

**FORT WILLIAM FIRST NATION**  
**CHIEF and COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**August 9, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.**

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**CHAIR:** Chief Michele Solomon  
**COUNCILLORS:** Yvette Greenwald, Jenny Charlie, Sheldon Bannon, Brian Ludwigsen, Peter Collins Sr., Bess LeGarde, Bonnie Pelletier, Jacob McKay, Kyle MacLaurin, Desiree Morriseau-Shields  
**STAFF:** Recorder-Bernice Pelletier  
**REGRETTES:** Sherry Pelletier  
**GUESTS:** Dr. Melanie Jeffrey,  
University of Toronto Mississauga - Amanda Norton (PhD Student)  
University of Toronto Mississauga - Professor Matthew Adams – Dept. Geography, Geomahcs & Environment  
Maria Jacome and Vincenzo Constanzo (on line)

**AGENDA – Call Meeting to Order – Chair** called meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Michele Solomon opened with smudge and prayer.

**AGENDA ITEM – Declaration of Conflict of Interest – None**

**AGENDA ITEM – MOTION TO ACCEPT AGENDA**

***MOTION #1 - Moved by Jacob McKay and seconded by Kyle MacLaurin to accept the agenda of August 9, 2023 with the addition of in camera item by Bonnie Pelletier and the deferral of in camera item re: Human Resources. All in favour. Motion Carried.***

**AGENDA ITEM – Presentation by Dr. Melanie Jeffrey**

Dr. Melanie Jeffrey, University of Toronto Mississauga - Amanda Norton (PhD Student), University of Toronto Mississauga - Professor Matthew Adams – Dept. Geography, Geomancy & Environment and Maria and Vincenzo (on line) gave a presentation on Caring for the Thunderbird’s Nest with linked studies investigating a Cancer Cluster with Fort William First Nation.

**Discussion:**

- study at the bark dump, landfill site at foot of Mt. McKay
- listening and respectful relationship
- relations of diseases and causes of cancer
- where is it safe to live, work and play
- what’s happening in our bodies, what is happening in my environment
- understanding exposures, air and water, soil
- preliminary overages (residential limits): GTP lands 2011-2012
- knowns and unknowns
- GTP lands is in FWFN lands, environmental testing has been done. The building of homes on that site is not allowed as part of the GTP settlement.
- Successful grants that were funded first for studies were done. Melanie is grant writing on continuous basis.
- discussion on blood cancers studies and how they are done
- One example is Air pollution studies could be from \$25,000 to millions and the study’s length depends on the grant.

**Maria Jacome presentation:**

- Introduction – ground water contamination, map where contaminants are in the ground water, where they are coming from and where they are going. Using geoelectric survey.
- Discussion on the background of geoelectric survey and condition of soil for mapping area where contamination might be suspected. Use monitors for recording the wells in the ground water.

- Discussion on bark dump land fill site as an area identified where there is contaminant in the water.
- Need to understand what are the main components that are producing contaminants.
- Bitext testing was recommended to be done at all the monitors wells in front of the bark dump and this has not happened. This testing can determine types of cancer. i.e. different types of gasolines, benzene. Etc.
- Brush cutting is being done to do more studies.

Testing from Resolute has not been received to date. Dr. Jeffrey will be meeting with Bobbi Bannon tomorrow for update. Chief will contact Resolute to direct them to provide the information. There is still leaking at the landfill site.

A meeting will be schedule in the fall with Atlas Holdings (Resolute) and CN. There are environmental lawyers who can investigate concerns from FWFN. There are 27 monitoring wells at this site.

Concerns that dumping is still ongoing down towards the old Abitibi site. They were told to stop and to date have not. Dr. Jeffrey will try investigating this site tomorrow.

Resolute should pay for the Biotesting, if not, Dr. Jeffrey could get funding to do this. It is important the Resolute do a duplicate testing.

Dr. Jeffrey can visit the old Big Chief area for testing in the future.

- Proposed new ground water sampling. Need a bio test to get samples from boreholes to see what kind of contamination may be there. Next action to do the analogies.
- Indigenous Cancer Care Ontario managed to retain a lot of its funding and Dr. Jeffrey will be in contact with them.

## **Matthew Adams - 2<sup>nd</sup> Presentation on Air Quality**



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Discussion:

- Pilot data on air pollution has been gathered and will be analyzed for FWFN
- Concerns – running gasoline and diesel engines and sulfur
- Generating power left overs since 2014
- Saw mill and chemical plant
- Home cooking and heating.
- Local businesses, gas businesses and paint shops (auto paint)
- Traffic patterns, vehicle types, rural or city, dump trucks. Logging trucks.
- Geography, lakes and weather patterns, wind patterns
- Air pollution out in the street, gasoline, exhaust, benzene, formaldehyde, iPhone 6
- Pulp haze in which way it blows
- Modeling approaches for air pollution.
- Benzene is distinctive blood cancer causing, leukemia
- Benzene can be tracked in homes by shoes, which can expose little kids playing on floors.
- Produce in pulp and paper as well.
- Out door air from combustion, i.e. vehicles, fire, natural gas to heat home, fire and steel production are contributors.
- Natural sources i.e. forest fires, mining
- Site visited was Abitibi/Abibow site in 2019. Lot of waste there, only suppose to be ash. There was an error made in 2011 report
- Urethane discs are placed in five different areas in our community and are analyzed monthly. Will get result of cancer producing chemicals. This will give a good sense if there is something to be concerned about.
- Looking at ozone results, measuring benzene etc. to see if those are elevated.

There is a smaller study with Emilie and Faith Sweetgrass and Cedar. Dr. Jeffrey will join with the collecting at the right time for sweetgrass and cedar for testing as its used. Plants can tell about the soil. Matthew's lab will pay for this.



Chief suggests avoiding these medicines in certain areas. Sweetgrass typically used for burning, cedar used for tea and cedar bath, line the ground in sweat lodge, etc.

White Clover and air pollution study possible future study.

Next steps:

- What is happening in my environment?
- Going for large air pollution grant for community driven survey exercise.
- Get more environmental site assessments before new subdivision was developed.
- Get more testing at gas businesses.
- Put forward a grant proposal so that elders can talk to each other about environmental concerns.
- What's happening in my body? Collaborative work with Ontario School of Medicine. Get wording from Dr. Leterrier.
- General framework to address community priorities: bark dump, engineering and machine learning approach, rank and separate the contribution that different complex mixtures are making, more and deeper wells where needed is another proposal, demonical of cancer, sharing information about the land between elders and staff, community air quality and health proposal.
- Youth interested in using a machine to find out what might be underneath the old St. Pat's High School, former residential school.
- Discussion to check out the old hospital site in Squaw Bay.

Dr. Jeffrey will be back in October 2023. Matthew Adams can be available to present finding in mid September and again in October to Council. Air monitoring would be good timeline to present.

**IN CAMERA begins at 9:20 p.m.**



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