

Greetings Chippewas of Nawash First Nation Members:

I'm pleased to provide an update for the past two weeks, April 7 -17th, and know I that we missed Easter wishes to you but we shared a beautiful day together at our Park on Saturday, April 11th to celebrate the 3rd Annual Ziibaakdakaan Maple Syrup Festival, and we say Chi-Miigwech to Nathan, Caley, Park staff, volunteers and everyone who came out to make the Ziibaakdakaan Festival a huge success!

At the April 7th Council, it was agreed that the Canadian Coast Guard will be brush trimming at the lighthouse road. Council also agreed to aggressively pursue the return of our lighthouse property which has been a long outstanding issue.

The Council continues to support the establishment of Noongwa Wellness in our community with many Thanks to Dr. Elisa Levi and the Board of Directors at Noongwa Wellness. The Council and I acknowledge the work and dedication that has been contributed so that we have holistic medical practices right here in our First Nation. We wish Noongwa Wellness much success in their goal to raise the necessary capital to complete the Wellness Clinic in 2027.

Mark Your Calendars for June 5th! The Grand Opening of the Nawash Rink!! The rink has yet to be named and I look forward to the opening and use. There is still work do complete in the rink, and we are all getting excited as we get closer to the opening date. The Timing for the opening of the Rink almost coincides with the closing of the Community Centre for renovations which start May 18th through to December 2026. The Band programs will be moved to other locations, and plans are in place for relocating the Food Bank. We will keep everyone updated in the coming weeks.

At the April 15th Council, we met with our Traditional Knowledge Keepers regarding plans for the annual Nochemowaning Ceremony proposed date Saturday, May 23rd but this date still needs confirmation. Access to the ceremony site also needs to be addressed. The Council received an update from the Lands Manager regarding properties held in Trust by the Ontario Heritage Trust, and that legal matters are pending negotiations. ATV and boundaries are currently being addressed as well as archaeological work. We acknowledge that Nochemowaning is our Sacred Place and that we honour and protect our Ancestors and Nibi always.

The Council is undertaking the work of Policy Review, analysis and development with Williams Consulting. This includes a review of all current policies, procedures, and guidelines across programs, administration, finance and governance. Policies will be analyzed for clarity, accuracy, compliance, effectiveness, and culturally appropriateness. Also, identifying gaps and risks.

This additional work is much needed, and we welcome clear policies to guide our decisions and practices.

The Council is aware that we need more Transparency and Accountability and we will be setting a date soon for a Community Meeting. We are still waiting for our audits to be caught up, and that has affected our strategic planning. We have yet to receive the 2026-2027 budgets, and the Council still has not had a financial meeting to review our OSR (Own Source Revenue), but we will do this soon. There are many projects underway, and matters to catch up on, and keeping up with new business such as the Solar and Battery Partnerships that we have developed under the Joint Council and the SON Environment Office.

The Council also received a report and reviewed the design and plans for the Gas Station on Hwy 6 - work is underway to meet MTO driveway standards, protecting the ecology on the land, and we've yet to see the completed costs and business plans later this summer. These things take time and patience!

The SON Environment Office keeps the Councillors very busy with the Bruce Power file, the Parks Canada file, TC Energy file, the Salt Mine expansion to name a few files that you can find more information on the SON Environment Office website. I look forward to the Nawash hiring a Communication Manager to keep us up to date on news and event. I encourage all Members to download the Nawash app. or visit our website to keep up to date on current news. I realize that a newsletter can't cover the big issues - like where are we going with the Bruce C Impact Assessment? and the Ontario Pumped Storage project? I'm sure the membership has many questions to ask, and I'd like to take a survey in May on what specific issues do you want covered in priority so we can begin to set up meetings. I look forward to community meetings very soon, until then - Enjoy the Spring, the buds, the birds and look forward to leeks and morels!!

Ogimaa Kwe Veronica Smith