support First Nation business and our members 	

d) Location Sign Request – Nimkii Aazhibikong

MOTION: 2025-08-26-06	
That Chief and Council approve the request for signage to be placed on both the North and South side entrances of Highway 639; identifying the road leading to Nimkii Aazhibikong, and designating the road as "Maanii Road"	

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Moved by	Kerri Commanda
Seconded by	Michelle Owl
CARRIED	In Favour – 4 Opposed - 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor McLeod opposed - Isaac Murdoch has requested the support of Chief and Council in placing road signs on both the north and south side entrances to the road leading to Nimkii Aazhibikong (Cultural Centre) on Hwy 639 - Community members and visitors alike have experienced difficulty accessing Nimkii Aazhibikong in past circumstances - The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) requires a Band Council Resolution (BCR) in order to have road signs placed on highway 639 - The proposed name for the road on which Nimkii Aazhibikong is located is “Maanii Road,” to honour a well known Ojibwe Language teacher/elder who has dedicated her life to the preservation of Anishinabek values 	

e) Land Use Request – Business Development – Jesse Darby

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jesse awaits decision from Chief and Council on issuing permission for long-term usage of land for site development and business growth - Jesse met with the Lands department to discuss his preferred location and to verbally share his expectations for site development and business growth - The business would be funded and built by Jesse - The site would be located west of Church Rd, directly north of Highway 17. The site is currently on lot 57-B; a lot with a CP belonging to a Serpent River First Nation member - This item was deferred to the duly convened meeting of September 23 and open to comments/feedback from Community for consideration until September 16, 2025
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f) Land Use Request – Business Development – Gerald Southwind

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gerald awaits decision from Chief and Council on issuing permission for long-term usage of land for site development and business growth - Gerald has been operating his chip truck from a temporary location near the Serpent River First Nation Powwow grounds and wishes to establish his business in a more permanent location - Gerald met with the Lands department to discuss his preferred location and to verbally share his expectations for site development and business growth; the site would start as a permanent location to operate the chip truck with an outdoor seating area and eventually expand into a sit-down restaurant - The site would be located west of Village Rd W, directly south of Hwy 17 - This item was deferred to the duly convened meeting of September 23 and open to comments/feedback from Community for consideration until September 16, 2025
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g) Housing Request – Terry Garrison

MOTION: 2025-08-26-07	
That Chief and Council approve of Terrance Garrison’s housing request as proposed	
Moved by	By Consensus

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Seconded by	By Consensus
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terry Garrison (the builder) has expressed his desire to secure a piece of land to build himself a permanent home in Serpent River First Nation - A potential piece of land measuring 200' X 200' was identified by the Lands Department on the south side of Woodland Dr., and a test hole was dug by the Infrastructure department to assess the feasibility of a home build - The builder is prepared to self-fund the construction of a home; Including a boundary survey, the purchase price of building materials, lot servicing including clearing and levelling, providing the home with heat & water, connecting to the electricity network, and the installation of a septic system - The builder is responsible for funding the project - The builder is responsible for clearing and levelling the lot, and all lot servicing. - The builder is responsible for constructing a home in accordance with the Housing Department's requirements - The builder is responsible for installing a septic system, connecting the home to electric distribution, and supplying the home with water - The builder must communicate with Housing & Infrastructure as the build progresses to ensure the minimum criteria are being met - The builder must demonstrate material progress on the lot within two (2) years of being granted approval for construction - Failure to successfully complete the project may result in interest in the land, and all existing improvements to it, reverting to Serpent River First Nation - The builder is responsible for registering a survey instrument for the lot 	

h) Creating External Partnerships to Generate Own Source Revenue

MOTION: 2025-08-26-08	
That Chief and Council	
Moved by	Steve Meawasige
Seconded by	Shirley McLeod
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide an overview and recommendations for Serpent River First Nation (SRFN) to establish strategic partnerships with non-Indigenous businesses aimed at generating Own Source Revenue (OSR) through procurement, investment, and economic activity on traditional lands - This would complement any existing businesses in the community that may be suitable for providing services or supplies for larger scale projects - Given Serpent River First Nation's limited number of businesses, one path forward is to form structured partnerships with non-Indigenous companies through formal agreements that may include shared governance and revenue-sharing mechanisms 	

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- These relationships would not only create employment but also build capacity and long-term economic sustainability
- Strategic benefits of entering partnerships include:
 - Generation of OSR to support self-governance, community infrastructure, and economic growth.
 - Improved competitiveness in bidding on major projects by leveraging Indigenous procurement incentives, including revenue-sharing terms (normally 2–5% of gross revenue).
 - Creation of employment and training pathways for SRFN members.
 - Development of predictable and enforceable income streams without operational liabilities.
- The Economic Development Team has identified several opportunities through the Contractors (AECON and Valard) who are bidding as the EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) for the Waasmowin Transmission Project. These may include the supply of goods and services such as civil work, concrete supply/finishing, equipment rentals, training, health and safety, security, fuel supply, and over 50 other requirements. Additionally, there will be 5 substations built or upgraded for the new transmission capacity, spanning from Sudbury to Sault Ste. Marie
- Presently, the other First Nation communities associated with this project have developed or are in the process of pursuing opportunities for either Band owned businesses or external partnerships to create revenue or employment for their respective communities

i) Pow Wow Grounds Upgrades – Phase 2

MOTION: 2025-08-26-09	
That Chief and Council authorize Administration to submit an application for the amount of \$500,000 to the Legacy Fund for “Pow Wow Grounds Upgrades: Phase 2” and the remaining cost through FEDNOR and NOHFC	
Moved by	Steve Meawasige
Seconded by	Shirley McLeod
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Band Council Resolution (BCR) is required to apply for funding from the Legacy Fund (Federal) to complete the balance of the upgrades needed for the following structures that are on the Pow Wow Grounds: drum arbour, stage, sacred fire area, canteen, change rooms, covered eating area - A funding application has previously been submitted to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41 (CHRT41) to support the Pow Wow grounds upgrades - NOHFC was submitted in the spring and is currently awaiting a response. CHRT41 continues to work through the process with the assistance of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) - Planned upgrades have been identified for Phase 2 of this project and require the support of the Chief and Council - The following upgrades, which will include the refurbishment of the stage and master of ceremony area, the arbours, shelters for elders and a new canteen area, as well as new change rooms, are required - The preliminary cost estimates have been completed - Funding support may be available through the Legacy Fund (up to \$500,000), which can be used to leverage additional contributions to reach up to \$1,000,000 in total project funding 	

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- Remaining costs can be supported through provincial and private funding opportunities, including FEDNOR and NOHFC
- This project is a significant component of Serpent River First Nations' cultural priorities and long-term objectives supporting community gatherings like the annual Pow Wow, cultural preservation, and improved infrastructure for the next seven generations

j) Late Fee Policy Implementation

- A policy has existed related to late fees for payments to the First Nation since 2007 as approved by Chief and Council
- Since 2022, the Housing and Infrastructure department has been attempting to work with members to address arrears, late and non-payment of rent and user fees
- In 2022/23 the Deputy Chief led engagements with the membership related to issue of arrears. In 2023/24, an updated Finance policy related to late fees, Non-sufficient Funds, etc. was approved at Chief and Council
- Based upon our findings in 2022 the policy dated in 2007 had not been implemented by previous administrations. (We are unable to confirm if it had ever been implemented but it was not in practice in 2022)
- The direction from those membership engagements was to begin addressing the issues as it had a negative implication for the provision of housing and ability to address renovations/repairs in the community
- In August 2024, additionally, as a result of the vote related to the Per Capita Distribution 50% of members rental arrears were to be deducted from the Per Capita Distribution. This was to allow for members to dispute the amount of their arrears and an investigation to occur, but members were also encouraged to come in to make arrangements to address their arrears
- The implementation of the Finance Policy related to Late Fees was communicated at Chief and Council, via social media as well as newsletters that are posted on the SRFN website and hand delivered to all Elders and Home and Community Care recipients
- Through the implementation those members who were 1-5 days late were not charged a late fee, however a letter was sent to them advising that moving forward they should make efforts to pay on the 1st of the month
- Members who appeared to be making the wrong payment i.e. Their rent payment was off by a few cents were also communicated directly with and requested to make corrections and no late fee was applied
- Some members raised concerns they were not communicated with directly in writing regarding the implementation of the policy
- Upon the indication of those concerns a review of the implementation was undertaken. That included determining if the current rental agreement speaks to late fees, NSF fees, etc. It was discovered that it does not
- As a result, the Finance Department was requested to reverse the late fees for August. A communication will be sent to each member to advise of the implementation of the policy which will take place effective October 1st, 2025
- The Rental Agreement is being amended to include information related to late fees, charges for non-sufficient funds, etc.

11) Community Questions and Answers:

- Community member inquired about the upcoming Trust referendum, whether the most updated version is available on the members' portal and raised concerns regarding Page 8, noting that it does not clearly distinguish who is eligible to vote (Section 10 or all registered 201 members) Chief clarified that the Trust

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Deed is available for review on the members' portal and that all registered 201 members are eligible to participate

- Community member inquired about the referendum schedule, voting times and options, including whether paper ballots will be available. It was noted that more detailed information will follow and paper ballots will be available for in-person voters
- Community member asked how many members were consulted in the creation of the Trust Deed. Chief explained that engagement sessions were held both on and off-reserve, and that the Trust is primarily a legal and financial vehicle developed with guidance from advisors
- Community member inquired about who the Trustees are. A: Tania Johnston, Cheryl Hankard, Lorraine Rekmans and Josh Rickard
- Community members asked what the voting (referendum) threshold is. Chief explained that it is 70% of eligible voters who participate in the vote

12) Next Meeting Dates

- Tuesday, September 23, 2025

13) Adjournment

MOTION: 2025-08-26-10	
That Chief and Council adjourn the Chief and Council Meeting of Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 9:37pm	
Moved by	Shirley McLeod
Seconded by	
CARRIED	By Consensus

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