Background

Miawpukek First Nation has undertaken a unique exploratory process to determine and assess the implications and challenges of exercising its inherent right to self-governance. Chief and Council directed that this exploration be community based and community driven. As part of this commitment, a series of community workshops were designed and delivered whereby the community members were provided with a foundation with which to assess the self-government initiative and an opportunity to provide input and direction to the leadership. From this process, the community members identified and instituted a “Challenger” arm (Tetpaqiskw – steer in the right direction) to its government structure.

The Miawpukek First Nation implemented the Tetpaqiskw as a pilot with the view of reviewing after a six-month period. The current review was undertaken with the objective of reviewing the pilot itself and the concerns and comments surrounding it.

Process of Review

During the review, the views of Chief, Council, Challengers and the General Manager were sought. These findings/comments are laid out within this report.

1. How effective has the Challengers been working?

   - The concept of the challengers is good.
   - Need further clarification of roles.
   - Should not fall into the trap of being apart of Council.
   - Should be looking at not the decision of Council but how Council has made that decision.
   - Need clearly defined roles.
   - Should have pre assigned seating.
   - Should keep Council procedure in check.

2. What are the strengths of the Challengers?

   - Good Attendance
   - Good Feedback
   - More bodies so more opinions
   - Accountable, dependable, well spoken & respectful.
   - Good liaison between Council and the community.
   - Opportunity to present another side
• Eager to make this new “thing” work.

3. **What are the weaknesses?**

• Not clearly defined roles
• Concentrating too much on what’s happening at Council as opposed to how Council makes decisions.
• Too few people
• Too chatty sometimes
• Need input on how Council makes a decision
• Need more understanding of roles for both Council and Challengers
• Tend to get sidetracked.

4. **Can and how should the pilot be improved?**

• More clearly defined roles
• Need Challengers to meet before Council meeting as a group
• Should be meeting more as a group
• Should be assigned a portfolio like a shadow cabinet
• Need some training on their roles and responsibilities
• Need training on protocol of meetings, Council too
• Need pre arranged seating
• Need time limits
• Should be more structured and more ceremony in Council meetings.

5. **Should MFN pursue this pilot under their self-government model?**

• Most definitely
• For sure
• Concept is perfect just need some fine tuning
• Definitely supports accountability and transparency
• So unique it will put MFN ahead of other First Nations
• Pursue under self-government with clearly defined roles.

**Decision and Recommendations**

From all accounts there is unanimous support for the challengers (Tetpaqniskw) concept. It is the consensus of both Council and Challengers to have more clearly defined roles. Based on my review, I offer the following recommendations:
• Review the current terms of reference with the Challengers
• Challengers make the appropriate revisions and forward to Council for approval.
• Have Challengers meet a day or so before Council meeting to review agendas
• Have shadow portfolio positions for Challengers
• Conduct training for Challengers on protocol of meetings
• Conduct training for Challengers on roles and responsibilities
• Have pre-assigned seating
• Have Challengers act as a liaison between Council and the community.
• Have timed debates where Challengers can debate the process Council used to make decisions and not so much apart of the decision making.
• Have Challengers meet as a group.

Conclusion

Trusting this review is satisfactory. Should you wish further comments or review, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

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Judy A. White