



An Update

GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

of the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement

March 2018

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

The Governance Working Group members met in Sault Ste. Marie, on March 28 & 29, 2018, to discuss and provide input on the ANGA and Implementation Plan. There were 14 GWG members in attendance representing 10 of our member First Nation communities, including Chiefs and members of Council.

At each Anishinaabe meeting, we start with the reading of the Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe (One Anishinaabe Family).

Head Getzit Nmishomis, Gordon Waindubence, provided a Clan teaching on our identity explaining the history and origin of our traditional governance that the Creator gave us to govern ourselves. Elder Gordon expressed the importance of connecting the circle by holding on to our purpose or we will not last as One Anishinaabe Family. The Ngo Dwe Waangizid Anishinaabe was created by our Anishinabek Elders and it is the Preamble of the Anishinaabe Chi-Naaknigewin (Anishinabek Constitution), adopted by the Anishinabek Grand Council June 6, 2012.

Discussions began with an update regarding the ANGA fiscal agreement. Currently, the federal government is developing a new national fiscal policy framework. This has been a challenge, but discussions continue to take place amongst the national fiscal working group. Though good progress has been made, some work is required for the best financial arrangements for our First Nations. Concerns were raised on what will happen to Canada's fiduciary responsibility to the Anishinabek. Martin Bayer, Anishinabek Nation Governance Negotiator, explained that in this agreement, we are negotiating a small part of the *Indian Act* and the federal government will always have fiduciary responsibility to us. Sections that are being negotiated are 8-14 and 74-80 of the *Indian Act* which deal with matters such as Band lists, notice of Band list, protests, and Chief and Band Council elections.

The GWG members asked what kinds of laws can be passed under the ANGA. The laws can be passed on elections, language, cultural preservation, citizenship laws that allows us to determine our citizens, management and operation of our governments, such as a Financial Administration Act.

Regarding the development of the draft Implementation Plan, a transition plan will need to be implemented. This process will assist First Nations to be ready to proceed with the change. It is suggested that part of the transition plan would include development of working groups to deal with citizenship, leadership and financial laws which are a must since laws will be at the First Nation level.

More information on the ANGA was provided with a detailed review of the agreement by Martin Bayer. Questions about the ratification threshold were asked and if it will change. Through the education vote, we gained knowledge and we are proposing to make some changes for a smoother process. The group asked

that a presentation on what the responsibilities will be for the Anishinabek Nation, First Nations and what is required to be in place post-ratification. A list of activities was presented to inform the group.

Other concerns were raised from the members regarding the use of the English language in the agreement. A review of the latest version of the draft comprehensive governance communication strategy and feedback was presented. The objective is to successfully engage citizens of the Anishnabek Nation, both on-reserve and in urban centres, in understanding the goal of the ANGA. Encouraging our citizens to take personal action and be an “active voter” in the ratification would benefit our future allowing effective law-making. This will provide a timely and effective way to ensure information is received to make an informed decision.

Strategic priorities, target demographics and the message are important tools in effective communications. Timelines are another consideration as a project team will need to be developed. GWG members were interested in how the First Nations will be helped in getting the message out as they would prefer if a person from their community be hired for this task. As this strategy is in draft form, other options will be considered.

In February 2018, the Respecting and Honouring our Past, Present and Future Conference was held in Sault Ste. Marie. The GWG reviewed the conference evaluation results. Overall, out of the 54 evaluation forms submitted, 47 stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they had a better understanding of Anishinabek Nation history and recognized the importance of how this can help us develop a better plan for our future.



**The next joint GWG/CCoG meeting is scheduled for May 30 & 31, 2018,
Garden River First Nation**

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

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