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# chischeyihtamihiiwewin

**1st Quarter 2020** **NEWSLETTER**

This newsletter was named following a contest last winter and selected early this year. Some submissions were received, and the name chosen was slightly changed to reflect the purpose of the newsletter. The above will officially be our newsletter name. Chischeyihtamihiiwewin is to inform the community members and residents on the status of specific files as they become available. The newsletter will be in quarterly issues. Congratulations! to the winner of the contest: Mrs. Barbara Blackned.

Watchyia! It is my pleasure to introduce to you our first edition of our *Chischeyihtamihiiwewin* newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide quarterly reports to you.

Our administration will provide updated information as we progress. Each department and section presents their respective activities. It is extremely important to us to communicate and to be transparent as we move forward. We continue to strive towards building a stronger community by using our resources and capacity. Working together is key, teamwork is the ability to work together for a common vision. I am grateful to have a team that strives to achieve that vison.

Indeed, our first quarter presented a challenge. The global COVID-19 pandemic forced us to adapt and respond to secure the health and safety of everyone. As a response to this pandemic, measures such as the adoption of the COVID-19 emergency response plan for the Cree Nation of Waskaganish was carried unanimously by Council. The pandemic plan provided a guidance for our local emergency team. Council also responded by adopting the business continuity plan. The continuity plan allowed our administration office to remain open and provide the much needed essential services.

A program on food access was initiated by Council to assist members financially during the pandemic. The emergency food access initiative was a social assistance program that provided access to essential food for community members. The duration of the program was six weeks.

Working together with organizations such as the Cree Health Board only brings benefits, it is a pleasure to share that common vision. A vision that will bring the long-term patients' home. Council approved the lease of the old police station. This unit will be used by Cree Health Board for the purpose of providing service such as the hemodialysis. A much-needed resource for our community.

In closing, I encourage you to take the opportunity to review the contents of this resource. It is our way to further advance in communicating with you our members.

Thank you & God Bless

*Chief Clarke Shecapio*

Wachiyek!

I am thrilled to present our first community newsletter to the members of Cree Nation of Waskaganish. In this newsletter, the band administration will start promoting awareness and dialogue by informing the community on its activities and important issues affecting Waskaganish.

Despite these challenging times, there has been significant changes in our operations, and programs during the first quarter of the fiscal year 2020-2021. In April, due to the measures implemented by public health on the COVID-19 pandemic, most of our services came to an abrupt halt.

The Human Resources Department has made a tremendous contribution by implementing new protocols in our organization during this difficult time. We slowly started to return to work with staggered hours and some employees worked from home. The Council adopted the Business Continuity Plan along with the return to work protocols for the health and safety of all employees.

Furthermore, the pandemic has caused the construction season to start late this year and we had to postpone some of our major capital projects to 2021-22. We have been working closely with the Cree Nation Government, Public Health, Indigenous Services Canada along with our Natural Resources & Development and Housing Departments to determine which projects to defer.

The health and safety of our community members and our employees in this organization is our utmost importance during these trying times. We will continue to provide safe and quality services and programs to our members.

Meegwetch!

*Brenda Weistche, Director General*

This is a summary of the activities of the finance department for April 1, 2020 to June 20, 2020. In normal times, this has always been one of the busier periods for the finance department. For most of this period, we had the added challenge of only being able to have a certain amount of staff working at any time. We managed to overcome these challenges and still complete our normal tasks and workload. We were able to complete the adoption of all the budgets in early June. We normally want to approve the budgets in April but it was not possible this year. It was challenging to prepare a budget for normal operations and programs while not knowing when some of those programs and activities could take place.

Another challenging task we spent quite a bit of time on during this period was working on the audit. It is an extensive process and usually 6 auditors would come to Waskaganish for 10 days to go through our accounting information. Since the pandemic made this impossible, we had to work solely by email, video conference and phone calls. Our staff sent all required documents by scanning all of the documents and uploading them to a site set up by the auditors. All of our meetings with the auditors took place online. Thankfully, we were able to finish our audit within the deadlines established by the Cree Nation Government.

I would like to thank all of my staff that showed great dedication in completing our major tasks during this period in addition to making sure all other accounting tasks were completed. In spite of the Covid-19 restrictions, we did not have any major issues in completing our work for this period.

*Steve Diamond,*
*Chief Financial Officer*

Our department has several branches. We have the Administration, Airport Services, Canada Post, Public Safety, Fire Department.

For the airport services, we had limited work hours to staff due to restricted commercial flights for all airlines. The terminal was closed to the public as directed by Transport Canada. The regular maintenance of the airport continued and submitted monthly & daily reports.

Canada Post had started opening during lunch hours to accommodate the clients. We had a high number of orders received and surpassed peak Christmas season.

The Fire Department continued to operate but suspended hands-on training for volunteer firefighters. They still responded to emergency calls that required assistance. As per regular routines, they continued preparing and testing their safety rescue equipment.

Since the Covid-19 Pandemic started, our department had shifted its focus towards the public safety department.

We have added more employees in this department to accommodate the guidelines and protocols set by the community and Public Health.
The department also worked in collaboration with various entities, which they have numerous meetings and conference calls.

As for the administration, we had been appointed to oversee the Emergency Management Task Force Committee in which multiple stakeholders attend meetings. The workload from the committee's recommendations had our department actively engaged since March 2020. Our workload had been strenuous at times and required working during odd hours and weekends. However, we still managed to serve our community the best of our abilities.

*Ryan Erless, Director of Community Services*

Greetings everyone, It is a pleasure to report to you the hirings and job postings that were done under the Human Resources Department from April to June 2020.

**Hirings**
Most of the following hirings were done before April but a few of the employees had to start at a later date:

| Job Position Title | Department | Employee |
|---|---|---|
| Beneficiary & Membership Clerk | Social Health Development | Ms. Lorena Hester (replacement) |
| Capital Projects Coordinator | Natural Resources & Development | Mr. Bert Hester |
| Collections Agent | Finance | Mrs. Crystal Brien |
| Corporate Secretary | Legislative | Ms. Alyssa Blackned-Hester |
| Public Buildings Maintenance Supervisor | Public Works | Mr. Edward Visitor |

**Job Postings**
Due to the pandemic, we had to put on hold some job postings for positions that became vacant. This was to follow our Continuity Plan where permanent employees either had to follow a schedule, work remotely or be reassigned to another position. The following are job positions that were posted:

**1) Aquatic Programs Manager (new job position)** – Responsible for Aquatic Programs and initiatives in order to promote health and well-being of members.

**2) Pool Maintenance Worker (new job position)** - Responsible for performing maintenance tasks in order to ensure that pool facilities, and grounds are safe and in good condition.

**3) Security Agent (Gathering Place)**

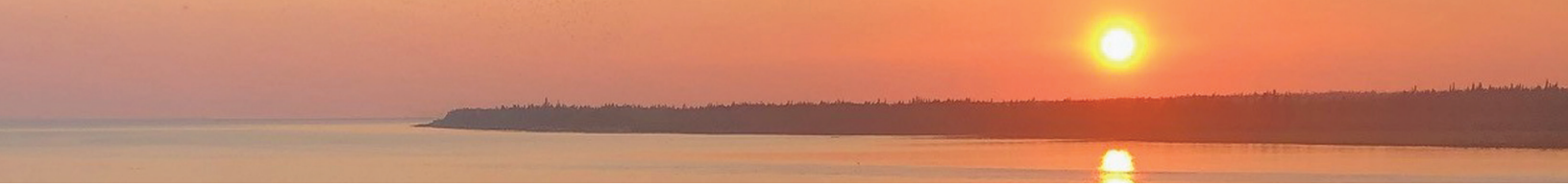
**4) Leisure, Sports & Recreation Programs Coordinator** – The job position became vacant in April but was posted in July.

The following are job positions that are new and will be posted at a later date:

**1) Assistant Pool Maintenance Worker**
**2) Lifeguards**

The past few months has been challenging due to the pandemic not only for our department but for the whole organization. I am grateful we have continued to provide services for the community. Meeg-wetch!

*Betty Blueboy, Director of Human Resources*



In April 2020 the Youth Department, Youth Council, and the position of the Beneficiary and Membership Clerk were transferred to the department of Social Health Development.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic the months of April – June were spent on planning, and assessing the way we deliver programs, and services to the community. Some initiatives had to be put on hold, however we did our best to implement other programs, and services by limiting contact with members and staff. We had to ensure that we followed the precautionary measures, and protocols that were put in place by leadership.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts, and initiatives developed by my staff, and their ability to adapt under these circumstances. Below is a list of services and programs from April – June 2020.

**Social Health Development**
- Emergency Food Access Program
- Collaborations with other food security programs
- Indian Day School Claims

**Youth Council**
- Goose break food vouchers for Youth
- Tiktok Challenges on Facebook
- Danny Gauthier Meat
    - Sorting and distributing meat packs
- Radio Trivia Show
- June Spirit Month
- Care packages for Youth in self isolation

**Youth Department**
- Goose break food vouchers for Youth
    - Collaboration with Youth Council
- Summer Student Employment Program Planning
- Hiring summer coordinators for:
    - Traditional Pursuits and Traditional Knowledge Teachings
    - Canoe Brigade

**Beneficiary and Membership Clerk**
- Hiring of Replacement for Leona Hester
    - Lorena Hester
- Income tax
- Status cards, birth/death certificate applications, beneficiary numbers, social insurance numbers, and firearms

*Jordan Stephen*
*Director of Social Health and Development*

Greetings Community Members. This is a brief activity report from the Public Works Department since April 1, 2020.

Dust control was applied on community roads on June 30th and a second application was done on July 7th. This year the lagoon and water intake roads were included for the convenience of walkers and joggers.

The waste collection schedule is five days per week, so each household can anticipate the garbage truck to come by every second day to empty the garbage bins. The department assisted in Spring clean-up in transporting waste to the local dumpsite by using the following equipment: loader, dump trucks, and pick-up trucks

A major clean-up is being done at the old band garage site, including the removal of all unwanted vehicles within the community. Maintenance crew responded to three sewer back-ups on Sheebanuk, Waskaganish, and Maskuchii Street and crew and also excavated and repaired three water service connections on Harricanaw, Sheebanuk, and Wiinibek Street.

House inspections were done on band-owned units to determine the condition of each unit so necessary repairs can be provided in the future.

As you may have noticed, signs were installed near the Anglican church prohibiting ATVs and vehicles from entering the area. These signs were installed to preserve the green spaces around the community. Also, additional precaution signs were installed on the access road for walkers and cyclists. Summer students did an outstanding job on street sweeping and landscaping.

Community members are strongly encouraged to continue maintaining their lawns and surrounding areas to enhance the beautification of our community.

I acknowledge the public works staff for continuing to provide essential services to the community members during the pandemic. Meegwetch and have a safe summer!

*Willie Shecapio, Director of Public Works*

I am grateful to be able to provide a quarterly report in the revived newsletter. This newsletter will provide us with a new channel of communication and will be great way to inform the community about the progress of our housing program.

Given the arrival of the pandemic, we have had to implement various safety measures and we will continue to respect The Public Health Guidelines to keep our Community safe.

During the month of March and April, my workstation was relocated to my home due to the band office's COVID-19 prevention procedures. In the month of May, as we slowly transitioned back into our regular offices, my tasks were primarily to continue with the renovations and the HIIFNIY program. This program allowed us to access funding which enabled youth ages 16-30 to obtain skills like plastering, painting, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and office skills.

The housing applications were screened. The housing advisory board met in June to forward their housing allocations recommendations to the Chief and Council. Another important accomplishment was the building of two private units and selling the units to the Community Members.

Looking forward, one of the main tasks is to secure funding from Indigenous Services Canada for three projects. Our goal is initiate the renovations of home interiors as soon as COVID-19 safety measures will allow us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention that all the
work our department does would not be possible without the assistance from my colleagues as well the external entities and the housing department staff.

Closing, we were fortunate to receive all the funding to build extra units, renovate houses, and expansions.
I sincerely thank all of you for your support.

*Marty Cowboy, Director of Housing*

Congratulations to all those involved in the establishment of "Chiseheyihtamihiiwewin" newsletter. As a public servant, I am thankful for this new avenue to share information to the community members.

The global Corona virus pandemic has certainly impacted all aspects of the Waskaganish Cree Nation operations, for about 2 months the pandemic (April & May) shutdown all programming from the Culture, Sports and Leisure Department. Our projects, programs and activities entail large social gatherings. Bringing people together is an important component in our mission statement.

On March 13, 2020, the Government of Quebec ordered all public sports venues to be shutdown. Both the Rupert River Sports Complex and the Gathering Place closed, so all sports programs for seniors and minors ceased.

The Gathering Place Fitness center reopened in July under new Covid-19 guidelines.

In April, with our programs on hold the workload was greatly reduced. Unfortunately, we had to layoff some of our staff. Other staff members agreed to be reassigned temporarily.
Once people returned from goose break in mid May, our programming recommenced. Physical distancing protocols only allowed for games, contests and quizzes on social media and local radio station. The "Miyu-Nanaakachihiisuutaau" health & walking club started on June 15 with over 100 members.

The Cultural and Tourism unit implemented a wild food harvest program to ensure food security for families and elders during the pandemic. The crew also produced masks for the public.
The community walking trail network has started. Expansion to the network is being planned.

*Charles J. Hester*
*Director of Culture Sports and Leisure*

During the 3-month period all our meetings were held by via zoom and by Conference call due COVID-19 and all the external meetings were cancelled.

In April, we had a meeting with Technical Committee about the swimming pool and with the Land Management Committee.

In May I continued my isolation and extended my holidays for additional week. The meeting scheduled with Niskamoon was postponed but another meeting on Renovations, Technical Committee on Swimming Pool, and with the Land Management Committee.

Community clean up started and ticket draws were handed out to all participants. In June, we started Spring clean up and all 19 applicants were hired, but some were no show. We also hired a seasonal worker for a six months period by keeping our community clean throughout the season.

I was again in isolation after another appointment and did conference calls with members of the CTA Executive but I was again sent out the following week for another appointment. Health wise I did not do well during the past three months.

We had a zoom meeting with Piron and Associates on Score Card for the CTA Executive Director and CTA Secretary/Treasurer. CTA Board of Directors was called by conference call which lasted for two full days. The third week of June I completed my isolation and work from office. I had a meeting on Road paving in our community and when to begin due to COVID-19 which stalled many of our projectss.

*Bert Moar*
*Director of Natural Resources and Development*