

**Minutes of the Odanak Public Assembly
January 31, 2009**

Glossary of Acronyms

INAC = Indian Affairs and Northern Canada

Opening Prayer and Words of Welcome

M. Raymond Watso said the opening prayer.

Rick O'Bomsawin gave the words of welcome.

Citizenship Code

The band list has been transferred to the community. The Band Council wants to hold a special assembly to give community members the opportunity to discuss the citizenship code. The council feels it is important for people in the community to read and fully understand this code.

Electoral Code

A working group will be created in the spring to review the work done on the electoral code proposed following the 2004-2005 Band Council scandal. The electoral code, once completed, will not apply to the upcoming elections because it will have to be approved by a referendum first. The electoral code should be implemented in time for the 2011 elections.

Given that off-reserve band members can now run in elections and the community population will increase by 300 to 600 members once the citizenship code is adopted, it would be important to have an electoral code.

The input of on- and off-reserve members will be sought when drafting the electoral code. Ideally, the code will be brought to a referendum in the fall of 2009.

Minor Repair Program

The Minor Repair Program is financed by the balance of the annual house construction funding received from INAC. However, federal government cutbacks to new home investment funding are jeopardizing the Minor Repair Program.

The Band Council wants to develop a new, long-term approach for this program, which is currently suspended. A new program to replace the Minor Repair Program will be implemented by April.

Odanak Recreational and Leisure Centre

The Band Council would like to implement a new community recreational program. An issue table will be created to improve the scheduling of activities to avoid holding multiple events on the same day, improve turnout and maximize use of the cultural centre. A community activity calendar will be prepared.

The exercise equipment in the health centre may be transferred to the recreational centre to allow people to use the equipment at night.

2009 Pow Wow

This year's Pow wow will mark the 50th anniversary of this event. The theme would be a commemoration of the community's achievements and history over the last 50 years. The Band Council is encouraging people in the community to propose ideas, share their stories of past Pow wows and get involved in the organization of this year's pow wow. Rather than have one huge organizing committee, the Band Council would like to have a number of subcommittees, each responsible for one aspect of the Pow wow.

The women's group will be organizing the bingo. The dates of the party/dance and bingo have been reversed, with the party on Friday and bingo on Saturday. This should increase the number of attendees at the bingo night.

Program Update

Calumet Restaurant

The community will take over the Calumet Restaurant on March 15. People are encouraged to eat there and promote it through word of mouth.

Odanak Business Park

A firetruck company in Pierreville is interested in signing a long-term lease with the community to operate its business. Apparently, there is no more prime commercial land available in Pierreville. If this company sets up shop in Odanak, this could be the start of the Odanak Business Park. The Band Council is seeking to develop such a park in the community to generate revenue that would offset government cutbacks (once native budgets fall due in 2010) and fund the sudden population increase following adoption of the citizenship code.

Negotiations are underway with a wind turbine company; the wind turbine would not be erected in the community, however. They would be erected on our traditional territory near Victoriaville.

Four-Unit Dwelling

The four-unit dwelling will be completed in March. If it is successful, another will be built. This is not a low-rental building; the only criterion for getting a lease is the capacity to pay the rent.

Health Policy

All administrative policies are being reviewed.

Now all off-reserve members may obtain health services on reserve. The former restriction requiring off-reserve members to live within 10 km of the community to be eligible for health services has been lifted.

Non-member spouses of off-reserve members are not eligible to obtain services on reserve, though they can attend public information sessions. Off-reserve members are not eligible for community homecare and medical transportation services.

Police Agreement

The community police force had been operating without government funding since last April, when the new agreement should have been signed.

The federal and provincial governments finally signed the agreement when the Band Council told them the police would start applying the traffic law to the letter to every car entering the community. The SQ was asked to monitor Odanak police force activities soon after the Band Council's announcement. Within 48 hours, the agreement was signed.

Community Newspaper

A few mistakes appeared in the community newspaper. It is not true that members will be stricken from the band list once they reach the age of 100 or if they have not provided their address to the Band Council. They will be stricken from the electoral list.

Skating Rink

The skating rink is now open. A nice change room is available for skaters to put on their skates.

Cultural Committee

An information session will be held on Saturday, February 7, at 1:30 p.m. to give an update on the Cultural Committee's activities. Two guests from Mashteuiatsh and one from Wendake will speak about their respective community's cultural policy. The entire community is invited to attend.

La cross

A game of la cross is held every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at the Pierreville community centre. The game is open to players of all ages and both genders. The equipment is provided.

Museum General Assembly

The museum general assembly will be held on February 22 for members of the museum. The financial statements will not be ready until March, however.

Major decisions will be made at the assembly. Several board members will be leaving: M. Rick O'Bomsawin, Jacques T. Watso and Mrs Florence Benedict.

Winter Festival

The Winter Festival will be held either on the last weekend in February or the first weekend in March. Parents are encouraged to take part. The festival will comprise a number of activities and end with a spaghetti dinner.

Olympic Torch Relay

The Olympic torch relay will go through Odanak. One member of the community will be selected to carry the torch. Anyone else has the opportunity to carry the torch by registering online. A special event comprising community games will be organized when the Canadian Olympic Committee comes to Odanak.

Community Centre

The community centre tenant has left. A few repairs will have to be done, such as to the bathrooms and floor.

Question Period

Q1-When are we getting water meters?

A1-The Band Council is looking into installing water meters in on-reserve homes and other buildings (commerces). This would enable those living alone to reduce their water bills, as they use less water than a family of four. Also, this could raise awareness of water consumption and encourage people to not waste water. Having water meters in people's homes would serve to identify the location of water pipe leaks.

Q2-Is the decision to get the water meters official?

A2-A request for funding has been made to INAC, but no response has been received yet. INAC is open to the idea. The funding would cover water meter purchase and installation costs.

Q3-What happens if INAC says no?

A3-The Band Council will take funds from the maintenance budget to buy and install the water meters.

Q4-What about the money from Crespieul's settlement?

A4-The funds are still in the bank. The two million dollars can only be spent on projects approved by referendum.

Q5-When are the new Indian card will be issued?

A5-No new cards will be issued to stop the counterfeit card industry. The government will be issuing new cards with enhanced security features and is asking communities to not issue any of their own cards.

Q6-I am concerned about having youth supervise other youth at the recreational centre. Will they be able to maintain discipline and protect the equipment there?

A6-The incident on Saturday evening is under control. Police will be making regular visits to the centre. Youth were hired because the previous solution for running the centre was not cost effective. Having youth run the centre is being done on a trial basis.

Q7-When will the museum open and when will changes be made there?

A7-Anyone who wants more information about the museum should attend the meeting on February 22.

The museum is operating according to the winter schedule at present (open upon request only). The regular hours will begin in March. The board will be reviewing and restructuring the museum to make it profitable because the community cannot continue to invest funds into it.

Rick will withdraw from the museum board because he feels he is in a position of conflict of interest. He hopes many new people will be elected to sit the board at the February meeting; the museum needs fresh blood.

Q8-Will something be done about the presbytery?

A8-The Band Council did a feasibility study on the idea of converting the presbytery into a bed and breakfast and found that it would not be profitable. The Council is asking the

community to submit ideas on what to do with the building. The members of the Church Committee are interested in preserving the building, too.

Q9-Concil was supposed to send me the confirmation that the Chief faxed our petition to INAC about Shirley de Wind case?

A9-The Band Council can give Dodo a copy of the faxed request sent to INAC. No response has been received as yet.

Comment 1-Rick pointed out that he speaks on behalf of the entire Band Council.

Q10-We heard that Council was working on a new electoral Code?

A10-The Band Council wants to get people from the community to join the committee to develop the electoral code.

Q11-Will there be parade for this year's pow wow?

A11-Yes, but the parade route will be changed to get more people from Pierreville to attend the Pow wow. The parade will start at the old train station and will end at the swimming pool.

Date of the Next Assembly

Assemblies will be held on the last Saturday of January, May and September. The dates of the next meetings will appear in the newspaper.

Transcription of the minutes by Greg Kelm

Read and approved by Daniel G. Nolett, Director general