

MEETING NOTES/ACTION ITEMS

Innu Round Table Meeting #22

Note – These notes are not the official minutes from the IRT meeting on June 28th. The official minutes will follow from the IRTS. These notes are for internal purposes to assist with any ISC action/follow up items as required.

Date: June 28th, 2018

Location: Marriott Hotel, Halifax, NS

Meeting Chair: Steve Joudry

Attendees:

Grand Chief Gregory Rich, Innu Nation
Deputy Grand Chief Etienne Rich, Innu Nation
Chief Eugene Hart, SIFN
Chief John Nui, MIFN
Christopher McDonell, ISC-RO
Geoff Cole, ISC-RO
Barbara Robinson, ISC-RO
Tom Keagan, ISC-RO
Debra Keays-White, ISC-FNIHB
Johanne Wilkinson, ISC- ADM, CYFS Reform
Judy White, NL/LAAS
Paula Walsh, NL/Public Safety and Justice
Anny Barrett, NL/Health Policy Services
Rick Healy NL/ADM Children, Seniors and Social Development – Programs and Policy
Susan Walsh NL/ADM Children, Seniors and Social Development – Service Delivery
Lyla Andrew, IRT Sec/CYFS
Kylie Rose, IRT Sec/IS

Others - tbc. The complete participation list will be provided by the IRT with the official minutes.

Opening Comments:

Irrelevant



Greg noted the recent tragedies in the Innu communities as well as concerns over diabetes. He reiterated that the time to act is now and current funding (\$130K) is not enough.

He spoke to the ongoing drinking and gas sniffing issues in Nauashish with 40-50 kids on the road every morning sniffing gas and acknowledged that youth in both Innu communities are affected. He expressed that a new and better approach is needed to deal with this. He noted that a Leadership Retreat is planned for Border Beacon in the fall in which current and past leaders as well as Elders will be engaged. He expressed that it is his desire to work together with all parties for the better of all Innu.

Greg is concerned that diabetes has been a problem for many years and many Innu are on dialysis. There is a need to change this through exercise, diet, living habits, etc. He identified Outpost as providing assistance with this as people who live and spend time on the land are healthier. He is concerned that Outpost numbers have been down over the past 10 years and believes diabetes has increased as result. He expressed that more time in the country results in healthier Innu.

Chief John Nui expressed that Council is trying to work aggressively to address the many issues in Natuashish. Gas sniffing/solvent abuse and drinking are a real problem and all parents are concerned. He noted that enforcement of bylaws is an issue and the community is receiving little or no support from RCMP in the enforcement.

Chief Nui identified that there is only one band member who does searching at the airport and he fears for the safety of this officer doing searches alone. He expressed the need for training and a security contract. At this time there are only two community monitors who provide some security for assets, vacant homes, etc.

Chief Nui expressed that we need to do more for youth. There are many drugs in Natuashish and he is concerned how the legalization of Cannabis will impact youth.

He also identified many positive things that are occurring in Natuashish. There were 9 graduates from High School and 1 ABE (adult basic education) graduate. 8-9 graduates are moving on to post-secondary education.

He identified education, housing, CYFS and security as the major issues in the community and noted that we need more action to achieve more results. Not just on paper but also need to be there to help, show care, etc. "Let's get to work. Thank-you".

Chief Eugene Hart thanked Chief Nui and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He expressed that Council leaders are working hard and dealing steady with many issues beyond normal roles of Chief and Council and are often acting as social workers, etc.

He tries not to bring work problems home but this is often hard. He mentioned that SIFN lost 7 people (since March), 4 were on dialysis and 3 from heart issues. There is only one Innu nurse in SIFN.

Concerning recent announcement on the Vale mine (the Premier, Yvonne Jones and others), he expressed that it would be nice to see announcements associated with SIFN, MIFN, IN, etc. He felt that at times it seems government looking for Innu leadership to fail so co-management can run it. There needs to be a better way. He noted that there was nothing in Premier's message for the Innu and fears many Innu see themselves as the "forgotten Innu".

Chief Hart feels that it often takes forever to get agreements. Kids are ready to come home but unable to make it happen. They are very frustrated and accuse leaders of lying. These kids lose their language and their culture. He saw (as a teacher) many kids commit suicide due to frustrations and feelings of helplessness. He expressed that the message does not always get through to governments that they need help. They would rather get kids home then lose them and Chief Hart is concerned that these kids think the community has abandoned them.

Chief Hart spoke to the issues with housing and expressed that nothing has been received from ISC – only 1 house received in over 3 years. Transition homes proposal is in. Much SIFN money is in these projects. The Group home is targeted for July but is not sure if it will happen by then.

He also expressed that gas sniffing is also a major problem in SIFN and diabetes is a huge issue, with many struggling from the disease. He noted that there have been many meetings but they are not always seeing outcomes from the meetings and he finds this very frustrating. He would like to see positive results.

He went on to say that Yvonne Jones said last year that Labrador would have separate budgets for housing. There has been nothing yet for SIFN and they have 40 families on their waiting list.

SIFN has 29 graduates this year. 3 in Goosebay, 1 in Halifax, 1 in Ontario, 21 in Sheshatshiu School and 3 in NWR.

Chief Hart noted that "We need to work together on the same side".

Debra Keays-White thanked William for his work (now with PHAC) and everyone for coming. She offered condolences to SIFN for the 7 deaths since March. She acknowledges concerns over diabetes and expressed that traditional knowledge, foods, and outpost can help with this issue. She acknowledged that solvent abuse is still a struggle and noted that Outpost also can be one component to address this. She noted that funding has stabilized for LICHs. She expressed that it is good to hear about leaders for Innu and that Innu-led programming is key - training ongoing. She offered congratulations to Natuashish on getting Headstart back up and running. Cultural and recreational programs will be in place starting July 9th. A similar program could be done in SIFN.

She mentioned Lyla Andrew's upcoming presentation on the Innu Care Approach (Halifax and Moncton). ISC-RO can link in and there is a possibility it may be taped for future sharing.

She offered congratulations to the many grads (29+9). "These are your future leaders".

Chris McDonell expressed that he is never tired of hearing from the leadership. He spoke to the Michael Sanders story and noted that improvements in schools and facilities are forthcoming. He expressed that he is very pleased that Johanne Wilkinson is in attendance. He noted that Canada committed to program reforms and that the Minister's committee is in place. Johanne is supporting this process and this is the reason she is in attendance (CYFS reform).

He expressed that Transformation discussions are also very important and just starting. He feels relationship is advancing, trust is being developed and there have been several positive advancements.

He noted that community safety is also critical and that some relief is coming through PSC plans (regarding recent call for proposals). ISC is still following vigorously with PSC, RCMP, et al.

Judy White (NL) offered a welcome on behalf of NL. She expressed empathy with Innu and said that NL would work as best it could to support the Innu in addressing all of the issues.

Discussion Items:

1. IRTS Justice and Policing Status

Paula Walsh stated that NL is willing to be a key partner in the justice and policing committee. Re the Innu correspondence to Minister Parsons; the department's response will be forthcoming and she is interested in hearing from federal departments as well.

Chris McDonell agrees with Paula stating that the merits of the committee are evident. He was hoping to have each partner identify what they can contribute to the working committee. Tom Keagan is searching for resources within and with other partners. ISC will contribute a portion (hoping other federal departments and Newfoundland will also).

Steve J. stated that the IRT has identified some money they can use. He is hoping to get this back on track as much work to be done and any help would be appreciated.

Chris M. stated that ISC will commit to fund next the next meeting of the justice and policing committee with the main objective of the committee to sort out how this committee would be funded in future (meeting likely in St. John's in the fall).

Chief Rich expressed importance of getting this resolved as many media issues (eg. Labrador Correctional Center) exist. There is much overlap. Justice and policing is a huge problem which has been around for many years. Innu have many ideas which could be implemented and it is very important that we move this forward. Drugs and drinking are rampant which lends itself to justice and policing issues. The Innu have experience and knowledge which will help. We need to prepare for treaties (Land Claims and Self-Government) and Innu will need to implement their own justice system.

Chief Rich posed a question to Paula Walsh concerning victim services and why the Innu proposal was denied? Minister Parsons was to revisit this. Paula will follow up on this.

2. Children in Care

Lyla Andrews expressed that Innu vision has been articulated for 30 years in all areas. There are key linkages across all areas. Changes in one area have an impact on other areas.

Rick Healy noted there is a new NL CYFS legislation in process. It is one year away from enactment. It will take approximately one year to develop the regulations/policy, etc.

3. CYFS Inquiry

Judy White noted that a joint letter was sent to federal departments (NL and Innu) and suggested a Deputy Minister's meeting between NL and ISC. NL is ready to go.

Chris McDonell noted Deputy Minister Tremblay's response is expected within a week.

Judy White noted that 3 Commissioners will be confirmed by NL and Innu (Canada will be advised as they did not feel it was Canada's role to select commissioners).

4. Group Home Transition

The Sheshatshiu transition home is complete. Level 4 standards are now at 100%. There are 86 standards in 22 areas that have been fully met. The group home is fully staffed and ready for placements.

Training has been extensive (and successful). Service agreements are being finalized, the home is fully staffed and can support up to 7.

The group homes are ready and that staff would like to get things moving. Staff have been on the job 88 days but no kids are there yet.

Steve J. expressed that the Innu may go to media if the service agreement is not in place within a week. He posed the question, "What is holding up the service agreement?" A separate meeting will be scheduled to review the status of the service agreements.

5. Innu Income Support Program

Kylie Rose stated that there are 210 files on the current caseload with a \$1.145 million budget. There are 28 in Natuashish and cases are increasing (more awareness and community liaison offered now in Natuashish). Kylie will forward deck to anyone who requests it.

6. FSR

Grand Chief Rich spoke with the Minister's Office last week. He said that he is talking with a potential FSR and he is very interested (OKT spoke with him also). He hopes an FSR it will be in place in time for next IRTS meeting.

Chris McDonell noted that a discussion will need to take place about "Terms of Reference" for the new FSR as soon as possible. (Grand Chief Rich is open to this discussion.)

7. CYFS Reform

Johanne Wilkinson expressed the need for additional meetings on CYFS with all parties (Canada, province, Innu Reps, etc.) to discuss the proposed development of national CYFS legislation.

She identified themes for CYFS Reform:

- Indigenous Jurisdiction
- Culture appropriate
- Family Reunification
- Social Determinates of Health
- Role of Elders/Grandmothers

She identified 6 points of action for Minister Philpott:

1. Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
2. Provision for Early Intervention
3. Jurisdiction and Recognition
4. Trilateral Tables
5. Inuit and Metis
6. Data and Reporting (with provinces, territories and partners)

She also noted the Role of “Agencies”:

- Actual cost for prevention and least disruptive measures
- Prevention pot “very broad and unlimited”
- Including housing

8. National Advisory Committee

Joanne Wilkinson noted greater control by communities is encouraged. **The** Canadian Human Rights Tribunal and AFN are calling for federal regulation (ISC working on this now).

Future CYFS to be community based/recognition based. Joanne noted that Minister Philpott stated that “ISC - “Service” is our middle name for a reason”.

Questions asked about the Innu model as they don’t currently have an agency. The current national model is for delegated agencies.

Chief Hart posed the question “What are the results on Transition-Home proposal?”

Chris McDonell noted that the goal is to have group home up and running prior to the transition homes. There are no funds secured yet but ISC is expediting the review

Chief Hart noted July 5 meeting is set to discuss further at the working group.

Johanne Wilkinson stated that federal legislation/regulation will not take over provinces/territories roles. It is intended to be complimentary and focused on rights recognition.

9. Health

It was acknowledged that the diabetes issue is huge and outpost and country living was healthier for the Innu. Mental health/addiction services are working on this issue. A working group was recently reactivated with 3 priorities identified:

1. Self-care (burn out common)
2. Action Plan
3. FASD Working Group

Steve J. mentioned that the Innu Care Approach should also be used for the diabetes issue.

The Innu expressed concern that the Innu diabetes proposal was declined by government and all 7 people who died since March were diabetic.

Funding and programming is desperately needed and currently they only receive \$135K per year for diabetes programs. This is the worst in many years (for diabetes issue) and the Innu are requesting more control and funding to make appropriate decisions.

Debra Keays-White agrees something needs to be done however this is a provincial responsibility funded through Labrador Grenfell. ISC-FNIHB does not cover this normally as it is provincial. Province will be invited to a meeting to discuss further. Canada cannot duplicate provincial services.

Liaison with Labrador Grenfell will also be pursued as they should be part of IRTS.

- Other Health Updates:
 - \$442K requests to date through Jordan's Principle. More group requests welcome.
 - TB outbreak is not in Natuashish but a plan is encouraged just in case.
 - Capacity development proposal also discussed.

10. Transformation

Chris McDonell noted ISC is moving more from programs to services, improving relations, etc. All items are open for discussion at this point in time.

Closing Comments:

Chris MCDonell noted that it is good to see progress in many areas and would like to keep the momentum going.

Mary Jane Nui for Chief Hart expressed that communities are crying for help and hoped that communities don't need to be in crisis to get help. Why are we meeting every 3 months if things aren't getting done to help?

Chief Nui thanked everyone for coming. He noted that some progress is being made even if it is slow. He will be meeting with Health Canada on Friday. Gas sniffing in Natuashish is still ongoing. The issues are real. He is hoping SIFN Council will return after next election as they have been working hard to help the Innu.

Chief Hart thanked John, Mary Jane and everyone. He hopes to be at next meeting (post-election). He stated that he "tried my best for community" and other leaders have been there for him. People don't always see the work that gets done. He thanked everyone again – province, Canada, Steve Joudry, Anastasia Qupee, and others.

Grand Chief Gregory Rich wants to see understanding/agreements concerning who is responsible for the Innu. We need to sort this out to make progress. There is much confusion regarding the CYFS Inquiry. We need to fix this. Governments need to come together on this (to improve Innu lives). He posed the question, "Is Truth and Reconciliation a part of this?" Many kids are still sniffing. We need commitments to address issues. Diabetes is rampant and statistics are alarming. He feels Health Canada needs to step up.

Need federal/provincial/Innu partners to come together and put words into action. It is often overwhelming as a leader as the phone does not stop ringing. He hopes the Leadership Retreat in September will lead to new approach/new strategy.

Next Meeting of the IRTS: to be held October 11th in St. John's.