



An Update from the

# GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP and CHIEFS COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE

of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement

The Governance Working Group (GWG) was established to help guide the negotiation of the *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* (“Governance Agreement”) with Canada and is comprised of representatives from our member First Nations of the Anishinabek Nation.

The Anishinabek Nation Anishinaabe Anokiiwin Aanokiiotoojig [Chiefs Committee on Governance (“CCoG”)] was established to provide a forum that provides a linkage between the political vision of the Anishinabek Nation with the self-governance negotiations of the Anishinabek Nation. In this regard, the CCoG provides guidance, leadership, and feedback to the Anishinabek Nation’s self-governance negotiations through regular meetings.

The GWG and CCOG members jointly met in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, on February 7 and 8, 2018. There were 22 members that attended, representing 12 of our member First Nations, including Chiefs and members of Council.

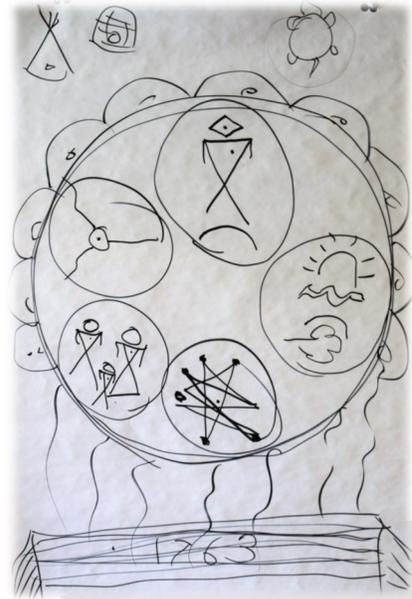
Updates on the progress of the *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* were provided to members, more specifically surrounding the Fiscal Chapter which is the remaining piece to be completed. The new fiscal arrangements will be part of the new Fiscal Transfer Agreement that will provide the financial support for the governance related functions and for the exercise of the law-making powers and other authorities going forward in a new self-government agreement.

Members participated in a major discussion on how to find unique ways of reaching out to our citizens to try and be better communicators. Members suggested that we need to tell the story of self-determination and action. We need testimonials from our citizens. We need to personalize how we communicate with our citizenship and First Nations. The way in which we communicate with all First Nations will vary based on the capacity and challenges each First Nation faces. For example, if there is an issue of broadband accessibility, there is intermittent access to online means of communications, therefore, a more direct approach will be better suited with door-to-door visits, or mailed information. Other First Nations may have more off-reserve citizens which will require information to be provided to citizens via mail-outs, e-mail, social media, billboards, etc. We need to ensure that information that is circulated is clear and concise, relevant, and tailored to all demographics in order to make an impact. If the content can make an impact, then citizens will become more engaged in the process and understand the importance of the Agreement.



Elder Gordon Waindubence provided teachings to members on the Anishinabek Preamble in the form of drawings:

- The Creator placed Anishinabe on the Mother Earth.
- The Four Elements: Fire, Water, Earth, Wind. They were given to the Anishinabek to take care of.
- The 7-pointed star: represents the sacred gifts—the Seven Grandfather Teachings— which are the foundations that were given to us by the Creator. These are our laws.
- Sovereignty: the Creator gave us sovereignty to man, woman and child to look after ourselves and Mother Earth.
- The Anishinabek also respect and honour the Past, Present, and the Future.
- The Big Circle: we are one family—this is our family; every one of us is in this circle. We all belong to a clan and we all have a responsibility. This is what our house looks like.



Elder Gordon expressed that if you want to understand more of our Anishinabe way, go live, look and travel to see for yourself and participate in ceremonies—the Creator gave us that.

Martin Bayer, Anishinabek Nation Chief Negotiator, provided a presentation on the preliminary findings of the updated Socio-Demographic Profile of the Anishinabek Nation by consultants Jeremy Hull and Stewart Clatworthy. One of the findings concluded that Ojibway is used at home by a small minority of the Anishinabek population, even in the First Nations where it is the strongest. For example, the highest level of Ojibway is in Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory where it is the home language of 20% of the residents on-reserve. In the majority of the Anishinabek Nation First Nations, 0.0% of the residents identify Ojibway as the language usually spoken at home.



Members believe that while children are learning the language at home, the learning stops once they reach the age where they enter into the school system. Members believe that we need to do more collectively as a Nation to address this alarming issue. In the last 20 years, the language speaking has declined by 60%.

The Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement will provide the power to establish laws that will support the preservation and on-going development of the Anishinabe so that in the generations to follow, there will always be Anishinabe.

**The next scheduled GWG meeting will be March 28 and 29, 2018, in Sault Ste. Marie, ON.**



“ Our Clan System functioned well. It was a sophisticated, well-organized way of our connection between the physical and spiritual world. The work we are doing is to reclaim our ways of doing and to create confidence in our youth that the old ways are relevant today and how we modernize our thinking to respect and honour the past, present and future. I witness the thirst in our youth to acquire the wisdom of our knowledge keepers, our sacred language, culture and traditions. This relates to the work being achieved by the working group and Chiefs Committee—we need to keep pushing in the right direction. ”

- Chief Paul Syrette  
Ojibways of Garden River First Nation

“ It's crucial that we as the Anishinabek Nation, individually and collectively, pursue and continue to have negotiations with Canada. We need it to ensure a future where our children and grandchildren have optimal opportunities available for them - whether it's flourishing our traditional customs and values, utilizing forms of traditional governance, the revitalization of our languages, and ensuring that our future generations have the resources in place to sustain self-governance well into the future. ”

- Deputy Chief Louis Kwissiwa  
Pic Mobert First Nation

If you require more information about the GWG or how to have your First Nation representative participate in the GWG activities, please contact:

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