

Northwest Angle #33 First Nation



Membership Update – 2021/2022

Prepared by Chief Darlene Comegan

CHIEF AND COUNCIL

- **Darlene Comegan**, Chief
- **Farrell Desrosiers**, Councillor
- **Norma Girard**, Councillor
- **Joseph Katcheconias**, Councillor
- **David Paul**, Councillor
- **Diane Sandy**, Councillor

CHIEF AND COUNCIL PORTFOLIOS

- **Administration & Human Resources** – Joseph Katcheconias
- **Capital Projects** – Darlene Comegan
- **Culture/Recreation** – Farrell Desrosiers
- **Economic Development** – Darlene Comegan
- **Education** – Farrell Desrosiers
- **Family Services** - David Paul
- **Finance** – David Paul Jr.
- **Governance** – All of Chief and Council
- **Health** - Norma Girard
- **Housing** – Joseph Katcheconias
- **Lands/Resources** – Norma Girard/David Paul
- **Membership** - Diane Sandy
- **O&M** - Joseph Katcheconias
- **Social Services** – Diane Sandy

BOARD SEATS

- **Abinooji Child and Family Services** – David Paul, Board Representative
- **Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resources Council** -Darlene Comegan-Board Representative
- **Grand Council Treaty #3** – Economic Development Committee Member
- **Kenora Chiefs Advisory** – Darlene Comegan, Board Representative
- **Miisun Forest Management Integrated Services** – Darlene Comegan, Board Representative
- **Mitigoog Trust Services** - Darlene Comegan, Board Representative
- **Ontario First Nations Limited Partnership (Casino Rama)** Darlene Comegan, Chief Representative
- **Sovereign Wealth (Hydro One)** Darlene Comegan, Chief Representative
- **Treaty Three Police Services** – Wesley Nelson, Board Representative
- **WNHAC** – David Paul, Secretary/Treasurer (Newly Elected by acclamation)

STAFF

- **Band Administrator** – Kathy Cranston
- **Health Director** – Joanne Rosas
- **Angle Inlet Secretary/Receptionist** – Geri Sandy
- **Dogpaw Secretary/Receptionist** – Vanessa Paypompee
- **Angle Inlet O&M Manager** - William Ross
- **Dogpaw O&M Manager** – Stanley Paul
- **Director of Education** – Elizabeth Mitchell
- **Family Band Representative Lead** – Mary Beacham
- **Angle Inlet Family Band Representative Worker** – Michael Sutherland
- **Dogpaw Family Band Representative Worker** - VACANT
- **Family Band Legal Representative** – Marco Frangione
- **Mental Health & Addictions Worker** – Maria Blackhawk
- **Community Wellness Worker** – Cassandra Paul
- **Angle Inlet Water Treatment Plant Operator** – Lili Sioui
- **Angle Inlet Water Treatment Trainee** – Shelly Sandy
- **Angle Inlet Water Treatment Trainee** – Savannah Sandy
- **Angle Inlet Water Treatment Trainee** – Lauren Mandamin
- **Dogpaw Water Treatment Operator** – Terrance Bird
- **Dogpaw Water Treatment Plant Operator** – Fredrick Sandy
- **Angle Inlet CHR/HBHC** – Karen Pearson
- **Dogpaw CHR/HBHC** – Ruby Shebahgeget
- **Angle Inlet Medical Driver** – Brian Kelly
- **Dogpaw Medical Driver** – Elizabeth Paul
- **Family Well-Being Worker** – Monica Shebahgeget
- **Angle Inlet Senior Family Worker** – Colleen Sandy
- **Family Services Worker** – Sophia Paul
- **Angle Inlet Housing Coordinator** – Nancy Sandy
- **Dogpaw Housing Coordinator** - Karrah Desrosiers
- **Angle Inlet Home Support Worker** – Conrad Ross
- **Angle Inlet Homemaker** – Francis Sandy
- **Dogpaw Homemaker** – Margaret Paul
- **Dogpaw Homemaker** – Eli Paul
- **Liaison Worker, Road Feasibility Study** – Melvin Blackhawk

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide membership with an update on programs and services

We have been busy and apologize for the delay in providing a report to membership.

As you may be aware, we have been extremely short-staffed. Recruiting staff for job vacancies within the community has been quite the task but with little response from on-reserve we have had no other choice than to post externally. With that said, Council has taken steps by filling some of these roles and that has kept us all quite busy.

It would be great if we had an Executive Assistant that can travel with Chief and Council and prepare information for release to the general membership.

BORDER CROSSING ISSUES

Chief and Council are fully aware of the problems members have been facing with crossing the border in recent months - *especially* those residing at Angle Inlet. We have been in contact with officials at the CBSA (Canada Border Service Agency) and have communicated with them over the course of the past few months to address the concerns of the residents at Angle Inlet. A meeting had been planned on March 23, 2022 with the CBSA but the meeting was cancelled due to winter conditions. They realize that this is having an adverse effect on our citizens at Angle Inlet and wish to mitigate the circumstances.

There are many new CBSA staff who are following Government procedures, but still have no knowledge of the intricacies of our geographic location. Training will be provided for inexperienced staff to help them understand our plight. We may be eligible for further exemptions once we have ironed out the details. We will keep you updated once we have made real progress in this area.

As Chief I have tried to address the ArriveCan mobile app issue - in that many of our people do not have cellular or internet services to use the app. But the concept of people being disconnected from internet/cellular in the 21st century seems to be beyond the understanding of many CBSA staff. Talks will continue once the lake opens up – upon our notification they will come to our community to meet with members and give the members the opportunity to address their frustrations directly.

The Chief is in constant contact with officials from the CBSA and the Aboriginal Representative Melanie Shutes has reassured that no one will be penalized especially Elders who do not have knowledge or use of modern-day technology. Fortunately, we are only one of the two First Nations in Canada that is listed at Canada Border Services Agency as having exempt status. The Chief is still trying to get clarification on what the First Nation's exemptions are.

HOUSING

The Northwest Angle #33 First Nation has been struggling with our CMHC housing program in the past years, however we have been making headway in that program to date.

1. PROJECT 9 (CMHC)

Project 9 was a long-standing project that spanned 11+ years. It was never completed but with Councillor Joe Katcheconias' position as the Housing Portfolio Holder has showed his commitment to ensuring the project's completion. He has worked diligently with CMHC, contractors and the Tribal Council to have this project meet the requirements as required by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Thus, outstanding mortgage subsidies being withheld were finally released enabling us to work on the completion of these homes - except for one house which wouldn't pass inspection as per CMHC guidelines and was converted to a regular Band house.

2. HOUSING MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

We have now reached compliance goals with CMHC. However, much work still needs to be done. The First Nation has purchased Housing Management Software to assist housing staff with their duties. Each house on the First Nation will be entered into the system. It will be a detailed program and any repairs or maintenance required will be entered. Pictures of the conditions of the houses will be added. Any materials ordered will also be recorded in the system. Any rent collected will also be recorded and hopefully, it can be synced with our financial accounting Software once everything has been entered. Detailed reports can be printed on every house once data entry has been completed. I believe that staff are currently in the process of learning the software.

3. HOUSING MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Nancy Sandy and Karrah Desrosiers were hired to manage housing program and due to the complex administration of the program, they will be provided training by a consulting group with funding provided by CMHC. There are numerous functions required with the CMHC program from policy development to proper maintenance procedures and replacement reserves. CMHC does condition reviews and once these are done, we must ensure that the remedial damages are taken care of.

4. RAPID HOUSING INITIATIVE

The First Nation was approved for a 5-plex consisting of three 2-bedroom and two 1-bedroom units under the Rapid Housing Initiative. It was a *very* competitive process and our Housing Portfolio Manager kept on top of the application procedures. Any information required from us was promptly sent to CMHC. The multi-unit plex will be situated at Dogpaw. It would be too cumbersome to transport to the Angle side. The unit is scheduled for delivery in August. We will

keep you posted in the event of any changes.

5. NEW HOUSING

The First Nation was approved for two new houses and since Dogpaw is getting the 5-plex, Chief and Council have opted to build the houses at Angle Inlet with construction starting as soon as lake opens.

CONSTRUCTION OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Chief and Council have been planning to construct an Administration building with the current abandoned structure that was originally a Daycare Centre. We have completed the design phase and are now waiting for quotes from the contractor. The project has now started. It will have 5 offices, a bathroom and a mini boardroom. This building is located at Dogpaw. The expected completion date is likely this summer before the fall.

COVID-19

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on all of us these past 2 years and it feels like it is here to stay. Several deaths occurred across the world due to this new strain. Our First Nation was not so lucky to be spared by this virus. Unfortunately, we do not have the statistics to provide how many were afflicted on reserve or off reserve. We tried our best to prevent the virus from affecting our community, but we just could not. We did our best to provide emergency food supplies and whatever was required for the community. We continue to follow the Pandemic Plan and can only follow the restrictions as directed by the province. COVID-19 is not gone, and we must remain vigilant against this virus and be safe.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We currently do not have a dedicated individual to work under our Economic Development Program, but we are still accessing funds through proposals submitted on our behalf from our Expert Resource Advisor and consultants that we have engaged. We do have some initiatives in this area and will have to seek funding to make dreams become a reality.

EDUCATION

Northwest Angle #33 First Nation has hired a highly qualified a Director of Education. Elizabeth Mitchell will be under a two-year contract and hopefully we can hire a community member to work as an Education Assistant to learn from Ms. Mitchell. Elizabeth has several years of experience working on Education with First Nations in the Treaty 3 area. She also has vast experience in Special Education and will also be administering the Post-Secondary Program. We have been negotiating for an increase in this program.

The First Nation has also hired Eleanor Skead under the Education Partnership Planning Project. Eleanor has a master's degree in Education and brings a wealth of knowledge in this field. She will be responsible for coordinating tuition agreements with our partners at the various school boards we are affiliated with. We hope to develop a better service delivery system.

We are currently in negotiations with Indigenous Services Canada for a school at Angle Inlet. We have submitted a request for a School Feasibility Study - this is generally the first step in obtaining funding to develop a design and engage with members.

FAMILY BAND REPRESENTATION PROGRAM

The First Nation applied for funding to develop the Family Band Representation Program after the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rulings. This program will be responsible for ensuring that our children are brought home - in order to reap the benefits of regaining their cultural identity and ensuring that their needs are met. There is a disparity within our child welfare system for First Nations children. Many of whom were lost in the system. Under this program, workers experienced in Child Welfare issues will be provided. Workers under this program will be working directly in the court system with our band representative lawyer. A lawyer was also retained to act as an advocate for children in care. He is responsible for all our children.

We will be purchasing the Frontline Worker software to develop a database of all our case files. This will be a highly confidential program and only the workers will be allowed to access any data required.

We will also be purchasing two SUVs for the staff to use when they are traveling to court or doing child welfare visits.

Please note - Prevention Workers are separate from this program. The two departments provide separate services. Prevention works to stop apprehension of children, whereas the Band Representation Program is for children that were already apprehended and under a protective agency. They try and locate family from the First Nation to act as the customary care givers.

An elder will also be retained under this program as well as a Human Resources worker. We have also included a budget for a consultant to help us the setting up the program.

There will be Band Representation Lead - a band representative for Angle and for Dogpaw.

Training will be provided as soon as they have started at their posts.

FINANCE

The First Nation is doing well financially and as of March 31, 2021, our audited statements received an unqualified opinion and our ratios have met the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) thresholds. However, there is much work still to be accomplished in terms of debt management. We have invested in short term GICs for much of our excess cash. We are ensuring that these funds **are not** to be used under our general account. The financial statements are posted on the ISC website for your review. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask and our financial advisors can prepare answers.

First Nations financial statements have become increasingly complex within the past few years with the governments transferring of programs and services to First Nations. Therefore, it is imperative that we hire qualified financial personnel to administer our funds and report in an accountable and timely manner.

FLOOD CLAIM

The flood claim negotiations have preoccupied a lot of our time within the past year. We have had several virtual meetings with lawyers and representatives from the Ontario and Canada. Narratives Inc. was hired to conduct information and consultation sessions with members. The first meeting was held in Winnipeg on February 7, 2022. There were approximately twenty-three members who were present in person and approximately eighty online.

Any questions that were asked at the meeting will be answered shortly.

Once COVID-19 issues are resolved in the communities of Angle Inlet and Dogpaw meetings will resume on a more regular basis. I believe a schedule will be shared once it has been finalized. We will keep you posted. The surveys have been registered online and Ontario started their 45-day consultation period ending May 14.

Once we get a confirmed timeline of the next steps, they will be released to Band Members. We require at least 2 consultation meetings prior to ratification of the flood claim settlement. These are being planned but we are waiting for break up before we can have some face-to-face discussions on where we want to go.

GOVERNANCE

Unfortunately, we have not had the time to work on our governance issue with respect to the Custom Election Code. We do have a draft but once again due to COVID-19 we haven't had the ability to have any engagement sessions with members. The election will be on August 27 as this is when the current term ends. Scheduling an early election would require the Chief and Council to end their terms by resigning. This would not be feasible as I am sure present council would not shorten their terms to accommodate an election when only a month away from the election. There are all kinds of issues to take into consideration such as a lapse in governance and economic matters of the First Nation.

MEMBERSHIP CODE

As part of the Governance program, we will be working on the Membership Code in the next few months and hopefully that can be ratified this year as this is an important process of the Flood Claim. We anticipate instituting a working group for this file as soon as possible.

LAND CODE DEVELOPMENT

The First Nation was approved to develop their own Land Code. This would mean that we would have control of our own land and would eliminate administering a big part of the Indian Act.

We have posted this position however we have not received any applications and therefore no work has commenced in this area to date. Once again though it would be having to engage our members in the process of developing our Land Code.

We have not yet made any decision yet as to what we will do with the funding that was provided. We have no expenses yet under this program.

Only First Nations that have not been in a third party arrangement are approved for this funding. All we need is someone to facilitate and coordinate meetings and discussions. A verifier needs to be hired. There is a workplan in place already and the steps just need to be followed. Training will also be provided through the Lands Advisory Board. An assistant can also be hired under this program.

LANDFILL SITE

We are still upgrading our Landfill Site. Funding was approved to address some of the issues pertaining to excess scrap metal. It should be noted that sewage waste should not be dumped at the site. The program has recently purchased a Kubota for the Landfill site but unfortunately it will not be delivered until August, 2022.

ROAD ACCESS REPAIRS (DP, WFB, AWZ37)

In partnership with Naotkamegwanning and Animake Wa-zhing #37 First Nations, we were able to secure funds to repair the access road. It has been in dire need of repairs for many years. We will know more in the coming weeks when construction will be starting.

ROAD ACCESS FEASIBILITY STUDY

We just recently had our kick-off meeting to begin our Access Road Feasibility Study. It has taken us many years to finally get approval for this project. Melvin Blackhawk was hired as the community liaison for this project. There will be an engineer that will look at the topography, and soil testing will be conducted as well as any environmental assessments relating to construction of the road. This is just the first phase of the project that maybe in a couple of years, we will be approved for an access road into the community. It has been quite the fight to get the road study approved.

WATER TREATMENT PLANT (Angle Inlet)

We acknowledge that there have been challenges completing the Water Treatment Plant project. Please be advised that Northwest Angle #33 First Nation has retained legal counsel and that the project team is doing everything within their power to ensure that the Angle Inlet community is provided access to safe drinking water as soon as possible. Unfortunately, that is all we can report at this time. Thank you for your patience with this matter.

WATER TREATMENT PLANT (Dogpaw)

The team met on February 15, 2022 to select firms to invite to tenders for project Manager team on the project based on the Terms of Reference developed by the Tribal Council. Firms will be given until March 4 to submit their proposals and proposals will be evaluated by the Technical Staff from the Tribal Council. After much lobbying, the First Nation was approved to receive \$10million+ for the Dogpaw Water Treatment Plant Upgrades. The work will be performed in phases over the next few years.

CLOSING SUMMARY

We hope that we have provided members with enough information to date. There are many issues that we must deal with daily, but we will do our best to keep you informed on what matters to you.

We have plans to gather with all our Health Staff to come up with a Health Plan geared towards the unique differences between the two communities and out of this we hope that a suitable structure is derived from the meetings.

As well, we now have the draft financial and policy hoping to streamline it to a solid working document that everyone will be proud to adhere to. We just need to revise it to meet the needs of both communities.

The council has worked very hard on projects and have helped the Chief to keep many files moving.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email either the Chief at chief@nwa33.ca or any of the Councilors as listed below:

- David Paul - davidjpaul1957@gmail.com
- Diane Sandy - Sandydc77@gmail.com
- Farrell Desrosiers - Keifer10@hotmail.com
- Joe Katcheconias - joekatcheconias@gmail.com
- Norma Girard - norma_girard@shaw.ca

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