

SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

195 Village Road
Cutler ON, P0P 1B0



Telephone: (705) 844-2418
www.serpentrivernfn.com

SRFN Chief and Council Meeting
Chief and Council Chambers
Thursday, December 11, 2025
Start time: 6:00pm EST.
Approved Minutes

Chair: James Owl

Council: Erin Carne, Angela Trudeau, Nicole Pelletier, Rebecca Csaszar, George Coughlin, Justin Urquhart (zoom)

Regrets: None at this time

Director of Operations (DOO): None at this time

Staff: Leila Macumber, Director of Health and Wellness

Recording Secretary: Madelaine O'Neill, POLEA

Community Members In-Person: 25

Community Members on Zoom: 88

1) Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Remarks:

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| - The duly convened Chief and Council meeting of Thursday, December 11, 2025 was called to order at 6:04pm |
| - Opening smudge by Councillor Trudeau |
| - Opening prayer by Elaine Johnston |

2) Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: 2025-12-11-01

That Chief and Council adopt the Agenda for the Council Meeting of Thursday, December 11, 2025 as amended

Moved by	Angela Trudeau
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Seconded by	Erin Carne
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CARRIED	By Consensus
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| - Add item 10 h) Authorized Signor – Build Canada Homes |
| - Add item 10 i) Signing Authority |

3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

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| - Councillor Trudeau/Councillor Urquhart declared conflict on item e) Nogdawindamin – Board of Directors Delegation |
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4) Community Presentations:

- None at this time

5) Approval of Previous Minutes:

a) Tuesday, October 28, 2025

MOTION: 2025-12-11-02	
That Chief and Council approve the previous Council Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, October 28, 2025 as presented	
Moved by	George Coughlin
Seconded by	Nicole Pelletier
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The previous meeting minutes of October 28, 2025 were presented for review. As the current Council was not in office at the time of the meeting, the minutes are approved for record-keeping purposes only, acknowledging their existence as an accurate record of proceedings held by the former Council - The Framework for External Partnerships Policy was briefly discussed and is to be brought forward at the next duly convened meeting for further review and consideration 	

6) Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

- None at this time

7) Reports:

- None at this time

8) Doodem & Committee Minutes & Reports:

- None at this time

9) Standing Items:

a) Audit Update

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was noted that the 2024/25 audit is anticipated to be ready for Finance Committee review in mid-January 2026, with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) anticipated to follow near the end of January 2026 - It was noted that Serpent River First Nation is currently managing a backlog in reporting which could potentially impact timelines - Community member(s) inquired about previous audit management letters, including whether summaries could be prepared and whether they would be made available for community review - Community member(s) inquired whether it would be appropriate to explore the engagement of a new external auditor - Chief and Council/Administration to review options regarding summaries of management letters, potential community access, and to provide updates on audit-related matters under Business Arising at the next duly convened meeting 	
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b) Community Safety Update

- Chief provided an update regarding opportunities to improve community safety including the need to expand bandwidth capacity to support community safety infrastructure, such as the potential installation of security cameras and related technologies

- It was noted that Chief Owl and Councillor Carne recently met with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) to discuss critical community safety concerns, including substance abuse, human trafficking etc. and to explore potential strategies moving forward

- Further discussion included the potential of establishing a Community Safety Task Force comprised of community members, which will be brought forward under Business Arising at the next duly convened meeting for further discussion and consideration

10) New Business:

a) Four-Day Work Week

MOTION: 2025-12-11-03	
That Chief and Council direct management to move back to a full Five-Day Work Week schedule effective January 5, 2026 and that any future options for work week adjustments require a comprehensive analysis conducted by Human Resource professionals in collaboration with the full Community	
	Rebecca Cszaszar
Secoded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus
<p>- Upon the request of Chief and Council (2021-2024 term) a four-day work week had been proposed. During the duly convened Chief and Council meeting on April 8, 2025, through MOTION: 2025-04-08-04, Chief and Council had approved a 6-month trial of a four-day work week</p> <p>- Additionally, they agreed that the collection of Key Performance Indicators was essential to help determine if the trial was successful</p> <p>- These KPI's included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessing number of emergency calls to staff on the Friday. 2. A decrease in absenteeism as compared to the last two fiscal years. I.e. Sick Leave reduction, medical appointments, no shows 3. Assessing any impacts related to a four-day work week that may delay a project 4. Assessing the number of call outs on the Friday and any financial impacts 5. Assessing the number of applications being received for postings 6. Assessing employee retention 7. Assessing employee satisfaction via survey 8. Assessing community satisfaction and concrete impacts via survey 9. Assessing productivity and quality of work via Director survey <p>- The collection and evaluation of Key Performance Indicator data was to occur during the 6-month trial period of the four-day work week initiative which was targeted between April 8, 2025 and October 8, 2025. No date was collected during this period and there was no report presented to the previous Chief and Council</p> <p>- During the trial period, concerns were raised at Chief and Council meetings</p>	

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- There was no collection of data that would assist in determining success or failure of the four-day work week
- The trial period expired on October 8, 2025
- There are cases where overtime liability has spiked significantly, placing Serpent River First Nation at potential risk for excessive payouts
- Related discussion included considerations around emergency contact coverage and the availability of key contact phone numbers specifically for Housing and Infrastructure Technicians and Mental Health Workers, to ensure service accessibility. To be revisited under Business Arising at the next duly convened meeting

b) Governance Manual Adoption

MOTION: 2025-12-11-04	
That Chief and Council endorse the Serpent River First Nation Governance Manual adopted in principle in 2021 as the primary reference for governance procedures and function until such time it is updated	
Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	Angela Trudeau
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The latest update to the SRFN Governance Manual was adopted in principal on March 23rd 2021. In August of 2021, the Serpent River First Nation Council advanced a decision to move from the Indian Act Election Process to the newer, First Nations Election Act - Serpent River First Nation held its most recent election on November 21, 2025 with the newly elected Chief and Council taking office immediately following - Operating under the First Nations Election Act, the Indian Band Council Procedure Regulations no longer fully apply to Serpent River First Nation Governance Operations - Serpent River First Nation legal advisor, Patrick Nadjiwan of Nadjiwan Law has provided minor amendments to the text of the Indian Band Council Procedure Regulations now entitled "Appendix A" as a guide for Governance meeting procedures - Discussion followed and Chief and Council noted the need for additional time to thoroughly review the draft Governance Manual and ensure alignment with a broader strategic plan before formal adoption. Further to this, Chief and Council determined that the item would be tabled to a future meeting date to allow for additional review and consideration 	

MOTION: 2025-12-11-05	
That Chief and Council table the Governance Manual Adoption (item 10 b) and it be brought forward to a future duly convened meeting to allow time for further review	
Moved by	Angela Trudeau
Seconded by	Erin Carne
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief and Council tabled the Governance Manual Adoption item for additional review, with the matter to return under Business Arising at the next duly convened meeting 	

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c) Robinson Huron Treaty Annuities – Per Capita Distribution Review

MOTION: 2025-12-11-06	
That Chief and Council approve a Per Capita Distribution of \$8,000 per eligible 201 member and an additional \$2,000-\$4,000 from the return of the 50% of the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (RHTLF) legal fees. Timing is to be determined based on Serpent River First Nation’s ability to distribute and the date of receipt of the legal fees deposit	
Moved by	George Coughlin
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
<p>- As its share of the proceeds of the Robinson Huron Treaty Court Case, the Serpent River First Nation has received from the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund, a total of \$385,108,499.85 in the following payments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. \$276,866,612.68 on August 9, 2024 2. \$101,094,767.59 on October 31, 2024 3. \$7,147,116.58 on December 31, 2024 <p>- Since receipt, Serpent River First Nation has provided per capita distributions to eligible members and has invested remaining assets in GICs through the Bank of Montreal and has invested in real estate projects in Elliot Lake and Sault Ste. Marie</p> <p>- The current Chief and Council has been working closely with the Serpent River First Nation Finance Department to ensure precise accounting of all financial assets associated with the RHT annuities</p> <p>- To date, Serpent River First Nation has realized \$15,325,588 in interest and following the recent court ruling against the RHTLF lawyers, Serpent River First Nation is anticipated to receive \$8,750,000</p> <p>- Serpent River First Nation is in a position to provide a per capita distribution to eligible members from the interest and from the return of 50% of the legal fees related to the RHT annuities</p> <p>- Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council has worked closely with financial and legal advisors to gain understanding of responsibilities and risks related to per capita distributions of settlement funds</p> <p>- Financial advisors for Serpent River First Nation have provided a series of options for a per capita distribution for eligible members focused on interest earned to date and the return of 50% of the legal fees from the RHTLF</p>	

d) SRFN LP - Contribution Payment

MOTION: 2025-12-11-07	
That Chief and Council support the recommendation from the Serpent River First Nation Limited Partnership Board of Directors to accept the \$100,000 contribution payment as stipulated in the Articles of Incorporation	
Moved by	Angela Trudeau
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus
<p>- The Serpent River First Nation Limited Partnership was established in 2021, with its inaugural fiscal year commencing in 2023/2024. This entity, formerly known as the Serpent River First Nation Economic Development Corporation, was constituted as a for-profit organization to oversee leases within the Business</p>	

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Centre, the SRFN Trading Post, the SRFN Gas Bar and Convenience, and to manage the ownership of Agawa Crafts, in addition to pursuing general economic development initiatives

- The Board of Directors is committed to the Partnership’s success and endeavors to enhance the profitability of businesses managed by SRFN Limited Partnership. Sustained growth and strategic planning initiatives aimed at increasing profitability have been implemented
- With the stabilization of the businesses and in accordance with the agreement between SRFN and SRFN Limited Partnership, the Board of Directors seeks to ensure the Partnership’s continued success by adhering to the established agreement
- The SRFN Limited Partnership Board of Directors previously identified and allocated funding for a contribution payment within the current fiscal year. At this time, the SRFN Limited Partnership proposes to remit a contributory payment of \$100,000 to Serpent River First Nation
- SRFN Limited Partnership possesses sufficient operating reserves to facilitate the proposed distribution, following the settlement of expenses and debts, and maintenance of the operating budget

e) Annual Holiday Gift Cards for Community

MOTION: 2025-12-11-08
That Chief and Council endorse the contribution of up to \$50,000 towards the purchase of gift cards for \$100 each to be expensed from the Serpent River First Nation Limited Partnership profit contribution of \$100,000

Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Nicole Pelletier
CARRIED	By Consensus

- The Chief and Council of Serpent River First Nation have historically provided a turkey, or gift cards to its members as a contribution towards their Christmas Dinner expenses
- In planning for the annual household Christmas Dinner contributions, staff have been reviewing options for a budget target and verifying member households
- Serpent River First Nation receives no direct funding for Christmas Dinner contributions to its members and must be creative in budgeting for this expense
- Serpent River First Nation members live in community as well as other parts of Ontario, Canada, the United States and beyond
- The current Chief and Council prioritizes fairness for all members and where appropriate will focus on equity in distribution
- The Serpent River First Nation Limited Partnership is a for-profit corporation owned by and operated for the benefit of the members of Serpent River First Nation
- The Serpent River First Nation Limited Partnership has communicated to Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council its positive cash-flow position for the current year and the imminent transfer of \$100,000 of accumulated profits to Serpent River First Nation Administration (as referenced in item 10 d)

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f) External Representation Delegation

i) Nogdawindamin Board of Directors – Erin Carne

MOTION: 2025-12-11-09	
That Chief and Council do hereby appoint Councillor Erin Carne to the Nogdawindamin Board of Directors for the 2025-2029 Serpent River First Nation Council Term	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Nicole Pelletier
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor Trudeau and Councillor Urquhart (zoom) stepped out due to declared conflict - Chief and Council do hereby remove Wilma-Lee Johnston to the Nogdawindamin Board of Directors - Chief and Council do hereby appoint Councillor Erin Carne to the Nogdawindamin Board of Directors for the 2025-2029 Serpent River First Nation Council Term 	

ii) Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (RHTLF) Trustee – James Owl

MOTION: 2025-12-11-10	
That Chief and Council appoint James Owl as the Trustee for Serpent River First Nation as required by the Trust Indenture effective immediately	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Justin Urquhart
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief stepped out due to declared conflict - Serpent River First Nation authorized legal action against the Crown in right of Canada and the Crown in right of Ontario, as a representative proceeding, in respect of a claim for augmentation of annuities under the Robinson Huron Treaty - Serpent River First Nation authorized Mike Restoule, Patsy Corbiere, Duke Peltier, Peter Recollet, Dean Sayers and Roger Daybutch to act as representative plaintiffs in this legal action, to sue on their behalf, and on behalf of all the members of the Ojibewa/Anishinabe Nation who are beneficiaries of the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 - Mike Restoule, Patsy Corbiere, Duke Peltier, Peter Recollet, Angus Toulouse are also our Litigation Management Committee of our Trust, the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund - The First Nations are required to appoint a Trustee to the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund for seven (7) years pursuant to 4.2 b of the Trust Indenture 	

g) Emergency Contact List

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In advance of the upcoming holiday closure, Chief and Council discussed the importance of ensuring accurate and accessible emergency contact information for the Community - An updated emergency contact list is currently being compiled and Serpent River First Nation Administration will continue to gather verified details in the coming days - Concerns raised in previous years regarding non-responsive emergency numbers ie. calls going unanswered during urgent situations were noted 	
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h) Authorized Signor – Build Canada Homes

MOTION: 2025-12-11-11	
That Chief and Council authorize and designate Chief James Owl as the official signing authority on behalf of Serpent River First Nation for the purposes of all applications, agreements and related documents required under the Build Canada Homes program	
Moved by	Nicole Pelletier
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief stepped out due to conflict - Serpent River First Nation is planning to seek funding from the Government of Canada for the Build Canada Homes program to support Nation-led housing development projects - The Build Canada Homes program requires a Band Council Resolution (BCR) formally designating a signing authority for the purposes of submitting funding applications and executing related documents 	

i) Signing Authority

ii) Bank of Montreal (BMO)

MOTION: 2025-12-11-12	
That Chief and Council approve James Owl and Leila Macumber to be designated as Principal Account Holders and be authorized for signing authority for the Bank of Montreal accounts for Serpent River First Nation	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	Angela Trudeau
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serpent River First Nation has elected a new Chief and Council and requires updated bank signatories for its Bank of Montreal accounts to support ongoing First Nation business - A Band Council Resolution is required to appoint James Owl and Leila Macumber as Principal Account Holders and to have signing authority as per the Serpent River First Nation Finance Policies 	

i) Scotiabank

MOTION: 2025-12-11-13	
That Chief and Council approve James Owl and Leila Macumber to be designated as Principal Account Holders and be authorized for signing authority for the Scotiabank accounts for Serpent River First Nation	
Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serpent River First Nation has elected a new Chief and Council and requires updated bank signatories for its Scotiabank accounts to support ongoing First Nation business - A Band Council Resolution is required to appoint James Owl and Leila Macumber as Principal Account Holders and to have signing authority as per the Serpent River First Nation Finance Policies 	

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11) Community Questions and Answers:

- Community member positively acknowledged the newly elected Chief and Council and expressed appreciation for the positive atmosphere and strong sense of community that has been felt
- Community member inquired about the possibility of signs placed at Serpent River First Nation entry points in an attempt to deter trespassers and support community safety
- Question was raised regarding status card assistance for off-reserve members. Chief noted that discussions have taken place with the Membership Department on how to improve engagement with off-reserve members, including the idea of conducting outreach visits and exploring additional solutions
- Community member inquired about the possibility of an email ticket system for on-reserve residents who may require assistance with housing issues, detectors, repairs, etc. which could potentially assist track requests and support timely responses
- Community member inquired about updates on applications submitted for on-reserve housing and asked when applicants might expect information on the status of their applications
- Community member inquired about the possibility of receiving an update on the Urban Housing Development housing projects in Sault Ste. Marie and Elliot Lake
- Community member inquired about the former Rockhaven School site and whether future development or utilization plans could be shared
- Community member inquired about when Doodems/Committees will be mobilized and re-established
- Community member sought clarification on the motion regarding the per capita distribution from the RHT settlement funds (10 c) and whether an interest portion will be directed to the minor trust funds. Chief confirmed that the interest component will be added to the minor trust funds and advised that Serpent River First Nation is currently working through the calculations. The importance of enhancing communication with parents of minor children was also emphasized

12) Next Meeting Date(s):

- Thursday, January 8, 2026

13) Adjournment:

MOTION: 2025-12-11-14	
That Chief and Council adjourn the Chief and Council Meeting of Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 9:51pm.	
Moved by	Nicole Pelletier
Seconded by	
CARRIED	By Consensus

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