



# huu ay aht

ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

**December 21, 2023**

## **Re: People's Assembly, Debt Payment, and Distribution**

Throughout the past few weeks, there have been comments and posts on the HFN Facebook page related to the process of People's Assembly attendance, travel support, and settlement distribution.

Huu-ay-aht First Nations Hawiik and Executive Council are committed to providing support to citizens to attend Huu-ay-aht functions so that everyone can contribute to bringing success to the Nation. This support is done by providing travel and accommodation to citizens participating in functions such as our People's Assembly.

### **People's Assembly Attendance**

For assurance on budgeting and planning, HFN requires a pre-registration process to prepare for all the requests and book appropriate travel requirements and accommodation. During online pre-registration, citizens are requested to check the box that citizens have read the "2017, *Huu-ay-aht Attendance at the People's Assembly Policy*". It is the citizen's responsibility to understand and read the policy. The policy outlines obligations to attend the full People's Assembly (voting sessions) and requirements for travel and accommodation. The HFN Government defines 'voting sessions' as the whole day(s) of the People's Assembly.

Sections 3 and 4 of the policy; "Requirements to Attend Voting Sessions and Failure to Attend Voting Sessions", outline the requirements and accountabilities of attendance. Along with the policy commitment, Hawiik, and Executive Council ask in return from Huu-ay-aht citizens that they fully participate throughout the People's Assembly, by attending the assembly and upholding our guiding principles of *ʔiisaak*, *hišuk ma c'awak*, and *ʔuuʔatuk* and as per the *2018 Huu-ay-aht Alcohol Policy*, all HFN functions and events are alcohol & drug-free.

When there is a breach of the policy, Section 5 of the *People's Assembly Attendance Policy*, "Effect of debt owing", outlines the debt process and collection. Before identifying a potential debt, each hotel establishment is required to submit invoices outlining any room damage (with evidence), and disruptions, and identifying who checked in and out of the room. These invoices are cross-referenced with attendance records kept when citizens register on the day of the People's Assembly.

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Registration is utilized to ensure we can proceed with a quorum at our People's Assembly or adjust if we do not have a quorum. Registration is also utilized to capture names of citizens present at the People's Assembly for all voting purposes and attendance. This year the Government decided to try our new voting tool, clickers, these clickers are a tool and a mechanism used to cast votes not to take attendance.

### **People's Assembly Travel Support**

As per the "2017, *Huu-ay-aht Attendance at the People's Assembly Policy*", HFN provides travel support through ferry cards, gas cards, reimbursement of travel costs, and accommodation.

Travel cards such as ferry cards and gas cards are purchased and loaded weeks before the Assembly, the HFN administration works diligently to ensure that these cards have the appropriate funds loaded.

Port Alberni is a central point for many Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and because of this, we must provide names and numbers of citizens to all hotels we are partnering with. To do this, it is essential to pre-register, so we have an accurate number of rooms set aside. We cannot book rooms on the day of the Assembly due to the price set by the hotels and because there is no guarantee a room will be available. Citizens do have the option of booking their room and getting reimbursed.

Accommodation is a two-way commitment, HFN commits to funding the room, but it is the citizens who must respect the hotel's policy, regulations, and requirements. The commitment is to leave the room in good condition, respect everyone else in the hotel, and not disturb others.

### **Settlement Distribution**

At this year's People's Assembly, there was an 'in-camera' item related to a Specific Claim. Due to the nature of the item, HFN could not go public about the settlement. So, no documents could be shared with citizens in advance or at the meeting. What was conducted was a PowerPoint outlining the settlement and the proposed usage of the settlement. On behalf of the HFN Government, I do ask that we not publicly post about this settlement and its value as it does breach the in-camera agreement.

Regarding HFN Distributions, for all distributions, the HFN Administration is to follow the "2018 *Huu-ay-aht First Nations Distribution Administration Policies*", which provides direction on citizen distributions. Under Part 3, *Entitlement to payment of distribution shares*, subsection 3.3 – (b), Payment of Debt to the Huu-ay-aht First Nations..." the Director must withhold the Distribution Shares of a Citizen with an unpaid Debt to the Huu-ay-aht First Nations....".

All Huu-ay-aht laws, regulations, and policies can be found on our webpage at [Legislation – Huu-ay-aht \(huuayaht.org\)](http://legislation-huu-ay-aht.huuayaht.org).



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HFN Government has zero tolerance for harassment and racism. The Government is committed to a healthy and safe environment for everyone. HFN administration staff work diligently and long hours to ensure HFN has a successful People's Assembly. To support Huu-ay-aht citizens who are employees, we work to ensure they can participate as citizens at the Assembly and not as an employees. We ask everyone to be respectful and refrain from using words that are degrading and can be deemed racist.

Yes, there is always room for improvement in planning, processes, and policies. Many of these can be changed or altered. We would love to hear from you as citizens on how we can make changes to ensure stronger communication and provide for a productive People's Assembly. Please send any suggestions to the Executive Director, Karen Haugen, at [executivedirector@huuayaht.org](mailto:executivedirector@huuayaht.org).

Our obligation is to aid and support all citizens, we do this by committing to a strong financial budgeting to support citizens in many ways from education, patient travel, crisis grants, medical & dental support, and other essential services. We ask that citizens commit to following all policies and respecting the obligation to adhere to the support that is provided.

Only together can we ensure a healthy and safe environment and 'Steer our Canoe in the right direction'.

Sincerely,

John Jack  
Chief Councilor

Theresa Nookemus  
Hawiih Council

Karen Haugen  
Executive Director

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