

SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

195 Village Road
Cutler ON, P0P 1B0



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SRFN Chief and Council Meeting
Council Chambers
Thursday, March 12, 2026
Approved Minutes
6:00pm

Chair: James Owl

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

Regrets: None at this time

Director of Operations (DOO): None at this time

Staff: Leila Macumber, Director of Health and Wellness

Community members in person: 10

Attendees via Zoom: 25

Recording Secretary: Madelaine O'Neill, POLEA

1) Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Remarks:

- The duly convened Chief and Council meeting of Thursday, March 12, 2026 was called to order at 6:09pm
- Opening prayer by Councillor Urquhart
- The Chief reminded attendees that the upcoming Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 21 and will also incorporate the 2024/25 Annual General Meeting (AGM), in which Community and Leadership will review and approve the audit together

2) Adoption of Agenda:

MOTION: 2026-03-12-01

That Chief and Council adopt the Agenda for the Chief and Council Meeting of Thursday, March 12, 2026 as presented

Moved by Justin Urquhart

Seconded by Rebecca Csaszar

CARRIED By Consensus

3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

- Councillor Pelletier, Councillor Urquhart and Councillor Csaszar declared conflict on item 6 d) Tobacco Quota Allocation – BCR
- Councillor Trudeau declared conflict on item 6 b) Community Strategic Plan – Consultant Selection

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4) **Community Presentations:**

- None at this time

5) **Approval of Previous Minutes:**

a) **Thursday, February 26, 2026**

MOTION: 2026-03-12-02	
That Chief and Council approve the Council Meeting Minutes of Thursday, February 26, 2026 as presented	
Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	Rebecca Cszaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus

6) **Business Arising from Minutes:**

a) **Glyphosate Spray Opposition Letter**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council reviewed a draft opposition letter written by the Chief regarding the use of glyphosate within Robinson Huron Treaty territory and its potential impacts on First Nation rights, lands, and environmental health. The letter outlines concerns related to treaty obligations, stewardship responsibilities, and the protection of traditional lands and resources - Council supported the intent of the letter and recommended that, in addition to sending it to the Ministry of Natural Resources, a broader list of relevant ministries and agencies be identified and included as recipients to ensure wider awareness and consideration of the Nation’s position
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b) **Community Strategic Plan – Consultant Selection**

MOTION: 2026-03-12-03	
That Chief and Council accept the recommendation of the 2026-2031 Serpent River First Nation Community Strategic Plan evaluation team and award the contract to Cambium for a fixed price of \$59,947. This recommendation is based on CIPS having the highest evaluation score and were within the project budget range	
Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the November 21, 2025 election, the new Chief and Council set a direction to engage with the community and to establish clear priorities for advancement by developing a Community Strategic Plan - In January of 2026, an RFP was drafted outlining a scope of work to complete a community strategic plan inviting qualified consultants to review and submit proposals. 3 Proposals were submitted for review prior to the deadline - All proposals were submitted prior to the deadline and met the company profile requirements of the RFP (Incorporated in Ontario, Aboriginal Content, Insured, Experience with First Nations Strategic Plans) 	

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- An evaluation team was assembled which included members of Council as well as on and off reserve members of Serpent River First Nation
- A detailed evaluation tool was used, with a breakdown of scoring based on the requested elements of the RFP. Scores of 6 evaluation team members were averaged to arrive at the final scores
- Biimaadswin scoring 614.6 with a proposed price of \$60,000-\$80,000 (budget non-fixed)
- Cambium Indigenous Professional Services, scoring 721.6 with a proposed fixed price of \$59,447
- N1 Strategy scoring 505.7 with a proposed price of \$50,000 (budget non-fixed)

c) RHTLF Go Forward Negotiations Status

- The Chief provided an update in response to a request from community member(s) at the previous Council meeting of February 26, 2026
- It was noted that the Robinson Superior Constitutional Review Case was rejected by Ontario. As a result, the anticipated pathway for Serpent River First Nation to move forward, previously intended to follow the outcome of the case, has not advanced at this time
- Legal counsel, Nahwegahbow Corbiere (NNC) have been retained again for future steps on the Go Forward Negotiations. Concerns were acknowledged regarding the high legal fees incurred in the past, however the Chief advised that he has not yet had the opportunity to engage in external discussions on this matter
- Additional updates will be brought forward as information becomes available

d) Tobacco Quota Allocation

MOTION: 2026-03-12-04

That Chief and Council approve the allocations for all listed vendors for fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027, totalling 23,096 and for the submission of all required documentation to the Ministry of Finance for final approval

Moved by	Angela Trudeau
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Councillor Pelletier, Councillor Csaszar and Councillor Urquhart stepped out due to declared conflict
- Serpent River First Nation currently holds an approved tobacco quota in the amount of 23,096 allocated by the Provincial Ministry of Finance
- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 4,500 for the current vendor Jeff Jacobs, Sumac Creek Tipi Company which is a decrease of 500 for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation
- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 4,500 for the current vendor Bruce Fraser, Scone and Wong which is a decrease of 500 for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation
- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 4,500 for the current vendor Jeremiah Day-Duncan, Woodland Printers & Native Art Gallery which is a decrease of 500 for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation
- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 7,096 for the current vendor Christopher Jacobs (Trading Post MGR) Serpent River First Nation Trading Post and Gas Bar which is an increase of 2,096 for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation

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- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 1,250 for the new vendor Gerald Southwind, Southwind’s Fish and Chips for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation
- Council agrees to the tobacco allocation of 1,250 for the new vendor Paul Owl, MishkikiGamig for this fiscal year April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 for Serpent River First Nation

7) Reports

a) Chief’s Report

MOTION: 2026-03-12-05	
That Chief and Council approve the Chief’s Report dated Thursday, March 12, 2026 as presented	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
<p>- The Chief presented his Chief’s Report to Council and Community, as follow: “During this reporting period, focus has been on onboarding for critical positions. One HR Generalist started on March 5, with the second scheduled for March 10. These 2 positions are key is advancing Human Resources capabilities within the First Nation. Director of Operations and Director of Finance and positions are targeted for interviews prior to March 31. V1 of the 2026/2027 budget reviews to be complete March 10. All audit Documents have been submitted and a Finance Committee meeting is targeted for March 11 for review and initial comments/recommendations.</p> <p>Internal Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Generalist positions awarded and on boarded on March 5, and March 10. • Director of Finance interviews to take place on March 10 • V1 2026/2027 Operating Budget reviews to take place on March 10 • SRFN 2026-2031 Strategic Plan Proposal Evaluations are underway • Weekly Directors meetings are ongoing with regular feedback and updates from departments. Preparations for departmental work-plans to align with the 2026-2027 budget are underway as well as bi-weekly reporting from supervisors, managers and directors • Follow-up continues on outstanding reporting requirements in all departments,with focus on performance management • The acid site remediation project tender period continues. A 2-week tender extension has been granted. RFN vendors have been listed for contact • Site preparation/tree clearing continues at acid site with 60% now complete and on track for budget and timeline controls • CHRT 41 project applications are in to ISC and Serpent River First Nation is currently 22 days into the 30-day response period • The Serpent River First Nation Capital Planning Study project has been re-engaged to provide long-term infrastructure planning in line with ISC capital management practices. Coordination meetings continue with the consultant to transfer previous reports and studies for their review. Community 	

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engagement schedule draft will be presented at the March 12 Council meeting.

- Additional NOG spend account requests have been submitted for community cameras and signage
- Special Projects Navigator (CDWAI) offer was not responded to. Re-evaluating other applicants
- HONI (Waasmoowin Project) capacity development fund engagement planning continue.
- First Nations Market Housing Fund capacity development initiative discussions complete
Amended schedules signed for re-engagement into the program

Internal Meetings Attended:

- SRFN/ SITE Resources Group Bids
- SRFN-Neegan Burnisde, Capital Planning Study
- SRFN-ISC, Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Project Request
- SRFN-ISC Reimbursement of costs of trucked water
- SRFN Auditors, BDO
- Fednor, Community Centre upgrades professional services funding request
- Fednor, Economic Development Officer project update
- BVLOS Inc. planning for RPAS Program funding submission to Fednor
- NOHFC Powwow grounds project update
- Senior Management Team
- Vegetation management Information Session, March 3, 2026
- CHRT 41 Project Development Meetings (Mondays)
- SRFN Health & Safety Team (Wednesdays)
- Culture Doodem (bi-weekly Wednesdays)
- Off-Reserve Task Team
- Human Resources Task Team
- Finance Task Team

Community Events:

- Polar Plunge
- Annual Aird Bay Fishing Derby

External Focus:

- Ontario Final agreement deadline approaching, focus is on ensuring that we evaluate our state of readiness and prepare for a shift in funding regime. Financial forecast received from COO demonstrating a significant program funding increase

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External Meetings Attended:

- RHW-Grass Roots Glyphosate discussion with MNR Mar 3

Upcoming Meetings:

- ZEI- Pre-Bid Capacity Discussion, Cutler Acid Project (March 13)
- Community Quarterly Meeting (March 21)
- RHW Assembly (March 30-April 1 virtual)
- NOTAO-FN Trust Conference (March 31-April 1 in-person)

b) Mamaweswen – Quarter Three (3) – Board Meeting Report

- Chief and Council reviewed the Mamaweswen 2nd and 3rd Quarterly Meeting materials, including the approximately 20-page report
- This report was received for information purposes

c) Waasmoowin & Hydro One – Chiefs and Leads – Meeting Report

- The Chief provided a recap of his attendance at the Hydro One (HONI) and Waasmoowin Opportunities and Consultation Council (WOCC) Chiefs and Leads Meeting, as well as the Cooperation Support Agreement (CSA) Signing Ceremony held in Sault Ste. Marie
- The overview included key discussions, presentations, and cultural aspects of the gatherings
- Discussion took place at the Council table regarding potential opportunities associated with HONI, particularly in relation to the upcoming transmission line project(s) and the potential for community involvement and benefits moving forward
- This item was received for information purposes

d) Nogdawindamin – Board Summary Report

- Chief and Council reviewed the Nogdawindamin Board Summary Report, which provided an overview of discussions from the January 15 and February 10, 2026 Board meetings. Key highlights included updates on the Ontario Final Agreement (OFA), FY26–27 budget planning, organizational restructuring considerations, and governance-related changes, including by-law revisions and Board processes
- Serpent River First Nation Director of Health and Wellness was in attendance at the Board meeting and spoke to the report. Discussion primarily focused on anticipated changes within the organization, service delivery considerations, and ongoing planning to address funding uncertainties and program continuity
- This report was received for information purposes

8) Doodem & Committee Minutes & Reports

- None at this time

9) Standing Items

a) Audit Update

- The Finance Committee has reviewed the 2024/25 audit in detail with the auditors (BDO)

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- The intent is to have the auditors attend the upcoming Quarterly Meeting and Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday, March 21 to formally present the audit to the community
- Request was made that the audit presentation be delivered in a clear and accessible format, including the use of visuals and graphics to ensure community members can easily understand the financial information

b) Community Safety Update

MOTION: 2026-03-12-06
That Chief and Council approve the Community Safety Report dated Thursday, March 12, 2026 as presented

Moved by	Angela Trudeau
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Councillor Carne provided a comprehensive community safety report to Council and Community
- Efforts to strengthen community safety initiatives are continuing across several areas
- An application was submitted to the Crime Stoppers Board; however, due to the requirement that board members not hold elected office, this opportunity was not available to Councillor Carne in her current role. As a result, Serpent River First Nation will be posting for a community member who may be interested in applying to represent the community
- Crime Stoppers has expressed willingness to support local engagement by visiting the community to provide presentations, host an information booth at community events, and supply promotional materials such as posters and brochures to help raise awareness about anonymous reporting and crime prevention.
- The application process for establishing a Community Safety Zone is currently under way. As part of this work, data has been collected from the speed monitoring signs within the community
- The information shows the number of vehicles traveling through the area as well as recorded speeds. Initial findings indicate a significant number of vehicles travelling well above the posted speed limits, which reinforces the need for enhanced safety measures and traffic calming initiatives
- Additional traffic safety improvements are also being implemented, stemming from community member concerns. A stop sign was installed to replace the existing yield sign at the intersection of Woodland Drive and the circle
- This change is intended to improve visibility and ensure drivers come to a full stop before entering the intersection. Helping to reduce the risk of collision and improve overall road safety in that area
- Looking ahead, there is interest in exploring the development of a Block Parent Program within the community. This initiative would create a network of safe homes that children and community members could turn to if they require assistance
- Before moving forward, community input will be sought to determine interest, appropriate structure, and how the program could best operate within Serpent River First Nation
- Work is also underway to establish a Community Safety and Well-Being Doodem. While this Doodem has not yet been formally created, discussions are taking place about separating it from the Mukwa Doodem to allow for a more focused approach to community safety matters
- Once the structure is confirmed, it will be brought forward to Council for approval. Community members will be invited to participate and help guide the work of the Doodem moving forward

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c) Quarterly Meeting

- Chief and Council reviewed the draft agenda for the upcoming Quarterly Meeting on Saturday, March 21, 2026, noting that these meetings are aligned with the solstice cycle and are being reintroduced as part of a historically practiced approach that has not taken place in recent years
- The agenda includes a cultural opening from 10:00–11:00 a.m., followed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) from 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Lunch will be provided from 12:00–1:00 p.m., with Administration/Departmental updates, Chief and Council updates, etc. scheduled from 1:00–4:00 p.m.
- It was confirmed that catering and audiovisual arrangements are in place. Final logistical details are being finalized, and a Zoom option will be available to support participation from off-reserve members

d) Governance Manual

- None at this time

e) RHTLF/RHT (as arises)

i) RHTLF Acknowledgement and Limited Release

MOTION: 2026-03-12-07
That Chief and Council approve the following:

- 1. Authorize and Approve of the Acknowledgement and Limited Release, a copy of which is attached hereto in Schedule “A”;**
- 2. Direct Chief James Owl to sign the Acknowledgement and Limited Release, and to take all steps required to give effect to its provisions;**
- 3. Authorize and approve of the Letter of Direction, a copy of which is attached hereto in Schedule “B”; and**
- 4. Direct Chief James Owl to sign the Letter of Direction, and to take all steps required to give effect to its provisions;**

Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- By way of Band Council Resolution 2013-2014-18, dated September 25, 2013,, Serpent River First Nation approved the creation of the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (the “RHTLF”), by way of a Trust Indenture to pursue litigation or negotiations relating to the Crowns’ failure to augment annuities pursuant to the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 on behalf of the Robinson Huron Treaty Anishinaabek, the Lake Huron First Nations, and the Beneficiaries (the “Action”)
- By way of Band Council Resolution 2019-16-002, dated July 16, 2008, Serpent River First Nation approved a Compensation Disbursement Agreement, setting out the terms for disbursing any global award or settlement attained as part of the Action
- By way of Band Council Resolution 2013-2014-, dated August 19, 2013, Serpent River First Nation authorized initiating the Action on behalf of the Robinson Huron Treaty Anishinaabek, First Nations, and Beneficiaries
- The Trustees of the RHTLF approved a partial settlement of the Action through a Settlement Agreement for Past Compensation for a global sum of \$10,000,000,000.00 (ten billion) on August 31, 2023 (the “Settlement Proceeds”)
- The Settlement Agreement for Past Compensation was finally approved and executed by all parties to the agreement on January 18, 2024

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- The Ontario Superior Court of Justice gave effect to the Settlement Agreement for Past Compensation by way of a partial judgement dated February 24, 2024
- The Compensation Disbursement Agreement was amended by the Chiefs-in-Assembly on April 22, 2024 for the distribution of the Settlement Proceeds under the Settlement Agreement for Past Compensation, in accordance with the terms of the Compensation Disbursement Agreement and the Trust Indenture
- \$255 million was paid to the RHTLF’s litigation counsel on May 3, 2024 in satisfaction of amounts owing to litigation counsel under a partial contingency fee agreement dated June 17, 2011;
- By Order of Justice Myers on October 28, 2025, funds in the amount of \$232 million plus interest were ordered to be returned to the RHTLF to be treated as Settlement Proceeds (the “Returned Legal Fees”)
- Serpent River First Nation’s share of the Returned Legal Fees will be sent from the RHTLF to Serpent River First Nation on or about February 9, 2026, (the “Legal Fees Payment”)
- As part of the distribution process to receive the Legal Fees Payment, Serpent River First Nation is required to sign an Acknowledgement and Limited Release, a copy of which has been appended hereto as Schedule “A” (the “Acknowledgement and Limited Release”);
- As part of the distribution process to receive the Legal Fees Payment, Serpent River First Nation is required to fill out and execute a direction to RHTLF, directing the Legal Fees Payment to be deposited into a bank account of its choice

ii) RHW/RHTLF Protocol

- Deferred to next duly convened Chief and Council meeting (March 26, 2026) for further review

f) CHRT 41 Updates

- Serpent River First Nation with the assistance of NFCS imitated the planning of three (3) construction projects that were identified as priorities for the community over the years
- With the roll out of CHRT 41, funding opportunities for capital projects focused on improving access to services for Children and Families+ were made available
- Three priority projects were pursued and include:
 1. Community Roundhouse
 2. Social Service Administration Building
 - Mount Lake Family Cultural Centre
- The initial review of the Phase 1A application is occurring
- Initial questions have been received from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and responses are being formulated for resubmission by March 13, 2026
- Phase 1B applications were submitted to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) in early March 2026 and are pending review by ISC
- Responses to 1A applications are being formulated
- The requested Band Council Resolutions (BCR) to be executed on March 12, 2026 (items 10 A-C)
- Once project requirements are satisfied, ISC will approve or deny the applications. Approved applications will move into the detailed design phase
- During design, it will be essential for interested community members to engage and provide input to ensure designs are reflective of community vision and culture

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10) New Business

a) CHRT 41 – Mount Lake Cultural Camp

MOTION: 2026-03-12-08	
That Chief and Council supports the application being made to Indigenous Services Canada for capital funding under Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Order 41 to enable the design phase of the Mount Lake Cultural Camp project to proceed	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	Rebecca Cszaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council place a high priority on ensuring that essential services are available to children, youth and their families and that adequate office and programming spaces are available to ensure safe and effective program delivery - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council in preparing for the devolution of Native Child and Family Services programming, have undertaken extensive planning exercises to identify key spacial and human resource needs for effective program delivery targeted towards achieving positive outcomes for our families while immersed in our unique culture - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council have identified a Land Based Cultural Camp as a key component of the Child and Family Services program needs assessment and has completed significant feasibility and planning work that supports a viable project 	

b) CHRT 41 – Community Roundhouse Building

MOTION: 2026-03-12-09	
That Chief and Council supports the application being made to Indigenous Services Canada for capital funding under Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Order 41 to enable the design phase of the Community Roundhouse Building project to proceed	
Moved by	Nicole Pelletier
Seconded by	Angela Trudeau
CARRIED	By Consensus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council place a high priority on ensuring that essential services are available to children, youth and their families and that adequate office and programming spaces are available to ensure safe and effective program delivery - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council in preparing for the devolution of Native Child and Family Services programming, have undertaken extensive planning exercises to identify key spacial and human resource needs for effective program delivery targeted towards achieving positive outcomes for our families while immersed in our unique culture - Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council have identified a Community Roundhouse Building as a key component of the Child and Family Services program needs assessment and has completed significant feasibility and planning work that supports a viable project 	

c) CHRT 41 – Social Services Building

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MOTION: 2026-03-12-10

That Chief and Council supports the application being made to Indigenous Services Canada for capital funding under Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Order 41 to enable the design phase of the Social Services Office Building project to proceed

Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council place a high priority on ensuring that essential services are available to children, youth and their families and that adequate office and programming spaces are available to ensure safe and effective program delivery
- Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council in preparing for the devolution of Native Child and Family Services programming, have undertaken extensive planning exercises to identify key spacial and human resource needs for effective program delivery targeted towards achieving positive outcomes for our families while immersed in our unique culture
- Serpent River First Nation Chief and Council have identified a Social Services Office Building as a key component of the Child and Family Services program needs assessment and has completed significant feasibility and planning work that supports a viable project

11) Community Questions and Answers:

- Community member inquired about the efforts to address members who have not accessed their Robinson Huron Treaty (RHT) funds. It was explained that both current and previous Chief and Council, along with Administration, have made efforts to reach eligible members. Historical challenges were identified, including outdated membership contact information or unreported address changes, as well as instances where individuals may choose not to access their funds for personal reasons. Though, all eligible members remain entitled to their funds
- Community member inquired about when Serpent River First Nation will receive the remaining 50% of the RHTLF legal fees reimbursements. Chief explained that these funds are anticipated to be received in the summer of 2026
- A community member inquired about the completion date of the five-plex units off Village Road. Chief explained that the project is nearing completion, with an expected finish in early April 2026
- Community member inquired about the condition of Woodland Drive, specifically regarding potholes. The Chief advised that Infrastructure Technicians have applied gravel and are continuing efforts to improve road conditions
- Concerns were raised by a community member about the Transition House, related to the lack of established policies and procedures. In response, Chief and Council acknowledged that formal policies and procedures had not been in place, however, it was noted that initial measures were motioned at the duly convened Council meeting of February 26, 2026. It was further noted that efforts continue to strengthen governance in this area and confirmed that follow-up will occur with the member

12) Next Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, March 26, 2026

13) Adjournment:

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MOTION: 2026-03-12-11	
That Chief and Council adjourn the Chief and Council Meeting of, Thursday, March 12 at 8:38pm.	
Moved by	Angela Trudeau
Seconded by	Erin Carne
CARRIED	By Consensus

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