

Council Summary – October 31, 2019

Financials

Council reviewed financial statements for July, August, and September in their regular council meeting on October 31.

Chief Councillor Robert J. Dennis brought up a concern that 15 per cent of the budgeted funds are not being spent. He said he would like this investigated, because if funds can be reallocated then that should be done. He said the senior management team should look at where there is overspending.

Chief Dennis said the biggest concern is infrastructure. Other council members pointed out that some of the underspending is from the salary and hiring freeze that was put in place earlier this year.

The financial statements were accepted and approved by executive council. Later in the meeting council also accepted and approved the Second Quarter financials, after a presentation from the Chief Financial Officer.

Council also reviewed the outstanding credit card statements for council members. Councillor Connie Waddell said providing this report will be common practice moving forward. Councillor Charlie Clappis agreed this was an important step because the Nation must know where the money is being spent so that each council member is held accountable for their expenses.

Field Course Work

Deborah Curran from the University of Victoria came to speak about the field work her law students did in Huu-ay-aht territory. She said the experience was extremely valuable to her students. She said the time they spent learning about the history and culture of the community will hopefully shape the way they practice law in the future.

Tayii Ḥawit̓ Ḥiishin (Derek Peters), Chief Dennis, and Councillor Edward R. Johnson all expressed their appreciation to the professor for the work she did. After the presentation was finished, Curran offered one final thanks to council and presented them with a donation to the Nation to balance some of the costs. She also told council it is her hope to continue the program for at least four more years.

Pre-approved contracts

After council approved this month's contracts, Councillor John Jack brought up that it would be useful to see regular updates for contracts of \$25,000 or above. He said this way council could keep appraised as to where the contracts stand and what progress is being made. This will give council a deeper understanding of how the money is being spent and the competition that leads up to these contracts being rewarded. Council passed a motion to receive a monthly report on the status for the fiscal year.

Councillor Jack followed this discussion with a suggestion that administration do a breakdown of the overall costs of the 2019 People's Assembly. This is requested for the last meeting in November. Councillor Jack said this request should not be seen as a reflection of the Assembly because he believes it went very well this year, even with the added challenges that having it in Anacla brought to the job.

Human Resources Vacancies

The Acting Executive Director Kathy Waddell spoke about the current hiring freeze and the challenges this creates given recent staff resignations from key roles. One of these positions was in culture, another in the Child and Family Wellness department, and finally a Paawats staff member. Council gave permission to post the positions.

This brought up the subject of the pay scale. Chief Dennis asked if Huu-ay-aht is losing staff because the Nation is no longer paying a competitive rate. He said one of the people who resigned told him this was their reason for leaving. Waddell said this has been an issue with many of the people who have left. It was suggested that the Nation revisit the pay scale.

Councillor Waddell mentioned that the hiring and wage freeze has been on hold while the process of hiring a new executive director is carried out. She suggested that they move forward on the organizational review. She pointed out that this kind of review would fall under the duties of the Associate Executive Director, so the hiring of the new ED should not hold up the process.

Council rescinded the motion that was made earlier for the hiring freeze, and moved that Executive Council moved to approve to put a freeze on all new hires, promotions, and salary increases with the exception of the positions that are already budgeted that become vacant. This removed the part of the motion that put a timeline on it restricted by the hiring of a new ED.

Councillor Jack then made a motion that Finance Department will work closely with Administration to carry out this budgetary review of the organization and its programs. This will focus on:

- Effective service for citizens, lands, and government,
- Efficient use of resources in the conduct of government and its resources,
- Provide expanded opportunities for Huu-ay-aht citizens to provide labour expertise and secures to be nation,
- And involved administration.

This motion was passed.

Council Reports

Chief and Council members presented their reports for August and September, except for Councillor Trevor Cootes who was not available. These will be available with the official minutes of the meeting.

Pachena Bay Campground

Director of Lands and Natural Resources Rita Johnson made a presentation on the proposed expansion and lease of the campground.

The motion was to for a leasehold interest in an 8.1-hectare parcel of un-surveyed Huu-ay-aht Lands for a term of 25 years (plus a 10-year renewal option) in order to develop and operate an expansion of the existing Pachena Bay campground operation. The Director of Lands and Natural Resources recommends approval of this application, and the People's Assembly of the Expansion Lease is not required under the Land Act.

The executive council approved the expansion lease to HFNHLP and approved the expansion as negotiated and finalized by the director.

Housing and Citizen Motions

Councillor Clappis discussed the housing plan with council. During this discussion it was acknowledged by all members of council that the leasing agreements need to be addressed as soon as possible. Councillor Clappis will work on this and other housing needs with the administration and bring it back to Executive Council.

The citizen motions from the 2019 People's Assembly were postponed to the next meeting given that Chief Dennis had to leave the meeting due to a family need.

Community Engagement Sessions

Executive Council was informed of the dates for the next community engagement session, which are:

Monday, December 2 – Anacra

Tuesday, December 3 – Port Alberni

Wednesday, December 4 – Vancouver (culture night)

Monday, December 9 – Victoria (culture night instead of on Wednesday, December 11)

Tuesday, December 10 – Nanaimo