

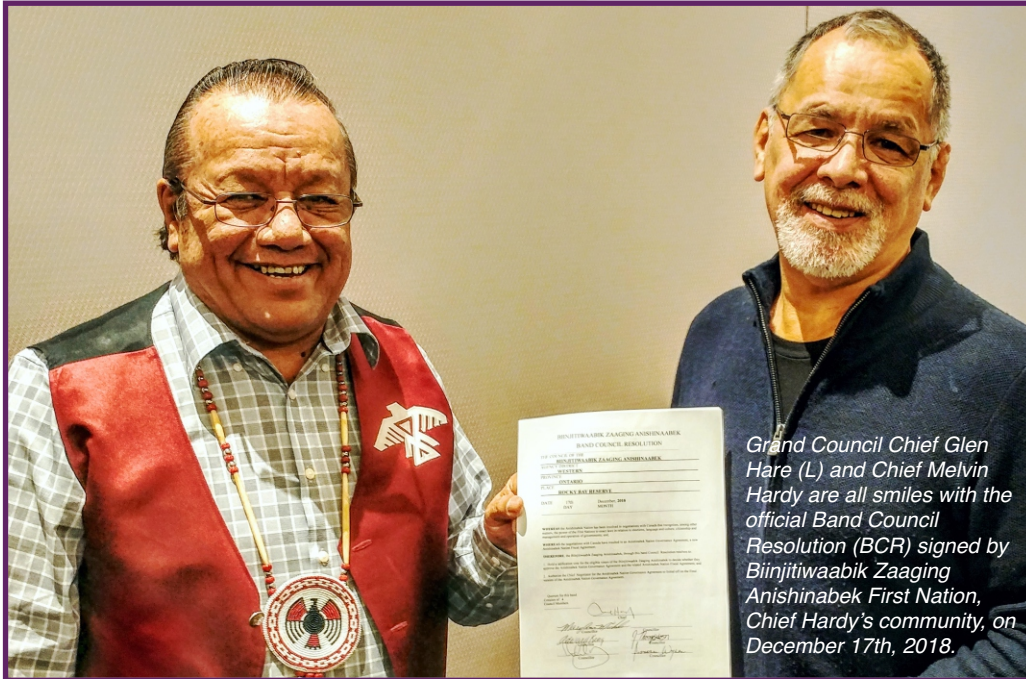


Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement

UPDATE

RESTORATION OF JURISDICTION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Fall Edition



By Kirk Titmuss

ANISHINABEK NATION HEAD OFFICE: – An important deadline for the 40 Anishinabek First Nations has passed. Oct. 18 was the deadline to submit a Band Council Resolution (BCR) for an Anishinabek First Nation to take part in the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* vote from Feb. 1-29, 2020.

For months, negotiators for the Restoration of Jurisdiction (RoJ) department at the Anishinabek Nation had been visiting First Nations, explaining the details of the Governance Agreement and how the Anishinabek Nation–Canada deal will benefit their people both culturally and fiscally.

The deal, 25 years in the making, officially identifies Canada's recognition of the Anishinabek Nation's inherent right to self-governance. The Agreement also takes First Nations who ratify, out from under the patriarchal *Indian Act* in four law-making categories: language and culture, citizenship, leadership selection, and financial management.

The 25* First Nations that confirmed by the deadline will vote on the Agreement. Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Glen Hare says that he is encouraged by the number of BCRs that have come in.

"I'm excited! We've come a long way because we were stuck at six for a long time. And now it's 25! That's amazing. We're well over the halfway mark." Despite the expired deadline, Hare says First Nations that haven't submitted a BCR can still do so to participate in the Agreement's ratification vote.

First Nation ratification officers will need to be hired in the communities. Training is slated for mid-November. Hare strongly encourages First Nations to get on board, especially in light of the Trudeau government's

federal election victory October 21. He says the Liberal Party's win helps clear any concerns of a change in power affecting the Governance Agreement vote process.

"That just boosts me up because of the election — the Liberals are still in power. We've got people who we've been working with and they're still with us. A minority's a minority but that doesn't mean anybody's out. So now we've just got to work together and let's move on. I had a call from some communities today so I hope they invite us down if they don't have their BCRs on their way yet.

Public information sessions for on and off-reserve citizens continue in the Anishinabek Nation's four regions. *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* leaders, including Grand Council Chief

Glen Hare, hope those who attend the sessions come away with a greater understanding of the Agreement, which in turn will motivate them to vote yes.

"The momentum's here. We didn't lose any momentum. I really encourage First Nation communities, there's still time to get on board with the Governance Agreement."

Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement champion, Patrick Madahbee, is also very pleased with the number of filed BCRs.

"We've reached a terrific milestone of getting more than half of the Anishinabek Nations on board already with the vision to move forward on our governance," says Madahbee. He is one of several RoJ representatives explaining the Agreement's benefits to citizens at many of the information sessions that have occurred in Anishinabek Nation communities across the province since June.

He praises those communities that have already passed their BCRs. "I consider them to be bold leaders in those communities that are going to give their people a chance to exercise their vote on something that's going to benefit them and their children for future generations. Once people see that they're going to be empowered and that they're looking for change in how they do business, I think they get pretty excited about it."

He says the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* represents a huge step forward to ensuring a more prosperous future for Anishinabek Nation citizens and needs to be strongly supported and implemented.

"We have to take advantage of this opportunity. These opportunities don't come along every day. We need to move the yardsticks on how we do business in our communities," added Madahbee.

**Two more BCRs have been received since this story was filed.*

For more information on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, please visit: governancevote.ca.

governancevote.ca



“We’re 26 First Nations strong,” says Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief as self-governance vote nears.

On Nov. 4, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Glen Hare encourages citizens to say ‘yes’ on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement in the upcoming vote in February 2020.

Photo by Laura Barrios

By Cindy Males

LONDON— Anishinabek First Nation citizens have an important decision ahead of them when they vote on a self-government agreement with Canada this coming February. With a little less than three months to go before the vote, Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief Glen Hare is encouraging citizens to vote ‘yes’.

The vote on the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* is scheduled for February 1 to 29, 2020, for First Nations that have authorized a vote through Band Council Resolution (BCR). Last week, when Grand Council Chief Hare addressed the Anishinabek Nation Chiefs-in-Assembly in London, more than half of the 40 Anishinabek First Nations had authorized a vote on the proposed Governance Agreement.

“We’re 26 First Nations strong on this Agreement, and there are meetings happening as we speak yet in our communities.”

Since then, two more First Nations have signaled their intention to run a vote on the proposed Governance Agreement, bringing the total to 28 First Nations.

Once the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* is ratified, the Government of Canada will formally recognize Anishinabek First Nation law-making power and authority over how their First Nations are governed. The four parts of the *Indian Act* that deal with governance will no longer apply to the Anishinabek First Nations who ratify the proposed Agreement. The First Nations will make their own decisions and laws about leadership selection, citizenship (E'Dbendaagzijing) government operations, as well as how best to protect and promote Anishinaabe language and culture.

Anishinabek Nation staff are now preparing to help the First Nations who ratify the Governance Agreement transition from Indian Act governance.

“We have a plan, it’s called a Transition Plan, and it’s for the 13-month window after the vote,” says Fred Bellefeuille, Anishinabek Nation Legal Counsel. “It’s about developing the four template laws, making sure that the culture is integrated. We don’t have to do everything overnight. We have high expectations of ourselves, but it doesn’t all have to be done really quickly. We have to transition things.”

The draft Transition Plan includes First Nation representative working groups for the four law-making areas, the development of fiscal transfer arrangements and financial authorities, an implementation committee, and the development of a registry and repository of laws.

Of the Anishinabek First Nations who agreed to run a vote on the Governance Agreement, 20 are already in a self-government agreement with Canada and Ontario, respectively, for Anishinabek education. Part of the Transition Plan includes the coordination of the Anishinabek Nation Education and Governance Agreements.

Work is also underway on a Long-Term Strategic Plan for the Anishinabek Nation that will set out realistic and measurable targets to improve the quality of life for all citizens and leaders. The plan will build off the proposed *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* and support strategic leadership to close the socio-economic gaps between First Nations and the rest of Canada and to facilitate prosperity.

Consultants with BDO Canada are meeting with Anishinabek First Nations and collecting input.

“We’ve been talking about social development. We’ve been talking about health. We’ve been talking about education, economic development, internal governance, external governance,” says Derek Rice, BDO National Lead, Economic Development. “And we’ve been collecting some very detailed information about directions from all of the different communities that we’ve been meeting with.”

“It’s not like we’re starting right from scratch,” adds Grand Council Chief Hare. “We’ve got a lot of kids, smart kids that are holding jobs just like everybody else in this country. We’re ready to go.”

For more information on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, please visit: governancevote.ca.



Fort William hosts first Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement Open House

Martin Bayer, Chief Negotiator for the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, shared information about the agreement during an Open House on Nov. 2 at the Fort William First Nation Community Centre.

Photo by Rick Garrick

By Rick Garrick

FORT WILLIAM FIRST NATION — Fort William citizens appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement during a November 2 open house presentation by Martin Bayer, Chief Negotiator for the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement.

“The Governance Agreement covers four law-making areas for the First Nations that vote it in, so what I heard today from the people that were here is that there’s definitely some areas where they need more understanding of,” says Fort William Councillor Michele Solomon. “They want to know what the long-term implications are of this for our community.”

Solomon says the open house participants also spoke about the need to encourage more citizens to attend the information sessions.

“So we need to get more people out to hear the information,” Solomon says. “We probably need to get this [information] into [their] homes so that they can gather some of the information and then come back to another information session.”

The proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement is an agreement between the Anishinabek Nation, on behalf of its 40 member First Nations, and Canada that recognizes the power of the First Nations that ratify the Agreement to pass their own election laws, citizenship laws, language and culture laws and financial administration type laws.

“It’s been [about] 25 years since they began negotiating self-government,” says Fort William Councillor Phil Pelletier. “I think it is important for First Nations people to understand what we’re trying to do. We live under the Indian Act, and we find it holds us back. With this Governance Agreement, it is just a small step going forward where we can start enacting our own laws. Right now, our hands are tied on most issues, and it is just a good way going forward.”

Bayer says he was “especially happy with the questions and comments” that were shared by participants at the open house, which was held at the Fort William First Nation Community Centre.

“That feedback is real important to us,” Bayer says. “It was really important when people were sharing concerns about making sure a lot more of this information can get out to other people who were not here this morning. So there will be a lot of opportunities to do that — this was just the first session.”

One of the concerns brought up during the open house was the requirement for First Nations to have a constitution before they can ratify the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement. Fort William currently does not have a constitution.

“On the constitution piece, I think there is lots of time to engage with the people on what a constitution could look like because now the templates for those are not complicated,” Bayer says. “I think they are pretty straight forward, pretty strong. The real challenge is how do we engage with the people so the people understand not just what is in the Governance Agreement, but especially more importantly, what is in their constitution when they vote on that as well.”

The vote on the Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement is scheduled for Feb. 1-29, 2020.

“We have a 25 per cent plus one voter participation threshold,” Bayer says, noting that voters need to be 18 years old or older, by the end of the voting period. “And if it’s a 50 per cent plus one that vote in favour, then the Agreement is ratified. So you can vote in person; for those who don’t live in the community, you can also vote by mail-in ballot or even easier, you can just vote online.”

For more information on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, please visit: governancevote.ca.

governancevote.ca



UPDATE ON THE 2019/20 RESTORATION OF JURISDICTION (ROJ) WORK PLAN IN SUPPORT OF THE ANISHINABEK NATION GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT

The key activities of the ROJ Department include the following:

Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement Negotiations

- The negotiations of the *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement* (ANGA), *Anishinabek Nation Fiscal Agreement* (ANFA), and supporting Governance Implementation Plan are complete. The Agreements were initialled off by the parties on August 23, 2019, in Sault Ste. Marie, signalling the end of the negotiations.

Anishinabek First Nations Approval to Run the Governance Vote

- The governance negotiations team met with every Anishinabek First Nation to discuss the negotiated agreements and to seek interest from the Anishinabek First Nations to run the ratification vote on the ANGA with their citizens. A signed Band Council Resolution (BCR) signalled the interest of the First Nation to run the governance vote.
- **28 First Nation BCRs** have been received to-date.

Governance Capacity Development

- First Nations Constitution Development - supporting Anishinabek First Nations interested in running the ratification vote on the ANGA.

Comprehensive Governance Communications Strategy

In support of the successful ratification of the *Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement*, the ROJ Department has developed a supporting Comprehensive Governance Communications Strategy (CGCS) to fully inform Anishinabek leadership and citizens about the Governance Agreement.

The activities completed to-date include:

- A Governance Agreement Information line (1-833-297-9850) and website governance.vote.ca are up and running.
- Communications funding in the amount of **\$3.2 million** provided directly to Anishinabek First Nations to support them with the communications activities in support of the governance vote;
- There are **22 First Nation Communications Coordinators** that have been hired directly in the First Nations;
- There have been a total of **30 First Nation Open Houses** along with **20 Urban Centre Open Houses** held throughout Ontario
- Key **social media/communication platforms** implemented to support the communications strategy: *twitter, Facebook, Anishinabek news, Mzinhigan, multi-media (radio/tv stations, APTN)*, and a *governance website* - www.governancevote.ca.

Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement Ratification Vote

The governance ratification vote is scheduled for February 1 – 29, 2020. The negotiated Ratification Process Protocol and supporting guidelines will be used to implement the ratification vote.

The activities completed to-date include:

- Ratification funding in the amount of **\$1.4 million has been** provided directly to Anishinabek First Nations to hire vote staff and to implement the ratification process
- Communications products are being completed to support the citizen awareness of the voting options

For more information on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, please visit: governancevote.ca.



DID YOU KNOW?

A key focus of the proposed **Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement** is the revitalization and preservation of our language and culture.

The proposed **Governance Agreement** will strengthen the cultural knowledge and secure it for generations to come.

As long as **Anishinabek** continue to govern under the **Indian Act**, the unique needs and priorities of each First Nation will not be addressed and the gaps will only continue to grow.

The **Anishinabek** member First Nations have never relinquished any authority, yet they are not recognized as their own government in **Nation-to-Nation** affairs.

Through the proposed **Governance Agreement**, other governments will recognize First Nations - who ratify it - and the **Anishinabek Nation** as governments parallel to the federal and provincial governments.

The proposed **Governance Agreement** will strengthen the **Anishinabek** voice in **Nation-to-Nation** discussions and build the platform for member First Nations to improve declining language and cultural conditions - as reflected in the **sidebar statistics** - for their citizens and communities.



Of Most Anishinabek
First Nations

96%

Do not speak

Ojibway at home.

4%

Use Ojibway

As the primary language at home.*

12%

Identify Ojibway

As the language they first learned.*

60%

Decline in

Ojibway speakers in Anishinabek First Nations in the last 20 years.*

19%

Is the highest

percentage of Ojibway used in one region - Lake Huron Region.*

*Information based on the 2018 Anishinabek Nation Socio-Demographic Profile by Prologica Research Inc., with data collected from the 2016 Census of Canada.

For more information on the proposed Anishinabek Nation Governance Agreement, please visit: governancevote.ca.

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For More Information

Toll-free line - 1-833-297-9850



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