SERPENT RIVER FIRST NATION

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Duly Convened Chief and Council Meeting
Council Chambers, 195 Village Road, Cutler, ON P0P 1B0
Thursday, September 10, 2026
Approved Minutes

Chair: James Owl
Council: Erin Carne, Rebecca Csaszar, Justin Urquhart, George Coughlin, Angela Trudeau
Regrets: Angela Trudeau, Nicole Pelletier
Director of Operations (DOO): Natasha Becker
Staff: Leila Macumber, Director of Health and Wellness
Recording Secretary: Madelaine O'Neill, POLEA

1) Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Remarks:

- The duly convened Chief and Council meeting of Thursday, September 10, 2026 was called to order at 6:09PM
- Opening remarks included acknowledgement of the return to school and the upcoming hunting season

2) Adoption of Agenda

MOTION: 2026-09-10-01 **That Chief and Council adopt the Agenda for the Council Meeting of Thursday, September 10, 2026 as presented**	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus

3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest:

- None declared

4) Community Presentations:

- None at this time

5) Approval of Previous Minutes

a) Thursday, August 27, 2026

MOTION: 2026-09-10-02 **That Chief and Council approve the previous Council Meeting Minutes of Thursday, August 27, 2026 as amended**	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	George Coughlin

CARRIED	By Consensus
- Edit header; Councillor Trudeau name duplicated	

6) Business Arising From Previous Minutes:

a) RHT Annuity Audit

MOTION: 2026-09-10-03 **That Chief and Council accept the Independent Auditor's Report and Schedule of Revenue and Expenses for the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (RHTLF) for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026, as presented**	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus
- Council reviewed the completed independent audit of the Schedule of Revenue and Expenses for the Robinson Huron Treaty Litigation Fund (RHTLF) for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026 - Following review and feedback from the Finance Committee, the presentation of expenses was to provide greater detail, including the breakout of professional fees/engagement expenses - The audit was reviewed and accepted by Council	

b) Exploratory Collaboration with the Tributaries First (TF) Initiative

MOTION: 2026-09-10-04 **That Chief and Council approve in principle continued exploratory collaboration with the Tributaries First (TF) Initiative**	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus
- Council revisited the Tributaries First (TF) Initiative, an Indigenous-led watershed stewardship, governance, education and environmental monitoring initiative. The Turtle Island Centre for Excellence in Environmental Research and Education (TIC) had previously presented the initiative to Council, by community presentation facilitated by Ken Meawasige on June 11, 2026, and sought guidance regarding partnership and permission to continue community dialogue and technical planning discussions. At that time, Council was asked to consider supporting continued exploratory collaboration through a Band Council Resolution (BCR) - Council expressed support for the initiative in principle, with the understanding that no immediate legal commitments or financial obligations were being established at this stage	

c) Sault Ste. Marie Urban Housing Development Update

MOTION: 2026-09-10-04

That the Chief and Council accept the expenditure recommendation of $826,020.00 to secure contractors to complete the required exterior finishes and drainage work at the Sault Ste. Marie Townhouse Project, funded through the existing project Line of Credit secured through the Bank of Montreal (BMO), as follows:

1. **Accept the lowest qualified quotation submitted by Fremlin Building Group for $626,020.00 completion of the exterior finishes on the existing 42 townhouse units; and**

2. Accept an upset limit of $200,000.00 to procure the services of a qualified civil contractor to complete required drainage improvements at the project site, subject to Serpent River First Nation financial and procurement procedures	
Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	Justin Urquhart
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council received an update regarding the Sault Ste. Marie Townhouse Project and required work to protect the existing 42 townhouse units and address outstanding site drainage deficiencies
- Following a review of the project, significant costing and quality concerns were identified and subsequently examined through a forensic analysis. RSG General Contracting was deemed in default of the contract on July 15, 2026, following which Serpent River First Nation assumed control of the property and project assets
- To date, more than $24 million has been expended on the project, including approximately $12 million for the acquisition of the property and associated closing costs and approximately $12 million toward site development and construction of the 42 townhouse units, which are approximately 50% complete. Serpent River First Nation continues to incur ongoing costs associated with the project, including servicing of the project line of credit, property taxes, utilities, security and legal expenses
- In June 2026, Serpent River First Nation was advised of an outstanding drainage complaint with the City of Sault Ste. Marie. With winter approaching, it is imperative that the drainage matter be addressed, and that the exterior work is completed, to protect the integrity of the structures and limit liabilities to the Nation
- A procurement process was undertaken for completion of the exterior finishes, with three quotations received. The lowest quotation was submitted by Fremlin Building Group in the amount of $626,020.00
- An additional upset limit of $200,000.00 was recommended to procure qualified civil contracting services to complete required drainage improvements, subject to Serpent River First Nation financial and procurement procedures

d) 2026-2031 Strategic Plan

MOTION: 2026-09-10-05 **That Chief and Council defer approval of the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan, pending community input on the four (4) proposed Vision Statement options; and further, that the four (4) options be circulated to the community for feedback, with the results brought back to Council for consideration and final approval**	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council reviewed the revised draft 2026–2031 Strategic Plan, which incorporated additions and feedback following Council's previous request to CIPS for further engagement, including additional youth and Elder engagement and perspectives
- Council discussed moving forward with approval of the Strategic Plan; however, further discussion was held regarding the proposed Vision Statement. It was agreed that the four proposed Vision Statement options should be circulated to the community for final input prior to approval
- A short community survey will be circulated requesting members to identify which of the four proposed Vision Statements best reflects the voices, values and future direction of the community. Feedback will be accepted until September 18, 2026

- Approval of the 2026 Strategic Plan was deferred to a future meeting for consideration, pending the results of the community survey

7) Reports:

a) Chief's Report

MOTION: 2026-09-10-06

That Chief and Council accept the Chief's Report for the reporting period of August 22 to September 4, 2026 as presented

Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Erin Carne
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Chief provided an update on activities and priorities for the reporting period of August 22 to September 4, 2026. Key areas of focus included follow-up on outstanding funding and reporting requirements; advocacy for critical infrastructure priorities including the Water Treatment Plant, Waste Transfer Station and housing; and ongoing discussions regarding herbicide spraying within the territory
- Updates were also provided on the RHT Annuity Audit, 2025/26 Annual Audit, Long-Term Care project, 2026–2031 Strategic Plan, Cutler Acid Site remediation, CHRT 41 project development, housing initiatives, and planning for the upcoming Community Quarterly Meeting
- Chief further reported on external and intergovernmental activities, including Highway 17 improvements, forestry and vegetation management discussions, economic and procurement opportunities, the Waasmoowin/HONI Transmission Line Project, and recent Trust development engagement sessions

MOTION: 2026-09-10-07

That Chief and Council will open an In-Camera Meeting immediately following the adjournment of the September 10, 2026 Duly Convened meeting of Chief and Council, for the purpose of discussing three (3) matters related to Child Welfare, Administration Security and a Per Capita Distribution Determination

Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	Rebecca Csaszar
CARRIED	By Consensus

- The Chief and Council of the Serpent River First Nation were elected under the guidelines of the First Nations Election act on November 21, 2025
- The Chief and Council of the Serpent River First Nation have individually sworn an oath to the community and collectively have committed to following the Serpent River First Nation Governance Manual
- The Chief and Council of the Serpent River First Nation is committed to conducting all business in an open, transparent and accountable manner
- From time to time, the Chief and Council will be faced with situations where legal or human resources matters must be discussed in a closed session to maintain lawyer/client privilege, or to protect privacy
- Chief and Council is currently processing through three (3) matters related to child welfare, administration security and a Per Capita Distribution determination

b) Director of Operations' Report

MOTION: 2026-09-10-08 **That Chief and Council accept the Director of Operations' Report for the reporting period of August 24 to September 4, 2026 as presented**	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Erin Carne
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council received the Director of Operations report for August 24 to September 4, 2026. The DOO provided updates on current operational priorities, including onboarding of the new Executive Assistant to the DOO, improvements to financial and event reporting through Reach Reporting, communications and event-reporting processes, continued development of departmental standard operating procedures across departments, and an internal IT review (Microsoft accounts, security permissions, and use of personal devices for organizational business)
- Additional updates included implementation and training related to BambooHR, ongoing staff supervision, Senior Management Team planning, and Citation Canada training for Chief and Council, which is anticipated to roll out in October of 2026

c) Councillor Report – E'Dbendaagzjig "Those Who Belong" Conference

MOTION: 2026-09-10-09 **That Chief and Council accept the Councillor Report**	
Moved by	Justin Urquhart
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council received a report from Councillor Carne regarding the recently attended E'Dbendaagzijig (Those Who Belong) Naaknigewin Conference held August 19-20, 2026
- The report included takeaways from the conference and explained the distinction between federal registration under the *Indian Act*, First Nations membership, and the broader concept of Anishinabek citizenship and belonging
- Discussion included ongoing federal registration reform and the potential implications for Serpent River First Nation as a Section 10 First Nation, including increased membership applications and future impacts on membership numbers, services, demographics and voting populations
- The report noted that Serpent River First Nation's existing Membership Code has not undergone a comprehensive modernization in approximately three decades
- The report suggested that a review of the Membership Code may need to begin with broader community discussion about how Serpent River First Nation defines citizenship, belonging and Nationhood, rather than immediately revising eligibility rules. These considerations will help inform future work of the Membership Committee

8) <u>Doodem & Committee Minutes & Reports:</u>

- None at this time

9) Standing Items:

a) Audit Update

- Auditors (BDO) have completed their on-site visit and met with the Senior Management team, and have indicated they are pleased with the transparency of the process. Completion of the 2025/26 audit is anticipated around the end of September, with an AGM to follow in October 2026

b) Quarterly Meetings

- The agenda for the upcoming Community Quarterly Meeting scheduled for September 19, 2026 was finalized

c) RHT/RHTLF (as arises)

- Chief provided an update regarding the ongoing matter concerning the outstanding second portion (50%) of the RHTLF legal fees and efforts to resolve the outstanding issue. It was explained that correspondence was sent to the Premier of Ontario and Prime Minister regarding the pause in go-forward annuity negotiations, however, no response has been received to date

d) CHRT 41 Projects

- Council received an update on the three (3) CHRT 41 capital projects intended to support the eventual transition of FNFCS to Serpent River First Nation: Social Services Administration Building (PN –P073293), Community Round House (PN – P073245), Mount Lake Family Cultural Centre (PN – P73315)
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) requested additional information regarding the Mount Lake and Round House projects, including resubmission of geotechnical reports and legal surveys. Responses and supporting documentation have been submitted
- The Social Services Administration Building is awaiting the transfer of design funding, while the Mount Lake Family Cultural Centre and Community Round House are awaiting approval of their Phase 1B submissions. Upon approval of the projects and respective funding, the projects will proceed to full design/design procurement

10) New Business:

a) Board Representative Appointment - Manontsaywin Nanotoojig Inc.

MOTION: 2026-09-10-10

That Chief and Council appoint Ashley Sago as Serpent River First Nation's representative to the Manotsaywin Nanotoojig Inc. Board of Directors, succeeding Shirley McLeod, effective immediately and for the term prescribed by the organization's governing policies

Moved by	Erin Carne
Seconded by	George Coughlin
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council reviewed the request to appoint a Serpent River First Nation representative to the Manotsaywin Nanotoojig Inc. (MNI) Board of Directors
- Serpent River First Nation has been a member of MNI since 1982, with Za-geh-do-win Information Clearinghouse operating within the broader organization and providing health, healing and family violence information and resources
- Ashley Sago was identified as the proposed representative, succeeding Shirley McLeod

- The appointment was brought forward in advance of MNI's Annual General Meeting scheduled for October 2, 2026 to ensure continued Serpent River First Nation representation

b) National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

- Council received an update on planning for the September 30, 2026 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation gathering at the former Spanish Indian Residential School site. The gathering will provide a space for remembrance, healing, education and community connection for Survivors, descendants and the broader community
- Planning is underway and includes a Sacred Fire, cultural and family activities, local food, craft and artisan vendors, educational and reflective opportunities, and participation from local schools and school boards. Council was invited to support the gathering through attendance and information sharing

c) Elliot Lake Urban Housing Development Project

MOTION: 2026-09-10-11

That Chief and Council accept the expenditure recommendation of $600,000 to engage the services of an experienced contractor to complete the subsurface infrastructure and initial site grading for the Elliot Lake Townhouse Development Project, to be funded through the existing project Line of Credit secured through the Bank of Montreal (BMO)

Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Justin Urquhart
CARRIED	By Consensus

- Council received a briefing note with an update regarding the Elliot Lake Townhouse Development project The project consists of 22 proposed townhouse units and was approximately 55% complete at the time of review; and approximately $1.2 million has been spent on the project to date, including the purchase of the property and site development work
- Following issues identified with the former contractor, Serpent River First Nation assumed custody of the site in May 2026
- Council was advised that the project is currently within a 36-month "must build within" period imposed by the City of Elliot Lake and that further work is required to complete the subsurface infrastructure and rough grading; completing this work would protect the existing investment, address site risks and allow Serpent River First Nation to either advance the development or better position the property for a potential sale
- Financing options are also being explored, with Bayhill Financial assisting Serpent River First Nation in identifying potential lenders and financing aligned with CMHC market-based and affordable housing programs. Project costing and energy evaluations are also underway
- The estimated cost to complete the required subsurface infrastructure and initial site grading is $600,000, to be funded through the existing project Line of Credit secured through the Bank of Montreal

11) Community Questions and Answers:

RHTLF Audit

- A community inquired asked how members will be able to access the completed RHTLF audit. Chief advised that information will be shared through the SRFN app as well as social media directing members to where the audit can be accessed. Hard copies will also be available upon request

Data Centre/AI

- A community inquired asked whether Chief and Council had issued a public statement regarding data centres and whether Council intended to do so. Chief advised that the matter has been discussed and outreach has occurred, although no response has been received to date. Chief indicated that Council would be open to further public communication should this be something the community wishes to see, and that Administration had previously established an internal position regarding opposition to the use of AI for Nation business

Elliot Lake and Sault Ste. Marie Townhome Projects

- A community member raised concerns regarding previous decisions associated with the Elliot Lake and Sault Ste. Marie housing development projects and asked whether potential legal avenues were being considered. Discussion included decision-making authority, community consultation, financial oversight, accountability and mechanisms to protect Serpent River First Nation when considering significant future commitments. Chief advised that broader governance protections could potentially form part of the development of a Chi-Naaknigewin (Constitution Law) and reaffirmed that Council's commitment is to transparency, open discussion and community involvement. Financial forensic analysis is underway with MNP, which will assist in informing future considerations and decision-making. Though no decisions regarding potential next steps have been made at this time, options and information will continue to be considered with community involvement, with a focus on protecting the Nation's interests and mitigating risk

12) Next Meeting Date(s):

- Thursday, September 24, 2026

13) Adjournment:

MOTION: 2026-09-10-12 **That Chief and Council adjourn the Chief and Council Meeting of Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 8:10 PM**	
Moved by	Rebecca Csaszar
Seconded by	Erin Carne
CARRIED	By Consensus