

## MFN 2023 Candidates Night Questions and Answers

November 30, 2023

Election Day is December 6, 2023

Location: Council Chambers

**Community engagement and community decisions, Please share your definition of Community engagement, and decision making. How will this include on and off-reserve?**

Chief Candidates

### ***Mayer, Deborah (Debbie)***

There needs to be a comprehensive communications plan to engage in a meaningful way with all members on all matters relating to the overall community goals. Our community members are located in all areas of this world. They still should be well-aware that their voice is important and vital to the success of our nation. I would engage with all members of Mississauga in any form they deem appropriate and useful to them. With the tools available email, Zoom, Teams, in-person, etc. the possibilities are endless. There should be no barriers to engaging in meaning discussions and questions from all our band members.

My goal would be to have our members feel like their voice is one which we all should take into account regardless of their location. Their strengths should be a foundation for building a better future and all members and should be included in all strategic planning sessions in order to build a better future for all our children, grandchildren and the next 7 generations.

Councillor Candidates

### ***Bobiwash, Conrad***

- Community Engagement is soliciting and consulting community members both off and on reserve.
- Ideas and opinions are solicited and included in the planning process if viable. Planning process, community consultation, community vision review and revision, yearly strategic plan (quarterly) and a three year master plan.
- Accountability is done through working with all elected official officials and Band office staff.

- Reporting progress addresses the growth or areas that require direction from the Chief and Council.
- This process is an evaluation marker to ensure our community is growing and validates the Chief and Council.

### ***Cada-Doiron, Jonathan***

- Community engagement is creating spaces whether, in-person or online, to learn about the needs and desires of the people around you. It's learning about the strengths and struggles everyone navigates. It's taking all that information and building a vision. When you understand who is in the space, you then understand what it is going to take to achieve goals that everyone can agree on. Facilitating those conversations requires a compassionate and patient approach. These are skills I have developed in my career and practice them often in the spaces I occupy. I am prepared to work with administration and with grassroots groups to highlight areas of concerns and ways to address them together.
- When it comes to decision-making, communication should be clear and concise. Finding a balance for the most fair and respectful outcomes occurs when the people in your spaces understand who you are and why you invest yourself in the work to be community-minded.

### ***Chiblow, Annette***

- Community engagement depends on the community members that are interested. In the past there have been times when discussion, forums and open question periods were offered to community members, and the people didn't participate.
- I would like there to be more notice to off and on reserve members about these sessions. We could have then scheduled for quarterly question and answers forums.
- I would like to see more involvement with the Membership Clerk who handles the information about where individuals are located so that these information sessions are announced to them. If they have direct internet connections these sessions could be broadcast to them via video recordings. Transcripts can be mailed. These sessions could be announced over local radio stations, Facebook, telephone and or mail.

- The organisation of these sessions would be an ongoing task for membership personal, and other individuals that have communication expertise.
- Discussions that Chief and Council are planning for the community should always be in written format, plain language so that everyone can understand what, who and why decisions are being made. These should be recorded and readily available for community members on the MFN web site.
- I would insist that every community member and their families be given information about working ideas and themes of what may be coming for the community as per planning future projects.
- There should be financial reports of the money going into the community and coming out of the community. As well as regular reports by monthly reports on who is contributing to the funding of projects and who is running and holding the file for these projects.
- I want to be sure that everyone that is involved is accountable for their involvement in big and small projects.

***Daybutch, Gloria***

- **Response:** Community engagement to me means, asking the community members to provide their input, ideas, and suggestions on a specific, usually a significant matter, that directly affects or impacts them and/or their families. This requires a safe place for community members to freely express their voices. A safe place may mean having participants agree to certain meeting guidelines and conduct such as when speaking or when others are speaking.
- Engagement to me means that all Council comes to this safe space, without any hidden agendas or their own biases as to what they believe or think is the right answer, regarding a matter, such as the RHT annuity. Council members are there with a clear mind, to actively, and respectfully listen to community members and keep their own ideas from influencing others.
- Community decision- making means to me that community members have a direct say on an important outcome that directly affects them or their families. This can be achieved through a community vote, shared results from a community survey with options to select and agree upon, committees that provide their direction to an important matter, such as hiring practices, the development of new services/programs, amendments to policies, laws,

etc. It is important to educate community members about the matter at hand, to ensure community members have the correct and most current information to make informed decisions.

- **#1(b) How will this include on and off reserve?**
- Response: For on-reserve, community gatherings can be held within meeting spaces, council can go to the Red Pine Lodge for a meeting with the elders, the sports complex to meet with the youth, the cultural building to meet with adults, the pow wow grounds, etc. Council meetings do not always have to happen in the council chambers.
- Important community events and gatherings can be widely advertised via MFN Facebook, Newsletters that are emailed out to all band members, put on the MFN website, etc.
- For off-reserve, zoom or team meetings can be held virtually with invites sent to individuals. Virtual gatherings can be held for all community members with break-out rooms assigned, including moderators for each break-out room. Virtual gatherings can be held geographically, i.e. separately for band members living in SSM, Sudbury, Toronto, Ottawa, locally off-reserve, etc.
- In-person meetings can be held in the urban centers especially when council members are attending a meeting in that region, to reduce costs. They can be held in an Indigenous centre or at the meeting location. Meals can be provided.
- The MFN website could have a backroom portal set up where band members can ask their questions and provide their input into engagement matters and decision-making processes. Decision-making sessions can be done during large community gatherings such as pow wows, fall harvest, etc. when some off-reserve band members come home.

***MacLeod, Kenneth (Ken)***

Engagement means presenting information to the members and notifying them of concerns and progress. Then listening to the feedback given to make a decision, keeping the best interests of the membership in mind. Making a Decision that will improve and protect the lives of the members.

## **How are candidates going to help off-reserve members?**

### Chief Candidates

#### ***Mayer, Deborah (Debbie)***

As a person who has lived and raised children in an off-reserve environment I completely understand the importance of inclusion of all. Advocacy for our members who live away from our community is of vital importance on all political fronts inclusive of federal and provincial governments, as well as our own political systems. We must ensure that when we speak, we speak for all regardless of where they live. The advocacy for all members should be front and centre in all we do.

There are opportunities we should be exploring to help our off-reserve people which benefit them financially such as investment in business which can be the basis for profit sharing. I believe we need to know their needs and knowledge is power and having the ability to provide answers to their needs and concerns is imperative. Being honest in how much we can and cannot do is also of vital importance.

### Councillor Candidates

#### ***Bobiwash, Conrad***

- Communication models that include a community web page, a list of all MFN service sectors and contact points for all members with requests and responses.
- Contact page for all elected Chief and Council and a general page for inquiries and questions.
- Planning for appropriate community events that bring all community members to a central location for information and welcoming all community members.
- These models assist the Band Council sectors to address all concerns and help support and build capacity.

### ***Cada-Doiron, Jonathan***

- My goal to engage off-reserve members will focus on learning where gaps in communication exist and how those lines can be improved. We have multi-generational issues and concerns to navigate which means the task of achieving positive outcomes is not easy. The best result I can think of today will be strategies to develop positive and constructive relationships. These relationships will include invitations into the wider scope of conversation needed to reach better community outcomes and inform strong outreach initiatives.
- I would hope our community members on and off-reserve will assist in helping MFN leverage partnership opportunities with other organizations, ministries and businesses that want to work on improving engagement for off-reserve community members. I am prepared to assist and lead these processes.

### ***Chiblow, Annette***

- Being an off-reserve member is a difficult position to be in. I have had some experience with this myself.
- I want to see again the Membership clerk more involved in taking questions and helping off reserve members to find solutions. These solutions would depend on the questions.
- If this is a health question about medical travel. That information should be readily available within 1 to 2 working days of the request. The membership clerk can find the answer for the person; document it so that we can have a running statistical format regarding the issues that off reserve have. Questions and answers to some question should be found on the MFN web site, for the more common questions about travel funding, access to local doctors, Nurse Practitioners, and traditional healers.
- If questions are more in-depth, I would like to have a counselor directly answer these questions for the individual.
- I would like to hire a community member to complete the task of finding out information for Off reserve questions and inquirers. Documenting these

questions and formulating a page on the MFN web site, so that everyone can access.

***Daybutch, Gloria***

For community engagement and decision-making gatherings, off reserve band members could have their travel costs subsidized to attend the event. Free cabins at Chiblow Lake lodge or rooms at Pier 17, or other Blind River hotels, could be subsidized. Bus tickets can be provided.

Council could appoint 1 or 2 council members whose Portfolio includes ensuring that the off-reserve band members are informed and included in important community events and decision-making processes. They could also ensure that special wording on advertising and posters always included language that stated something like...all band members residing on reserve and away from the community are warmly invited to attend....

Leveraging technology is the key to connecting youth both on reserve and off reserve together, elders together, entrepreneurs together to share and exchange ideas, etc. A concerted effort can be made by council to ensure that as many MFN band members who are interested, submit their current email addresses and mail addresses to receive timely information and not after the fact.

Council could plan and set aside an annualized budget to ensure band members residing off reserve could benefit from as many services and perks/subsidies afforded to on reserve band members.

***MacLeod, Kenneth (Ken)***

I have lived off-reserve and understand that sometimes finding information or services is frustrating. Working in the band office I learned about services and programs available. The website and social media have bridged this gap but communication is key.

## **Regarding the RHT Annuities, if you are elected, How will you consult with the community?**

### Chief Candidates

#### ***Mayer, Deborah (Debbie)***

I commit to immediate review of all documents and working with elected Council to scheduling meetings in-person in as many locations where high of our members reside and using all manner of communication to discuss the implications of the documents and most importantly listening and documenting that discussion about concerns and suggestions on the who, what, when, why and how of the settlement agreement.

As I indicated it would be the voice of the total membership that would dictate the outcome of how the monies are allocated. There are many suggestions and ideas all of which are important but the first thing is to gather the information and report back in a meaning way and finding a path forward for implementation.

### Councillor Candidates

#### ***Bobiwash, Conrad***

- Yes, this is affirmative and in all options, the Chief and Council need input to make the best decision based on past, current and future planning.
- Interference comes from the governmental level and or negotiation team on the process, Chief and Council need to be proactive in lobbying to share the settlement.
- The Chief and Council will be tasked to establish support mechanisms to protect all members in the settlement. This may be in financial planning, aggregation of financial services and financial awareness. In addition, there are opportunities to build a modern Health Centers, Housing as a income stream for the MFN and or social services such as culture and language camps or treatment support for all community members.



***Cada-Doiron, Jonathan***

I understand the intensity of interest that many have regarding the RHT Annuities process. What I have suggested from the start is we wait for the full range of information to become available before making any determinations about outcomes. These monies represent sentiments of potential, opportunity, and relief for all 21 First Nations and its community members.

A dedicated community lead will be tasked with facilitating conversations with all band members for MFN. That includes our on-reserve members and off-reserve. My goal would be to work with and support this lead to ensure the best set of information is being shared with everyone. This includes information around potential outcomes, rationale for those outcomes and how any final decision will not be made until we have clear lines of understanding about our people's feelings on the matters presented.

I would be an advocate for ensuring our people's voices are well represented in the final decision for the inevitable disbursement process.

***Chiblow, Annette***

Openly, honestly, and without prejudice. I as well as many other candidates, are willing to keep the community informed through a number of communication systems.

I would see these continued for the future. I would see that the documents are available for all members of MFN. We have an abundance of intelligent people at our disposal. Streamlining the services and repositioning people to complete the work that needs to be completed.

I would see that open communication and speaking about the advantages, and disadvantages, the goals and plans that MFN might have for the funds that are coming.

Also, I believe that being transparent about the impact that the HRT funds will have for the future of each community member, on and off reserve. I would like to have input and questions from all members. I want to develop a plan as to how we can minimize harm and danger on the reserve from individuals that may want to come in and hinder the health and wellbeing of the community members. I would like to see a think tank development to generate ideas from all members, and utilizing programs and people that can and can assist when needed for community safety.

The more brains that we have thinking in the same direction the better we can formulate ideas and put together plans.

***Daybutch, Gloria***

As stated above with a free mind to listen to people and not impose personal ideas and opinions. I would consult with band members as noted above by holding in-person sessions in urban centers as well as virtually. To ensure what I and the rest of council hears from people is recorded and results given back to people who attended events about the RHT issue. To then act on what has been shared and share that final rolled up report back again with all band members, and if wanted by a majority of meeting attendees to hold a vote on the final decision with a connotation what happens next if a majority vote is not achieved.

I feel it is important to listen to peoples' stories when they give their opinions and input into the RHT annuities. Final decisions must be inclusive of what people have said and what factors influence their feedback so that as many community members as possible feel that a win-win decision was reached.

***MacLeod, Kenneth (Ken)***

Regarding RHT annuity consultations, I would like to see similar events as the candidate night with both in person and virtual, on and off reserve opportunities to participate in a live event. With live feedback/ questions.