Citizens' Council Meeting - March 19, 2026

Unofficial Transcript

[Grandmother Beatrice Demetrius]
Good morning. Gracious Father, today we remember our Métis, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our rights. As a solid team at this table, we can work together to promote our history, culture, and customs, and make proud our ancestors who gave so much. Help us trust in the deep wisdom and traditional knowledge we were gifted. Thank you for each mind and heart that fills the presence of this room today. Amen.

[Chair]
Thank you, Grandmother. Before we get started and take a look at our agenda for today, Secretary Wolfe, the floor is yours.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
Good morning all. So for those that know that I'm the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, and last week I attended a national gathering from Métis National Council, and we had a veterans' gathering in Vancouver all week. And while I was there, working on behalf of President Sandmaier, we had received a gift.

Now this is a gift that recognizes the Purge, which is the LGBTQ, and the new monument that they have to represent Métis, well, yeah, Métis veterans, but all veterans from the Purge, and they created a beautiful challenge coin that was presented to me, and I wanted to present it to you, President Sandmaier, as our governing body leader. So thank you so very much. Please look at it. It's gorgeous.

[President Andrea Sandmaier]
Thank you.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
That's our representative on that.

[President Sandmaier]
Okay. I'll send him a thank you.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
Please do.

[President Sandmaier]
Oh, wow. That is beautiful.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]

So the picture on the coin is actually the new Purge monument that they have going up in Ottawa. It's a whole LGBTQ Purge walkway, parkway, and the monument that's actually been approved is on the coin.

So I wanted to say thank you for representing the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Otipemisiwak government for our Métis veterans. Thank you.

[President Sandmaier]
Thank you for representing us with the veterans.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
My pleasure. Thank you.

[President Sandmaier]
Thank you.
I will send him a thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Wolfe. That was lovely. Okay.

So there's an agenda before you, Council. I understand there's one addition that's been requested under 12F would be a contractor-related matter. Are there any other additions or deletions to the agenda?

Seeing none, would someone like to move the agenda as amended? Secretary Leddy, seconder, Secretary Chodzicki. Debate, discussion?

Any opposition?

[Representative Shannon Dunfield]
Mr. Chair, just to confirm, you're listing it as a contractor-related matter?

[Chair]
That's right.

[Representative Dunfield]
Okay. Thank you.

[Chair]
Any opposition to the motion to adopt the agenda as amended? Seeing none, the motion carries. The agenda is adopted.

Madam President, I will turn the floor over to you for the President's welcome.

[President Sandmaier]

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Good morning, everybody. I hope everybody had a good night last night and a good sleep. I want to first, again, thank Elder Beatrice for coming and starting us off in a good way with a prayer.

It is important that we ground ourselves on days like today, especially when we have lots of hard work to do, and I thank you for coming. Thank you very much. I also want to welcome our newest Council member, who was sworn in last night, Representative Women's Representative Gabrielle Blatz.

Let's give her a great big round of applause. Welcome to our table. We are all very excited for you to be here, excited that we are a full Council again, and look so forward to working with you.

We have a lot of work to do, as you know, but we will get there. As I've said many times to this Council and to our citizens, building a new governance structure, building a new government is not an overnight task. This will take more than this term to build this government.

It will be an ongoing construction. An ongoing renovation, I guess, is more the term, but we'll get there. As I've also said many times before, there are going to be roadblocks in front of us.

There's going to be people who don't want to work with us, people who are going to not be nice to us. There's going to be mistakes that we make, but we have to learn from it. Learn from those mistakes.

That's how I was raised. Treat each other with kindness. Learn from your mistakes and move on.

I'm going to give you a little bit of an update on some of the things that have been going on the last month. Last week, we joined Métis National Council and Métis Nation of Ontario in a historic signing of the MOU between MNC and Northwest Territories Métis. The agreement establishes a framework for collaboration and ongoing dialogue between the Métis National Council and Northwest Territories Métis Nation to advance shared priorities, strengthen Métis governance, and ensure that the perspectives of Métis and the Northwest Territories are reflected in national advocacy and policy discussions.

We also attended the Métis National Council Board of Governors meeting where we made progress on the development of the Métis Policy Forum. We also were able to attend the unboxing of the historic Métis ancestral object that is one step closer to getting home. We have some artists, some experts that are now studying that object to see where it came from and possibly who the artist or artists are and hopefully we'll be able to make sure that that item gets back to where it's supposed to be.

We also attended the Métis National Council Health Summit in Ottawa along with our health team as well as Secretary Mitchell, Secretary Chodzicki, Secretary Lavallee, Secretary

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Lussier, and Secretary Leddy who was also there but doing multiple things in her portfolio while she was there. It was a great health summit. Our health team of course did a presentation and they of course rocked it out to the park.

Our health team does such a great job with the work that they're doing and we also had some of our couple of our elected officials and one of our Métis youth on a youth health panel. So we were well represented at that health summit. Making sure I don't forget anything.

While I was in Ottawa I also met with the CERNA Deputy Minister Valerie Gideon and her team to discuss of course the progress of our self-government agreement amendments and the consultation policy. I also met with INAN committee member MP Billy Morin to reiterate that our government fully supports all federally recognized Métis nation governments in achieving their own self-government treaties. However this cannot come at the expense and harm to others that and that we expect a fulsome study when it does get to committee.

I also met with just this past Monday with INAN committee member from the block Mariléne Gill, MP Mariléne Gill, and we discussed also the importance of a thorough study. Both were in full agreement and also have their own concerns about the legislation. As you as we've already said we've welcomed our new women's representative but we also had sworn in two new district captains last night.

Bernie Ouellette from the Red Deer district and Kevin Metz from the Nose Hill Métis district who I believe is here with us today. We have now successfully transitioned 17 out of 22 of our districts. This is nation building and we're getting there.

Our consultation team held a very successful Promoting and Increasing Cultural Safety Leadership Summit. The consultation team has been engaging with citizens across Alberta to learn and listen how to better support Métis women, youth, and 2SLGBTQQIA plus folks. We believe that cultural safety is a key part of nation building.

It was a great celebration celebrating the final report. Thank you to those citizens representatives that were able to come and participate. We had a great day on our own on Saturday going through some of the rights-based things that came out of the report and we also had to sew.

Don't hang your head down Trevor. It was okay. You made it through.

But we did learn how to, well a lot of the people around the table, Cindy, Lisa, Sarah, knew how to sew. I think Nelson knows how to sew too. He just wasn't saying.

But we did make ribbon sweatshirt sweaters. Yeah and they, it was fun. It was a great day.

Where was I here? Last week we started our, had our first of three Métis Works Business Summit. So last week was in Calgary and that was a lot of fun.

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It was great to see citizens out who came up to me and said I've never been, I'm Métis, I've never been to any events and I'm so happy to be here and it was wonderful. Great speakers, panelists, again makes me very proud to see people who are our entrepreneurs who are stepping outside of their comfort zone and getting up and doing a keynote and killing it. Absolutely killing it.

So we have another one this weekend on Saturday in Slave Lake and then on Monday in Edmonton. So great job to Tyler and all of your team. Katie, wherever you are, great job, absolutely great job.

And of course to Secretary Dibb, wonderful job, great speech, great networking. Thank you very much for all the work that you're doing. I, last Sunday, our women's representative, at that time women's representative-elect, Gabrielle Blatts and I attended the Slave Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais District's women's ice fishing event.

Those events are called Catch, Clean and Cook and we went to Slave Lake where we were joined by Representative Cindy Moore, District Captain Diane Peredery and Secretary Grant Lacombe. Although we didn't catch, but I believe after I wrote my notes here that I found out that after we left there were two fish caught, which maybe we are bad luck, I don't know, but there were two fish that were caught, so that's fantastic. It was a great day connecting and learning.

It was very cold. The weatherman lied to us, but we pushed through and we made it out unscathed. Gabrielle did not fall in the hole, so we're good.

But I wasn't going to say that. So a great big thank you to our harvesting manager, Craig Letendre, and all of his volunteers. Although some days are challenging, that is okay.

We were built for challenges, the Métis people. That's what we've been doing the last couple hundred years. Challenge after challenge after challenge.

What matters is that we can see the hard work that we were all doing and that it's paying off. And I'm so honoured to serve our nation alongside all of you. I know sometimes it feels like we're not moving forward, but little by little we are.

And what I'm hearing out there when I am out at events with our citizens is that they're proud of us and that they're happy that we're doing these things and that we are moving forward and the things that they wanted and dreamed of for our nation, we are getting there. So thank you all, and I will pass it back to the chair.

[Chair]
Thank you, Madam President, for that welcome. Are there any questions, comments to the president's welcome? Seeing none, can I get a motion to accept the president's welcome as presented?

Seconded by Representative Ward. Any discussion, debate? Any opposition to the motion?

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Motion is carried. That takes us to agenda item number five, which is the meeting minutes for the Citizens Council meeting of February 19th, 2026. Secretary of Records, the floor is all yours.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
Thank you very much and good morning, everybody. You have the minutes in front of you. So if you have anything of note that you would like to add or change, please let me know.

But I did want to take a moment and introduce our new official Clerk, Lindsay Henderson. She did do our minutes for us in December, but she didn't get an introduction, so I really wanted to make sure that we all knew that we have an official Clerk now, Lindsay. So yeah, everybody say hi, Lindsay.

And then I also wanted to let everybody know that there were no redactions to the recording from February's council meeting. So there's nothing written in the minutes because there were no redactions about that. So yeah, thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Wolfe. Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Bobbi Paul-Alook]
Just a correction. From our last meeting, there was a correction to the previous minutes. And so on agenda item number five, meeting minutes, the correction that was made is still incorrect.

The correction was to accurately record the singular question of order that was brought forward, which was what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation. So it's still not reading to correctly reflect what was asked.

[Chair]
Secretary Wolfe.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
There we go. Okay. Could you repeat that for me, Bobbi?

Because we did go back and listen to the recording and make sure, so maybe there was just a little extra thing. So if you could just repeat that for me, and then we can make sure that this is perfectly to what you wanted to say.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
It was just a singular question. I can't recall what the beginning part of that sentence was, but it had read regarding decisions of the operation of the council. The question that was asked was just what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation.

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So there wasn't like questions regarding what aspects. It was just one singular question. What aspects of operation will be included in the regulation?

Does that make sense?

[Chair]
Secretary Wolfe.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
Okay. So you're saying in the amendment that I'm looking at right now, it does say regarding what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation. So what part are you trying to correct?

Sorry.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
It was phrased in the original meeting minutes that there was like questions regarding what aspects. It was one singular question, and the singular question was what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation.

[Chair]
Secretary Wolfe, how can I help?

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
Okay. I'm so sorry. I'm totally not understanding.

Can you like tell me exactly where on this page you were wanting the correction?

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Do you have the full phrase that was written? Because this is just a piece of it that was changed. What the amendment was asking for was to change the reference to not regarding decisions, because it wasn't questions regarding decisions.

It was one single question that was asked. So I think maybe if you look at the whole piece from the previous minutes, you'll understand what I'm asking for. I can look that up for you and give it to you in a minute, but I don't have it right in front of me.

[Chair]
Secretary Wolfe.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
Okay. That makes more sense now. Thank you very much for clarifying.

I think we will have to just go back and double check with the February and the January minutes to make sure that they're reflected properly, and we might need to take on the

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break. Maybe we can take a look at that. Would that be okay with you, Bobbi, or Representative Paul-Alook? Sorry.

[Chair]
Okay. In that case, we will stand the minutes down and come back to the minutes after the break.

That takes us then into-

[Representative Dunfield]
Mr. Chair, are we coming back to the full minutes or are we still talking about if there's any changes or anything, or do we want to wait to do that until after?

[Chair]
Yeah, let's do it all at once when we come back rather. That way we're not burdening the clerk with tracking. Okay.

[Representative Dunfield]
We may need to have a discussion about whether or not that is conflict of interest. I do understand that there was a Judicial Tribunal ruling on this, but I think we need to have further discussion about whether or not those two roles can be held in tandem.

[Chair]
So we did seek a formal opinion of the Judicial Tribunal and it's been published that there is no conflict of interest?

[Representative Dunfield]
Okay, so the other piece to that is that it is my understanding that the Clerk of the Judicial Tribunal reports up through self-government when in our Judicial Act they're supposed to report up through the Judicial Tribunal.

[Chair]
For the purposes of clerking the Judicial Tribunal, the Clerk does not report through Self-Government. All of the work related to the Judicial Tribunal is separate and apart from all of the work of self-government.

[Representative Dunfield]
Okay.

Okay, so that takes us into Agenda Item 6A, which is the Chair's report. I won't read it to you folks, it was circulated in advance. Are there questions to the Chair's report?

Thank you. Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Paul-Alook]

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Just a comment on how great it was yesterday to be able to host the Constitution Commission. That was one of the first things that we had motioned for as an action item when we first took office, and so it was really great to be able to finally host them and hear from them yesterday. So thank you for making that happen.

[Chair]
Pleasure. It definitely took some wrangling to find private citizen schedules in alignment, but yeah, it was a very valuable session for sure. Any other comments, questions to the Chair's report?

Representative Dunfield.

[Representative Dunfield]
Just confirming, I know I had a quick conversation this morning, but there have been a couple dates that have been saved the date for us for Citizens' Council meetings in September. So just wanting to double check with you, because that's not listed on your on your report. So just, is that, that's not set in stone yet?

[Chair]
They're essentially set in stone, I didn't include them in the update because I haven't drafted the notices for them, but they will be issued.

[Representative Dunfield]
Okay, thank you.

[Chair]
Those will be the dates.

If there's no additional questions, can I seek a motion to accept the Chair's report as presented? Secretary Leddy, seconded by Representative Schnell. Further discussion, debate?

Any opposition? No opposition. The motion carries.

The report is accepted. Thank you, Council. Would you like to go into the Citizens' Proposal updates, or would you like us to break now and come back to the minutes once the clerks have had a chance to review?

Okay, we will carry on to agenda item 7a, which is the Senior Executive Officer Citizens' Proposals update. The floor is all yours, Mr. Barner.

[Senior Executive Officer Aaron Barner]
Thank you. All right, this, there's a briefing note under 7a, and I'll just review that, and if there's any questions, please let me know. So the objective is to inform Citizens' Council that a number of proposals from the 2025 Annual Citizens' Gathering have been referred to administration for review, analysis, and future reporting.

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Background, at the 2025 Annual Citizens' Gathering, citizens brought forward and carried multiple proposals for consideration. In accordance with the Self-Government Act, these proposals were reported to Citizens' Council and subsequently directed for administrative review. The proposals referred include Proposal No. 3, Métis Art Inventory and Artist Promotion, that the Citizens' Council consider building a diverse inventory of Métis art and promote the art and artists through the kisîhtoskâtonaw Métis Government Artists Collective. Proposal No. 4, Prioritization of Métis Citizens in Employment and Leadership, that the Citizens' Council consider implementing legislative and policy requirements that will ensure that Métis citizens are prioritized, supported, and given preference for employment, leadership, and decision-making roles within our government and its institutions wherever possible.

Proposal No. 5, Two-Spirit Representative Role, that the Citizens' Council consider to create a specific Two-Spirit Representative Role on our Métis Government. Proposal No. 6, Fish and Wildlife and Resource Management Act, that Citizens' Council consider and begin the necessary work to take the draft of the Métis Nation of Alberta Fish and Wildlife and Resource Management Act and further begin the process to enact this as legislation. Proposal No. 7, Harvesters' Council, that the Citizens' Council consider the work to begin to put a Harvesters' Council back in our agreement.

Proposal No. 11, District Communication and Protocol, that the Citizens' Council consider that prior to engaging with any program, event, consultation, or services within a district that the respective departments of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government or the Métis Nation of Alberta or its affiliates establish a clear communication work in partnership with the districts to deliver the programs, events, consultation, or services by way of written and mandate that the protocol that it utilizes with each department. Proposal No. 13, Constitution Commission, that Citizens' Council consider creating a commission to identify amendments to the Métis Constitution ahead of the three-year deadline that we have to fine-tune the elements that need to be addressed and reinforce this and strengthen our Constitution.

Proposal No. 14, Future Citizens' Gathering Venue Review, that Citizens' Council and the Métis Crossing Board to look at all options to deal with hosting the next Citizens' Gathering here in 2027 with options for all the concerns brought forward by the citizens at this gathering. Current status: All listed proposals have been formally referred for administrative review. Work is now in the analysis phase and is being coordinated across relevant areas to ensure a consistent and complete approach. Initial work focused on is gathering relevant information, prior work, and extinguishing and existing materials.

Confirming scope and intent where proposals are broad or require clarification. Assessing operational policy governance and legislative implications. Identifying alignment with existing initiatives, mandates, and priorities.

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Determining what can be advanced administratively versus what may require further Citizens' Council direction. This work will inform the development of structured response materials for future Council consideration. Analysis.

This approach ensures proposals are reviewed in a coordinated and disciplined manner, allowing administration to provide clear, consistent analysis across all proposals. Distinguish between administrative actions and matters requiring Council decision or legislative process. Identify risks, dependencies, and cross-departmental impacts early.

Avoid premature implementation without appropriate authority or direction. At this stage, all proposals remain under review. No implementation decisions have been made.

No new programs, structures, or legislative actions have been initiated.

[Chair]
Okay, Council. Questions to the briefing? If not, is there a motion to accept the status update on Citizens' Gathering?

Secretary Chodzicki, seconded by Representative Schnell. Discussion? Debate?

Is there any opposition to the motion? The motion carries. The update is accepted for information.

Thank you kindly. That takes us to Agenda Item 7B, which is the Citizens' Proposal with respect to Number 2, the Veterans Memorial. Director Fetch, I believe this is your agenda item.

[Director Tyler Fetch]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, we support the Veterans' Portfolio and Secretary Lisa Wolfe in trying to do work for veterans. So we were provided the update because of the Citizens' Proposal from the last gathering, which asked Citizens' Council to consider directing resources regarding funding or communications that's needed and to ensure the monument expansion is completed by November 1, 2026, in order that veterans, first responders, and families can celebrate this effort on Indigenous Veterans Day, November 8, 2026.

We had a long, drawn-out, two-year wait to try to draw funds through the Métis Veterans Legacy Fund and managed to get that finalized. And we have the funds. The funds are being transferred to Metis Crossing.

But in the meantime, our elder Beatrice has been working diligently and had identified a number of more names than what we had originally applied for. So the fund that we got was for the, I think it was about 2,500 names. And now we're at about 4,000 extra names, right?

Is that correct?

[Grandmother Beatrice Demetrius]

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Total of 7,200.

[Director Fetch]
And there was already 3,000. Yeah, about 3,000 up there already. And then we were going to put 2,400, 2,500.

And then she's been working since then because it took two years to get the funding. I did speak with Juanita at Métis Crossing. We are on track to have this done in time for Indigenous Veterans Day so we can host an event with the updated monument.

We won't be... We're right now asking contractors, what does the added names look like? What is the cost?

I don't think that we'll be able to cover it with the funds that we got, but there are other options to be able to try to do something. So we're working. At least we'll get what we originally had planned to get up.

And then we will work to get another, the other names up. And I think in that time, we're probably going to have a bunch more names. So we're going to have to approach it as we get there to see where we're at and what the cost, because we have to go back to the contractor.

We have to get quotes. We have to be able to provide that when we're asking for funds to be able to expand that monument. But there are a couple of options for that.

So we are on track to meet this proposal. Yeah.

[Chair]
Thank you, Director Fetch. Questions to the update? Secretary Lisa Wolfe.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
Yes. Thank you for everybody that has been supportive on the Veterans Profile. I know that a lot of our family members here from around this table have served in the First and Second World War, and in Korea, and in Afghanistan.

So again, if you do have family members that are not on that original monument, I would ask that you talk to our elder, Beatrice Demetrius, so that you can fill out the appropriate form to get that in. We do have a deadline of March 28th for this process right now. And you need their service number.

You need their background. You need their grandparents' name. You need their great-grandparents' name on there to prove Métis identity.

So I wanted to say thank you for the intergovernmental team and also to our Board of Governors for obtaining the funding that we need for the second half of our monument. I know it's been a long process, pretty much the whole time that I've been here for the last

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three years. So thank you very much to Tyler Fetch and our veteran team that supports me in my portfolio to get these things done.

Thank you.

[Chair]
Representative Blatz.

[Representative Gabrielle Blatz]
Thank you. Thank you for the report and all the work that's done on this. This is really exciting.

I just have a question of clarification because I got confused with all the numbers that were being thrown out. Will it be 7,200 total on the monument or 7,200 extra names on the monument?

[Director Fetch]
It'd be about 7,200 total.

[Representative Blatz]
Total?

[Director Fetch]
Yeah, because there's 3,000. I know I was doing the math, air math, right? So it's 3,000 about on the monument that was originally built.

We had 2,600 names and then there's another, like that was when we applied, we had 2,600 and then there's now, the total would be 7,200. Yeah, roughly 7,200.

[Representative Blatz]
Okay, thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you, Representative Blatz. Further questions, discussion to the briefing? I see none.

Is there someone who wishes to make the motion to accept for information? Secretary Ekeberg, seconded by Secretary Chodzicki. Discussion?

Debate? I see none. Is there any opposition to the motion?

The motion carries. The update is accepted for information. Thank you kindly.

We're a little ahead of schedule, but I understand the Ombudsman is in the room with us. We will go to agenda item number 8A, which I believe is the joint report from Secretary Sarah Wolfe and the Ombudsman. If Ombudsman Werth could join us at the front.

[Representative Dunfield]

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Mr. Chair, can you go closer to the mic or speak up? Because you're very quiet.

[Chair]
I'm starting to lose my voice. I'm catching the cold that you have all tried to share with me.

Is the Ombudsman in the room? I can't turn my neck all the way around. He's coming?

Great. The floor is all yours for each of you. I don't know who wants it first.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
It's not too much from me, so I will hand it over to Ombudsman Werth to give his report. Thank you.

[Ombudsman Phil Werth]
Thank you. Good morning. Thank you for having me.

My position, I will say, has been evolving since the start. There's been changes and whatnot that have gone on. I've gotten to know a lot of the people and citizens.

Some call me to clarify things, and I'm starting to get more of a handle on the culture and what's going on out there. I don't mean the Métis culture. I mean what's going on in our government and the province and whatnot.

I have a formal presentation here, but I just want to say that if you ever have questions, please feel free to call me or come and see me or whatever you would like to straighten things out, because there's been a lot of rumor, innuendo, and all kinds of other things I've run into. If somebody actually has an issue that they want to discuss, then I'm just asking you, please reach out and ask me. I'm going to give you the honest answer as I know it, and if you are having an issue and you can clarify it with me and in my lane, I will do what I can to help you.

That being said right now, I just want to ask if anybody has a question before I get into the slides.

[Chair]
Council, questions before we begin? Looks like they're ready for you.

[Ombudsman Werth]
Okay, we've seen this before, the mandate and role and some of the responsibilities.
To expand on that, recently I've been working on getting an office where people can come and talk and whatever else, make their issues known.

I'm also in the process of hiring an investigator to assist as there is now a few things going, so I need some help with that. Does anybody have a question about the mandate and role? Basically, I'm just going to say it simply as I did before.

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If you have a concern or a question or you feel that things aren't being dealt with fairly, then you can come and see me. You can go on the website, fill out the forms, and like I said, I can direct you in the right direction or else if it's in my land jurisdiction, I will help you and do the best I can to help the process along. Any questions about that?

Okay, we can move forward then. I did see, and just to make clear, I think anyone that's talked to me, we've discussed it for the most part, but if you come to me with an issue, it's going to kind of be like this. If I am expected to do some things, the fact that you made a complaint may come out or else some things can be completely confidential, and if that's what people wish, and as I say this, you can pass this on to people that you deal with in your day-to-day dealings and work.

Basically, if I'm told it's confidential and it's confidential, then it is. I won't be letting the cat out of the bag on that. I'll do what I can.

I have to look at my own because I can't see that far. So this report is for September 1st, 2025, which is basically shortly after the Citizens' Gathering and up to February 1st, 2026. The goal is to try and do quarterly reports, when possible, and I was put off for a couple months, but here I am.

So during that period of written submissions. S~~o Sarah has asked me, which I will do~~, I normally process about two phone calls a day on average of people that have questions about what's going on, what they're doing. So I'm going to record those and just to kind of give an idea that there's a lot of things going on without basically disclosing everything.

So out of the eight submissions, five were against public officials, and three of them were against, we would call, I was asked to call institutions. So a group more than a person. Trends, there's been an increase online, obviously, as people become aware there's somebody that they can reach out to.

I get a lot of calls about how people can apply for the programs, the various programs that we have.

So it's on the slide. So what are those eight submissions that I got? I would say that four were resolved 100%.

I worked on the other four. And sometimes it takes a little bit of time to get everybody on the same page and to move forward. So basically, I'm here to facilitate a good working relationship for everybody.

And that's why I've been working a little bit with human resources to try and help these things. And what we're doing is we're following the laws. We're following labor law.

We're following the case law in Alberta. And the number one thing is just trying to get people to treat each other well. When there's a fight at work, it hurts people.

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They get criticized. They feel pride. And it takes a while to get over it.

But that's something that we have to do. I believe I was told there's like 335 employees now. We all have to try and get along and know that we're on the same page and try to work together.

That's a big one. Just to go through here again, if anybody ever has a question on jurisdiction, go through the act. I don't think the bylaws are out yet, but I'm waiting.

Go through the Ombudsman Act and read it. It's not that long. And you can answer a lot of questions and clarify things for yourselves rather than taking a story from somebody else.

So there has been some work done in the last month. But during this period of time, I had made five recommendations presented. And they were basically, it's not like I came here and presented them.

I think there's an issue with that. Because some of the times, if I do the presentation on one thing, people will know what it is. And then it's not confidential.

But we're working on a way to try and bring that forward so that people can get a handle on what the possible recommendations are. And sometimes they're just going to be confidential because it's between three people. But on some of them, you have to take my word for it.

I've been working with the Judicial Tribunal. We are in discussion with four different files to go forward on. Those take time.

There's people that come forward to me and they want to know, why isn't this done? This should be done.

And I'm working on being able to get information back faster than I am right now. But for some of the things, unfortunately, will take time. So I hope everybody can understand that.

Okay, we can go to the next. So this is basically just outlining the approach. I think people are starting to understand.

I get the inquiry, review what materials I can to see if it's relevant. I normally try to reach out and have a phone call with the parties involved to kind of get a gauge for what's going on. At that point in time, people are notified there's been a complaint and I'm looking into it to try and determine a solution.

And just to kind of interject there again, some people think they're going to phone and then the next day somebody's going to be fired. But that's not the goal. The goal is to get everybody to work together professionally and politely.

And that's what we're trying to do. And like I said before, sometimes feathers get ruffled a little bit and people make up stories, complain, if that makes sense. So it's not easy.

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And there's the, we're on to the, getting down to the, about the communication and assisting with the OMG to fulfill the needs. And the big thing is communication. Like I said, my goal is to do presentations here so people can understand, see me instead of just hearing stories.

There's been a few times, and I understand we're just about done here that I'm talking a lot, but part of it is frustrations from my day to day. Okay. So there's another thing.

If I meet somebody and that person hates me and I've never met them before, I know there's an issue and then it takes a while to work through. But if I can have communication with people and they get to know me, then normally it's easy to facilitate the conversation and problem solving is what I'm trying to do. So I hope that makes sense because I know, obviously, if I haven't met someone and they're already after my hide, then it's not a good thing, is it?

[Chair]
Ombudsman Werth, Secretary Lavallee.

[Secretary Rebecca Lavallee]
Sorry, I just have a quick question. So for the Deputy/Assistant Ombudsman, is that also the Acting Ombudsman?

[Ombudsman Werth]
Well, if I'm not around, then yes.

[Secretary Lavallee]
Okay. Thank you.

[Chair]
Representative Dunfield.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you, Ombudsman Werth, for sharing in your presentation. Really appreciate it. I know you've been very diligent in supporting those of us who have called you to clarify some of the things, so appreciate that.

I do need to bring to the attention of the Council that there's a contradiction in our Constitution and the Ombudsman Act. If you look at our Constitution, 23.2 on page 18 states the Ombudsman is an arms-length officer of the Otipemisiwak Government. Yet in the Act on page four, it says as soon as practicable after being appointed, the Ombudsman must designate an employee of the Otipemisiwak Government who is a citizen as Acting Ombudsman to fulfill the duties of the Ombudsman in the event that the Ombudsman cannot fulfill their duties.

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This is contradictory because the Ombudsman is supposed to be arms-length. We need to address the inconsistencies between our Constitution and our laws, especially when our citizens have made it clear.

[Chair]
President Sandmaier.

[President Sandmaier]
So of course the laws that we have right now, there's nine laws that were done prior to this Council being in place, and they were developed with a legal team, so what we'll have to do is take that back to our legal and ask for clarification on both of those questions.

[Chair]
Okay, we'll refer those questions to Legal Counsel. Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Karen Collins]
Yes, good morning and thank you very much for providing an update to the Council. So just a little bit of clarity in respect to how I worded that. I believe this is an update and it's not actually the annual report as it's identified there.

Otherwise, this annual report is done very, very early compared to when we do our annual reports to the Citizens' Gathering, so I don't know if it's just me or if it indeed is the annual report then you need to tell me that. My question I suppose is, my question is about your recommendation for, what is your recommendation for financial reporting? If there are issues around people asking about financial reporting with respect to, and I just need to also provide a little bit of clarity, there are no zones in our government structure and there are no regions in our government structure.

So with regards to your comments in that respect, if you're referencing districts, then that's how I'm responding to this question. Because I understand that with districts, and I suspect probably more as we go forward and we have 17 online now, by the time we have 22, they are going to be having other, because I already know some are creating economic arms or other arms of perhaps maybe a society that will deal with other areas that the community wants to focus on.

[Chair]
Secretary Collins, I'm just going to hold there. Secretary Wolfe, on a question of order. Go ahead, Secretary Wolfe.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
I apologize to interrupt you, but Mr. Chair, I do believe that this conversation does have some pretty specific details that would require us to go in camera for the remainder of this conversation, please.

[Chair]

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Council, on a question of order, the suggestion to go in camera so this discussion can be had, I take it it would be intergovernmental relations is the sense I'm getting. Is there someone willing to move going in camera? Secretary Lisa Wolfe, seconded by Secretary Leddy.

Is there any opposition to going in camera to continue this discussion? Representative Dunfield.

[Representative Dunfield]
Just a point of clarity, why would we need to go in camera?

[Chair]
So a motion to go in camera is not debatable. So if we disagree with going in camera, then we won't go in camera and we'll leave it in public. But it sounds like there's an intergovernmental relations aspect to this that is raising concerns that can't be dealt with in public.

So is there any opposition to the motion to go in camera?

[Representative Dunfield]
I think I'm still trying to understand, Mr. Chair, what those potential intergovernmental relations concerns would be. That's why, like, if we're going to go in camera for this, we need to have clarity as to why we're going in camera.

[Chair]
I mean, we can go in camera and then that can be eliminated. And if it's not properly in camera, we'll come back in a public session. But to highlight them in a public session and then go in camera afterward would defeat the purpose.

[Representative Dunfield]
I think this is a point of clarity for our citizens, especially in regards to some of the concerns raised by the Ombudsman around his role and responsibility. And I think it's important for our citizens to hear, you know, what his role and responsibility is and what our role and responsibility is to ensure that he is arms-length and he is being supported to do his role.

[Chair]
Again, we're heading into debate, Representative Dunfield, and there's no debate on the motion to go in camera. The motion is either dealt with or not. So if there's opposition, just state that you're in opposition.

[Representative Dunfield]
I feel that we don't need to go in camera.

[Chair]

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Okay. So there's opposition to go in camera. President, do you wish to go to a vote on this or should we continue in public session for the time being?

[President Sandmaier]
I think we should go in a vote. I don't, I think there are some things that are concerned to me that should be, we should be in camera. So I think we should go to a vote.

[Chair]
Okay. Then being no consensus, we will call for a vote of the members on the motion to go in camera. All those in favor of going into closed session, please raise your hands.

Online, we will call for a vote. I'll have to ask you to indicate your votes verbally just because I'm never sure if the hand-raise function is to speak or to vote. Representative Chernow, are you in favor of going in camera?

[Representative Jason Chernow]
I'm in favor of going in camera.

[Chair]
Representative L'Hirondelle, are you in favor of going in camera?

[Representative Alfred L'Hirondelle]
No, I'm not in favor.

[Chair]
Representative Cardinal, are you in favor of going in camera?

[Representative Judy-Ann Cardinal]
Yes.

[Chair]
Okay. The motion carries. We will go into closed session.

We will recess for five minutes so that the room can be cleared of staff and the gallery and we will get started. So council stands in recess for five minutes.

The floor is yours to finish up your report.

[Ombudsman Werth]
I want to thank everybody for your time and I got a lot of my things out today so I felt that was very good. I'm done unless somebody has a question and thanks again.

[Chair]
Council, any further additional questions in respect to the Ombudsman report?
Representative Paul-Alook.

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[Chair]
On a question of order, Secretary Leddy.

[Secretary Aura Leddy]
I believe this is a matter should be in camera as well.

[Chair]
Okay. Do you want to make a motion to go in camera then?

[Secretary Leddy]
Yes.

[Chair]
Okay, there's a motion to go in camera. Is there a seconder? Secretary Wolfe seconds the motion to go in camera.

There's no debate on a motion to go in camera. Is there opposition to the motion to go in camera?

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Yes, there is opposition. This is a follow-up question to a comment that was made out of camera and a discussion that was started out of camera.

[Chair]
President Sandmaier.

[President Sandmaier]
Well, I actually responded to part of that question in camera, so I'm not going to respond to it anymore. I believe what Ombudsman Werth had said was that you're hiring for an assistant right now. You're looking for or you already hired somebody.

[Chair]
If you could use your microphone.

[Ombudsman Werth]
Yes, we are currently in a position that we're trying to hire some people, but I don't know if that would be fulfilling one of the other roles spoken of right now that was part of going forward for me to go forward with.

[President Sandmaier]
Can you go back on your slides please?

[Secretary Collins]
I do have a motion on the floor.

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[Chair]
There isn't consensus and the president hasn't directed me to conduct a vote, so I presume we're in the consensus gathering phase, which is within the president's purview under the Self-Government Act.

[Chair]
Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Am I able to finish the question that I was asking?

[Chair]
I can't psychically foresee the question and where it's going, if you want to start your question, go ahead.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
All right, so the, whatever it is that the position is called or the function that these two individuals are serving, it is, it is written in the Ombudsman Act that there is somebody appointed and that it is to be an employee. However, there isn't in any of our legislation a position for an elected official to be involved. I am just wondering, were these, was this kind of new position or new support role sent for review to the Judicial Tribunal to determine whether they're constitutionally compliant prior to appointing them?

And if not, has there been a referral to the judicial tribunal for review since these individuals have taken these positions? And then I have a second question after that.

[Chair]
Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
Mr. Chair, you had a motion on the floor quite a number of minutes ago before a bunch of comments. I'm really wondering, have you ruled that one out of order and we continue the conversation or is that motion still on the floor?

[Chair]
So I was giving Representative Paul-Alook the benefit to finish her question so that I can make a determination in respect to the motion to go on camera. Well, she started her question, it was jumped in to go in camera. Secretary Collins, I'm about to issue the ruling.

Now, if you, President Sandmaier, my feeling is not being a consensus of the motion to go in camera and that this matter was spoken to in public that there's no reason to go on camera and then we can finish and dispense with this. Given that you've already referred most of the majority of these questions to legal counsel for review, it's an extension of that question which now suggests the Judicial Tribunal also give an opinion and I think that's fair and reasonable and we can just refer this question to both and then move on if that suits your purposes, Madam President.

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[President Sandmaier]
Yeah, as I stated earlier when it was brought up by Representative Dunfield that we will take this to legal as the Ombudsman Act was something that was passed prior to this Council sitting around this table and that there was a legal team who worked on these laws and were approved by Provincial Council so we will refer it to our legal team and I guess Judicial Tribunal as well. Thank you.

[Chair]
Very good. We will make those referrals. I declare the motion to go in camera a failed motion.

Representative Dunfield, you have the floor.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just for further clarity and thank you so much for that, President Sandmaier, but it is my understanding that as Citizens' Council that we have the ability to provide legislation to change any of those laws or any of those acts. Is that not correct?

[Chair]
President Sandmaier.

[President Sandmaier]
I think that what we had said was we would review the legislation, yes, so if we want to take a look at that legislation at another meeting, we can do that or we can first off refer it to judiciary or legal counsel and get an opinion on your statement from earlier and Representative Paul-Alook's statement as well.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you for that, President Sandmeier. With that, I would like to make a motion that Citizens' Council look at the Ombudsman Act section 10 regarding the appointment of an employee as the designate for the Ombudsman from the Otipemisiwak Métis Government. I would like to make a motion that we review that particular line and that it be brought back to Citizens' Council as a potential change in that law.

[Chair]
Representative Dunfield, so which is it? Are we going to refer questions of order to for review for legal opinion and Judicial Tribunal review or are we going to make a motion that Citizens' Council consider an amendment to the Act?

[Representative Dunfield]
Oh, sorry. At this point, Mr. Chair, I think we can do both, that it can go to JT for review but also at the same time that we can look at changing the Act.

[Chair]

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Okay, there's a mover. Is there a seconder? Secretary Collins seconds.

Is there further discussion with respect to this motion? Debate? Is there any opposition to the motion?

Secretary Lavallee?

[Secretary Lavallee]
I'm just, we originally talked about having employees in certain positions and this come up with the Chair before and I feel like this is the same conversation that's happening again but we had originally made a motion when we talked about this back, I think it was November 2023, it was like one of our first discussions where we talked about having an employee in these certain positions and we as a Council and I could probably bring it up because I think we had made the decision to change the Self-Government Act to say that an employee can be a citizen and even when we go back into the age, not the age, sorry, the Citizens' Gathering, there was a Citizen's Proposal that said that we should be supporting our employees so I just don't understand what the point of having this motion is.

Is it that you just don't want employees to be in these positions specifically? Because I just, like I said, I don't support this motion because I just don't see why we're kicking up a big fuss for there to be an employee in this position. She's the head of HR, most of these complaints are going to be going to HR regardless of what happens, right, because they have to do with people like us elected officials of the Otipemisiwak Government and they have to do with a lot of complaints against institutes which are going to be included within the HR so I just don't understand kind of what the purpose of this is, I guess.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Lavallee. I have been provided some information from administration. The Judicial Tribunal did review the appointment of Jeanette Blumentrath as Acting Ombudsman.

A decision is published as decision 2025-06 which the Judicial Tribunal found is compliant with the act. So that's for your information, feel free to go and reference that. Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
So my specific suggestion for referral to the Judicial Tribunal was again not in regards to Ms. Blumentrath's appointment to Deputy Ombudsman. I just don't want there to be any confusion. And so I'm just asking if there's an ability to elaborate on that just to help us better understand. If not, then that's fine.

But the question that I asked was specifically in regards to his report that we just received.

[Chair]
So I'm going to rule on your question. It's been advised that any details including examples arising from that section, which was included in the report, would be subject to privilege as

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an HR and personnel matter. So there won't be any examples or further detail given in a public session.

We will take that question back and have both legal and human resources weigh in and seek to get you answers that can be presented at a future in-camera discussion of council. Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
Mr. Chair, again, I'm going to speak to the motion that's on the floor.

[Chair]
I've ruled... Oh, sorry, the motion with respect to the amendment of the legislation?

[Secretary Collins]
Correct. That's the motion that you accepted and then you took accepted conversations that were not with respect to the motion on the floor. I'm going to speak to the motion on the floor and I'm going to thank the president for this morning saying we continue to build.

We're a young government that continues to build. If and when we find items in laws that may not be consistent with our constitution, it is our job as the government to make those corrections. If we're seeing that there's potentially a contravention between the act and the constitution, which is what I'm thinking and why I second the motion, is I think it's time to have some of those reviews.

Indeed, the President again earlier alluded to the fact that... Well, she told us that we had a committee in place that we're going to review the laws to make them consistent to the constitution. That piece hasn't happened.

If it needs to happen one piece at a time, then maybe this is the first of the one pieces that needs to be addressed. So I seconded the motion because I believe that if that was one of the first things that we've seen and we're going into year three, almost halfway through our year three, then we should do some of that stuff. It's our responsibility.

We're the government and if we see inconsistencies, that's our job to make those changes. Therefore, I seconded the motion and with that, Mr. Chair, if there's no other comments, I'm going to call question on the motion.

[Chair]
Okay. There is a speaking list. So is there further discussion in respect to the motion, which is to refer the Ombudsman Act for review with specific respect to section 10?

Secretary Leddy, is there a comment in respect to the motion?

[Secretary Leddy]
Can you repeat the motion quickly for me?

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[Chair]
Madam Clerk, do you have the motion in front of you or should we have the mover repeat it? If the mover would like to repeat her motion so it's clear for Council.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you. Sorry, I was hoping you wrote it down. So I am asking, the motion was to amend section 10 of the Ombudsman Act.

[Chair]
So in that form, the motion would be out of order because it can't be amended by simple motion. You could refer the Act for review.

[Representative Dunfield]
Okay. Can I make a motion to refer the Act for review, specifically section 10 of the Ombudsman Act?

[Chair]
Very good. Secretary Collins, I understand that's what you're seconding, correct?

[Secretary Collins]
And I believe part of her original motion and perhaps, Mr. Chair, that when we make motions that we could get them clarified in the future so that the Clerk actually knows what our motion is so we don't have to wheel back and try and remember what we said. But part of it was for that review of that particular section so that it is in line with the Constitution. And that's the piece where I'm coming from is we need to align our laws with our Constitution and in her original spiel.

[Chair]
Let's get to the motion. So we're adding so that it is in line with the Constitution. That's right, Mr. Chair. Very good. Can you read the motion, Madam Clerk?

[Acting Clerk Lindsay Henderson]
So the motion reads that be it resolved that the Citizens' Council will refer the Ombudsman Act for review, specifically section 10 of the Ombudsman Act, so that it complies with the Constitution.

[Chair]
Are we confident with that language mover and seconder? I'll just look for nods. Yes, good.

Secretary Leddy, then the floor is yours now that we've clarified the motion.

[Secretary Leddy]
I just feel it's unnecessary. We've had judicial... Oh, my brain just froze, unfortunately.

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We do have a committee already established to review laws, as I understand. I'm not privy to that information of that or what that committee does or the work that they're currently at. Additionally, my understanding is that we already had the judicial tribunal review that specific portion on employees.

And at this point, I'm content with how this sits and would be content to have the committee doing the review to align it with the Constitution. This just seems to be doubling up on work that's already occurring.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Leddy. Representative Paul-Alook, is it in respect to the motion?

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Yes.

[Chair]
Very good. Go ahead.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
I am speaking in support of the motion. It was well established that when we came into this government in 2023, and even prior to that, actually, that there were certain enabling laws that needed to be stood up before we took office and in order to stand up our new government. The Ombudsman Act was one of these enabling pieces of legislation to build our government.

And it was well understood when we took office that the existing OMG laws may require honing and tweaking as priorities are determined and reevaluated over time and in review to for compliance with our Constitution. It was actually President Sandmaier in the, I believe, November 2024 meeting that brought forward a motion to begin the process to review our laws specifically to accomplish those goals, to look at them for better suiting the needs of our citizens, our government structure, and ensuring that since a lot of them were written prior to our government standing up, they were a little bit more in line with the Societies Act than to our own Constitution and to ensure alignment with our actual Constitution. So, I am speaking in favor of this motion for that reason. And I'd like to call question, please.

[Chair]
President Sandmeier and then Secretary Bramfield.

[President Sandmaier]
Yeah, I am fine with this motion. I think that as long as we have our legal Judiciary Tribunal take a look at it to make sure, you know, take a look at the pieces to see if it is in conflict with our Constitution, then I think we need to move forward on reviewing that piece of the legislation. I'm fine with this motion.

Secretary Bramfield has been waiting for a while.

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[Chair]
Secretary Bramfield, you are next and hopefully last on this and you'll go to the vote.

[Secretary Brooke Bramfield]
Yes, thank you. I just would like to speak in favor of the motion. It does align with our Act of Resolution that was made, I think, in November 2024 to do a full review of the laws.

So, I do support the motion and I think that, you know, just with some of the conversation before about the, you know, employees' arms-length, I think we need clarification on what that actually means as well, because I think, yeah, I think we're having some differences of opinion about what arms-length means. And that, so I propose the motion, I support the motion and would like to vote on it right away, but I do have another motion or action item after.

[Chair]
We will come back to you once we are through here. Is there any further discussion or debate on this? I'm inclined to close the question here.

Seeing nothing further, is there any opposition to the motion which was read by the clerk? Seeing none, the motion carries. The legislation is so referred.

Secretary Bramfield, I committed to give you the floor back.

[Secretary Bramfield]
Thank you. And with this discussion and the discussion about the legislative review, can we please bring that, especially because some of us weren't here when that was brought forward, and I don't think we've met for over a year about it, and it was made in November 2024. So, could we bring, I don't know if I need to make a motion, but to bring that briefing note and discussion back to the table at the next meeting?

[Chair]
President, do you need a motion? You're the chair of that committee. I think we can just bring it back.

[President Sandmaier]
Yeah, I think we can bring it back, and I realize that it has been a while since we have met. There are a lot of competing priorities around this table and dealing with Canada and Alberta on a lot of different things. So, we do want to come to some kind of legislative review.

I'm not sure if what we had planned previously is feasible given the time length that we have, but I have some other ideas. So, yeah, I would like that to come back to the table.

[Chair]

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Noted, I'll make sure it is on the agenda for April. Secretary Bramfield, do you need the floor again?

[Secretary Bramfield]
Oh, I was just wondering if I, you know, if it would be better to make a motion that we bring that we bring the original briefing note back to the table for discussion and direction, something along those lines? Because, once again, not everyone was here, and we can all be on the same page about it.

[Chair]
Yeah, sure thing. If you'd like to make that motion and you find a seconder, then it's clear direction for me as the chair. So, happy to see that.

So, moved? Very good. Seconded by Representative Dunfield.

Further discussion on that motion to return the legislative priorities briefing note back to council for the April meeting for discussion? Debate? Any opposition to the motion?

Carried. We shall ensure it comes back in April. Ombudsman Werth, any concluding comments to your report?

Ombudsman has no further commentary for his report. Further questions from council, or should we look for a motion to accept the Ombudsman's report? Secretary Chodzicki moves to accept the Ombudsman's report.

Secretary Ekeberg seconds. Discussion? Debate?

Any opposition to the motion? Motion carries. The report is accepted.

Thank you for your time, Ombudsman Werth. I appreciate it. Council, that takes us into our lunch hour.

We also have the minutes to review over the break, so we will recess until 1.30 so that there's some time to do that work and also some time for people to eat. So, council stands in recess for one hour and 15 minutes. We reconvene at 1.30. If Grandmother Beatrice could offer a blessing for the meal, we would be very grateful.

[Grandmother Beatrice Demetrius]
Father, we thank you for the blessings and joy to be together at this table. Please bless this food we are about to share, those who prepared it and serve it.

And for those who have worked to put this gathering together. Amen.

[Chair]
I'll get you to take your seats and we will call back to order. We're backtracking in our agenda a little bit back to item 5A, which is the draft meeting minutes of February 19th, Citizens Council. Secretary of Records, I'll turn the floor back over to you.

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I think we have a few amendments, correct?

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
All right, thank you very much. It was a delicious lunch and stew. Okay, so I wanted to go back to agenda item number five with Representative Paul-Alook's correction that they would like to be made.

So, currently the wording is Representative Paul-Alook requested information regarding what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation. And we are looking to amend it to say Representative Paul-Alook asked what aspects of operation will be included in the regulation. Is that good with you, Representative Paul-Alook?

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Yes, thank you.

[Chair]
Very good. And then Representative Dunfield has a question in respect to the recording of the special resolution.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, page nine, motion 20260219-18. Can you please share with us, just for information, what does it mean by a special resolution, especially when it concerns the recording of the votes for, against, or abstentions?

[Chair]
Yeah, happy to. So, within the Self-Government Act, there's requirements for special resolutions that are set out. Ultimately, the requirement is that a special resolution must be passed by not less than 75% of the representatives that are present at a council meeting.

So, the question is why would we record the abstention of the President on a vote when she's required by a section 48-2 to abstain? Because we have to record her as present in that mathematical calculation of 75%. We also then have to record her as an abstention unless there was a tie, and then we'd record her vote in that manner.

So, to say it was carried unanimously and not record the fact that she was present, and for those mathematical purposes, wouldn't make a lot of sense. So, this is the way we've done it. I do think there's probably a clarification that could be made here.

After President Andrea Sandmeier, we could put in brackets per section 48-2 of the Self-Government Act, and close the brackets, and that would make clear that she's abstaining as a result of her legislative requirements. Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
Yeah, Mr. Chair, just remind me again, because I wasn't physically in the room, why would, why would this have been a special resolution?

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[Chair]
I can't go into the nature of why it was a special resolution without going into the in-camera portion of the resolution it refers to. It will be discussed in the in-camera portion of the meeting today, later on in the personnel matters, and I can answer that question once we're on a closed session, if you like.

[Secretary Collins]
Okay, okay, good, because I, in my recollection, it's the first time that it's coming, I was wondering. I understand. Thank you so much, we can talk about it then.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you, Mr. Chair, I really appreciate that clarification. Just to go back to my earlier question, could you, could you direct the Clerk of the Council to please share the Judicial Tribunal's ruling on the Clerk of the Council or the JT, the Junior, or Judicial Tribunal Clerk of the Council being part of the, part of the supports for all different teams? Could you share that with the Citizens' Council?

[Chair]
Yeah, we will share that decision, certainly. Thank you. Any further amendments, adjustments, corrections, deletions to the minutes?

Seeing none, would you like to move your minutes as amended?

[Representative Judy-Ann Cardinal]
Hi? Yes, thank you. Hello? Hello?

[Chair]
I don't know what that sound is, but it's freaking me out.

Representative Cardinal on the line, do you, do you have comments?

[Representative Cardinal]
Yes, could you hear me?

[Chair]
No, not, not really. It sounds quite robot-like and not very clear. Okay, I don't know why that's happening.

AV is going to work on it, let's give him one minute to make some adjustments. That's terrifying to me. Representative Cardinal, do you want to try again?

[Representative Cardinal]
Could you hear me now?

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[Chair]
We can hear you now, loud and clear.

[Representative Cardinal]
Okay, I was just going to say for the minutes, for the attendance part, I was there virtually and it's saying that I was absent.

[Chair]
Okay, I looked to the Clerk and Secretary of Records, are we okay making that adjustment and removing Representative Judy-Ann Cardinal from the absentee representatives? Seeing no odds, any other additions, deletions, corrections to the minutes? Apologize for the oversight, Representative Cardinal.

Secretary Wolfe has moved her minutes, is there a seconder? Representative Blatz seconds. That's what we're going to do, we're just going to put her on the record whether she likes it or not from now on.

Representative Dunfield, go ahead.

[Representative Dunfield]
Mr. Chair, sorry, I just want some clarification, would you refer to her as Representative Blatz or Provincial Women's Representative Blatz? Because I don't, that's, I just want clarity on that because I feel like it's more Provincial Women's Representative.

[Chair]
You're going to make me say that every time I say her name?

[Representative Dunfield]
Yeah, I am, because she's new and she deserves it.

[Chair]
I'll take it under advisory. Okay, any opposition to the minutes as amended? Motion carries, minutes are adopted.

Thank you, Council, for working through that with us. That takes us into Representative Business, which is agenda item 9A. I'll invite the Events Manager to come forward and there's a couple of briefings for you, it looks like.

Ms. Taylor, I'll turn the floor over to you, go ahead.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Hi everyone, so before you, you'll see a briefing note with the motion, be it resolved that the Citizens' Gathering Gas Card Policy be amended to expand the program. We did discuss this last meeting, so I took it back to our committee and we did revise it to kind of increase accessibility as much as possible. So we recognize that the current gas card policy does have some gaps in accessibility.

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The committee has discussed ideas and potential solutions to ensure an equitable process and access to the Citizens' Gathering. We put a lot of thought and a lot of work into this, so we did try our best to make it as accessible as possible. The current plan allows for anyone traveling further than 150 kilometers to the Citizens' Gathering is eligible for a $50 gas card, limited to one per household.

So the current status is the committee is proposing an amendment to the gas card policy and the amendment is as follows, gas cards will be available from 4 to 8 p.m. both the Friday and Saturday. Citizens may only collect one gas card between the two days, so if you go and collect a gas card on Friday, you may not collect a gas card on the Saturday. If you are traveling between, and we wanted a tiered approach to this, so if you are traveling between 150 kilometers and 299 kilometers, you will receive a $50 gas card.

If you are traveling between 300 kilometers and 449 kilometers, you can receive a $100 gas card or two gas cards. If you are traveling 450 kilometers or further, you can receive a $150 gas card and this again would be limited to one per household. So the budget for this gas card, these gas cards are $50,000 and we'll have a better idea of potential cost once the RSVP is published in May.

Last year we did only provide around $17,000 worth of gas cards, just to provide some context.

[Chair]
Secretary Lisa Wolfe.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. Masters there, in regards to the citizens gathering and planning, did we discuss the location this year of where we're going to have the actual gas cards be distributed from? So I think when I was talking with my other council here that we were saying that maybe at the registration desk.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Yes, so gas cards would be distributed at the registration. Our registry department does oversee the gas card distribution as they have access to addresses and all of the qualifying information that would be needed.

[Chair]
Thank you. Secretary Leddy.

[Secretary Leddy]
Yeah, I just wanted to say thank you for bringing this back. It's obvious a lot of thought and effort went into this and I know it's a conundrum that doesn't have any easy answers, especially with a budget on it. I feel very strongly that this shall work and I'm excited to see how it works out come this August with our citizens gathering, and I'm in full support of what this amendment is.

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[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Leddy. Secretary Ekeberg.

[Secretary Jason Ekeberg]
So just a quick question here on this, and I know this is going to come up by certain people because I've dealt with this several times. It says if you're traveling between 150 to 299 kilometres, is that per one way or is that both ways? Because if you're 150 kilometres away and you're actually traveling 300 there and back, you qualify for more, and that's something that will come up.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
This would be one way.

[Secretary Ekeberg]
Okay, we should make sure we put that in there to do that. Yeah, one way.

[Chair]
Further discussion?

[Secretary Ekeberg]
There was another question, I just can't remember what it was.

[Chair]
Do you want us to give you a moment?

[Secretary Ekeberg]
Oh, another question. Okay, so what it is is we have districts all across the province and sometimes where our main Citizens Councils, our district council gets together is 150 kilometres away, but the person still lives another 100 kilometres away because your district's big enough for that. How are we going to be able to identify that people come from that distance? Who's going to be responsible for that?

Are they going to put their real address in there and then you guys do that? How are we going to do that?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
So again, our registry team, they have access to addresses connected to the citizenship numbers. So when you register, you show your number, your address, and then it is from your mailing address listed on your profile, not from your district's hub.

[Chair]
Representative Moore and then we'll come back to you.

[Representative Cindy Moore]

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There we go. I'm probably going to get a lot of negative feedback from this because my district is 136 kilometres away. And so like I'm fully in support of this and I don't want to hold anything up.

However, I think it needs to be addressed because my citizens will want to go and with the price of gas, knowing that they're not going to be reimbursed a dime, I think that it's going to be a little bit of a hindrance for many of them. And so I don't know how I'm going to answer that for them because it's going to be over 300 kilometres when they go both ways. And so I don't know if this should perhaps be amended to 100k.

I don't know because for once in many years, the citizens gathering is going to be easily accessible for my citizens, but they're not going to get a dime. And I think that Diane and I are going to face a bit of flack over that. So I don't know.

[Chair]
Thoughts? Any thoughts?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
I think I definitely hear what you're saying. However, if we want to amend to 100 kilometres, we can adjust those tiers, I would say. That being said, I think then we open ourselves up to what about the people who are 99 kilometres away.

So that's one thing to consider, but we can definitely amend the tiers.

[Chair]
Representative Blatz.

[Representative Gabrielle Blatz]
Thank you. Sorry, I am new here. So I do know this was discussed at the last meeting too, but I'm still having trouble understanding because if it's one way, then yeah, if somebody is travelling 150 kilometres there and back, $50 doesn't even cover a full tank of gas, especially right now when gas is $1.65. So I'm not sure, can I make an amendment?

[Chair]
You can certainly propose. There is a motion on the floor.

[Representative Gabrielle Blatz]
Okay, cool. Can I propose that it is a round trip for the travelling between 150 kilometres to 299? Instead of it being one way.

And my whole thought process behind that is just because if somebody is travelling that far or if they're travelling 300 kilometres there and 300 kilometres back, that's 600 kilometres. And so if they're getting a $100 gas card, then that's like, yeah, it's just, it's not covering the cost of gas. So then I'm wondering if it's even helping the issue that we're trying to address with the cost effectiveness for our Citizens Gatherings.

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[Chair]
Okay. So you're asking that we consider the calculation to be round trip rather than one way. I'm going to put you on the spot, Senior Executive Officer Barner. Do you have thoughts in respect to the financial implications?

I know it sets out a $50,000 budget. Is that the number that you were going with? I think maybe some light there.

[Senior Executive Officer Aaron Barner]
Yeah. And I think with last year, we only spent $17,000. So I'm comfortable with this number, and I don't think we can justify going much higher than that given the other expenses we have with the gathering.

So however council chooses or whatever to divvy it up this kilometre or round trip, you know, to me, it's, you know, as long as it stays in with the $50,000, it's fine.

[Chair]
Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
A couple of points, Mr. Chair. And I'll use myself as an example. I don't live in my post office box.

I still have to drive 50 kilometres past the post office box to where I live. So if we're using post office box numbers as the gauge, that is not going to be fair to a number of people, especially in rural, because it's not every little community, or if you don't even live in a community, you don't have a post office box. You have to drive to go to your post office box.

So I think that should be considered into this. With respect to the one way or round trip, I think about our friends in Medicine Hat. Let's just use Medicine Hat.

Medicine Hat to Slave Lake. I'm going to guess probably more than 450 kilometres one way. Pardon?

So to say this $150 is going to get you a round trip, good luck with that. So I think those realities need to be considered, especially in the years where we move our gatherings to different parts of the province. When we go south, it's going to be the issue for the people in the north.

So it's going to be an issue every second year for sure. So we should consider some of those items, especially if we're making it into policy or anything that's going to affect further down the road. So I think it's a little bit more than if I'm only going 99 kilometres and I shouldn't get $50, but we should think past year to year. Thank you.

[Chair]
President Sandmaier.

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[President Sandmaier]
Yeah, it's a hard one to manage this one, but I agree on the physical address. Our registries department has the physical address. I mean, we've been working on that.

I know it was a problem before using just box number. And maybe there are some citizens still that haven't updated their physical address, but we have a lot of citizens that live early and to have to go by a Cold Lake address or a Bonnyville address when you live another 50K out of town, that's not right. So we need to figure out that.

The problem that we have is we have a budget of $50,000. So how are we going to try and make this as fair as possible? No matter what we do, we're not going to please everybody.

So we just have to put our heads together around this table and try and figure out what is the best way to do this, given the $50,000 budget.

[Chair]
It's a good opportunity for registry to get people to update their addresses. Show up at the registration desk and you haven't given your physical address. That's a good time to get it, I think, too.

Representative Schnell.

[Representative Catherine Schnell]
To KC's point, I've already heard from several families that have said they go every year, but they can't afford to go this year. They thought they were only getting a $50. I said, I think we were going to be looking at that amount.

But I still think, like KC said, we should probably look at the people that are travelling from the farthest north and the farthest south ends to make it a little more equitable so more families can go. Like the $450,000 limit on this one, we're just about double that one way. Thanks.

[Chair]
Secretary Ekeberg.

[Secretary Ekeberg]
I should have shut my mic off because Secretary Collins and President Sandmaier brought up the stuff that I need, but I think we need to work off rural addresses and be able to identify that. If not, another thing that we used to do a long time ago, and it might work too, I'm not sure if it'll work, but the regions used to get X amount of dollars and the regions used to take registration for those who showed up and to be up that money along then. And if people don't want to go, they don't go.

But if people do want to go, they do get something too. So that's one way and another way of looking at things too.

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[Chair]
Secretary Leddy.

[Secretary Leddy]
My only concern at making it round trip is with $50,000 is we shrink the availability for those who are travelling quite a bit further. So with that, that's my only caution because I feel like a part of this was to supplement to help those folks who are travelling quite a distance to show up. I understand the concerns around gas prices.

I'm sure we've all felt the pinch of that. But it's unfortunate that we can't just pay for everyone to show up. That would be lovely.

That's in a dream world I wish I could live in. But at this point in time, I feel like the tiering here makes the most sense to help folks that are coming from so much further in the province to reach a gathering and maybe encourage them to participate when it may not be feasible otherwise.

[Chair]
Secretary Lavallee.

[Secretary Lavallee]
Do we know the numbers of approximately how many people show up to the Citizens' Gathering?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Yes. So last year we had, and these numbers won't be exact because I don't have them right in front of me, but we had a little over 650 registered citizens attend the Citizens' Gathering last year. The year before that we had quite a bit more because it was held in Edmonton.

Those are the numbers that I'm aware of as of right now.

[Secretary Lavallee]
Okay. And how many people actually utilize the gas cards out of those 650? Do you know?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Yes, I do. I want to say we gave out around 200 during the Citizens' Gathering and then we mailed another 170-ish.

Again, those numbers may not be 100% accurate. I don't have them right in front of me at the moment.

[Secretary Lavallee]
That's okay. I just wanted a clear estimate because I know that we have to keep it within the $50,000 budget. So even looking at those prices itself and the conversation of one way or both ways, I don't know.

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Because I also understand the concerns over the one way versus the round trip because it gathers a lot of people. I don't know. I feel like it's a rock and a hard place for this conversation because you can't please everybody and it's like we try our best and we're still going to get absolute flack for it.

I don't know. I know even when we had it in Smoky Lake, there's people that live out in... My papa complained about this so I can use him as an example.

He lived just at the cusp. He was 149 kilometers, but then when you added it up, it was 3 kilometers for him to get outside of Lac La Biche to Smoky Lake, even though arguably that is close. So you have a lot of people that do have that problem.

Yeah. I don't know. And I also agree with the physical versus the mailing.

Because again, my mama and papa, they live 20 minutes outside of Lac La Biche on the other side of the lake. But they use Lac La Biche as their mailing address. So that doesn't really reflect where they're traveling from because that's about 30 kilometers additional to the mailing address, right?

Yeah. I don't know. Because I do remember the old system of giving of who showed up with the regions.

And I know we wanted to get away from that because there was a lot of problems with that system. But now we're having problems with this system where we're trying to make it fair with 150 kilometers, but then we're getting problems with like, okay, one way versus all ways. So I don't know.

I just wanted to kind of get that estimate because it's like, even then if I just wanted to see how many people actually showed up. So 650 showed up and around, I would say, let's ballpark it 400. Even if we divided that 50,000 between all of them, it would only be like each person gets $125.

And that's still not even fair as well because then we're talking about if you're driving 1600 kilometers from Medicine Hat to Slave Lake, you get $125. So no matter what way we do it, it's not going to be fair. I think maybe we should give ourselves grace to just try it out too.

Like we did it last year this way. I mean, we can change the tiers and see if that helps. We can change it from it being one way to all around ways.

I don't know. I feel like this is the time to try to meet in the middle, I guess.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Lavallee. Representative Blatz?

[Representative Blatz]
This is just back to Representative Leddy. Is that correct?

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How I said that? Secretary? Secretary Leddy.

Point about the 150 kilometers. And the reason why I was bringing it up to begin with was more or less because like I know people in my community. So like I'm from Wetaskiwin.

And so if we were to drive to St. Albert, let's say that's 150 kilometers from Wetaskiwin. I know that especially in my community, there's a lot of people that really struggle to go to Métis events because they can't afford to go places. And so it's just that added stressor, especially with gas being as high as it is right now.

So I just wanted to provide that perspective a little bit. But with the fact that there was still $33,000 left over from the last one, I'm almost wondering if it's feasible for us just to increase the over 450 kilometers from 150 to 200 and keep the others at where they are now. But that way it gives a little bit more incentive and also starts to offset those costs for people that are driving in from a far ways.

I know that there's no way that we can actually make this fair for everybody because we have a pool of money. But with the fact that there was still $33,000 left over, it does make me think that there might be a little bit of room there to start readjusting the numbers. So maybe we just look at readjusting it and seeing how many gas cards we can get in each category.

Thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you. Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
I'm fine. She actually had a really good suggestion that I don't need to add to.

[Chair]
Representative Ward.

[Representative Trevor Ward]
I just want some clarity on what Secretary Ekeberg had said. So is it my understanding that each district would get X amount and then we would distribute that to whoever showed up?

Is that my understanding?

[President Sandmaier]
I was going to address it. Yeah, that's what we used to do under Provincial Council.

The regions would get so much money, the six regions. So there was six regions back then. Now we're talking 22 and $50,000.

So that's, you know, 2270. Well, if you round it up, 2270. Yeah.

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So that doesn't, that's not a lot of money. And when you're doing it that way, when we're in Slave Lake and we have people wanting to come from Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, that's not a lot of money for those districts to give out, right? So, and that was part of the problem is that, and then there's some regions that have a lot of people that come.

And so they would get 20 bucks, but someone else, another region, wouldn't have as many and they'd get 100 bucks. So it caused a lot of issues when we were doing it that way. So that's why we had registry kind of take over that part of it.

And then also the regions, some of the regions didn't have enough staff or, you know, elected officials were giving out the money and missing the gathering, which happened quite often in some regions.

[Chair]
I remember one time I went to Assembly, I got 17 bucks. I thought I hit the lottery. Secretary Ekeberg.

[Secretary Ekeberg]
So no matter how we look at it, and we all know this, we're not going to make them all happy. We're not going to make them happy. So we have to draw the line somewhere and so no matter what.

[Chair]
Going online, Representative Chernow.

[Representative Jason Chernow]
Thank you. Yeah, I would agree with Representative Blatz's suggestion. Price of gas has already gotten really high.

And we all know that it's likely to...

[Chair]
If you're speaking, we can't hear you.

[Representative Chernow]
Internationally. And I think this conversation really opens up that we have to take a look at how to allow virtual... equal branch of our government and the gathering does have decision making authority regarding special resolutions and as well as constitutional amendments, the ratification of those.

And so I think it feels very undemocratic to limit participation in those votes to people that only have the good health or the good finances to be able to participate in the gathering. So I think we really need to take a look at how do we allow virtual participation in those kind of important votes. Thank you.

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[Chair]
So unfortunately, we only caught the very tail end of your commentary. So I'm going to have to ask you to take it from the top. Representative Chernow, I really apologize.

[Representative Chernow]
All right. Can you hear me now?

[Chair]
You bet.

[Representative Chernow]
Sorry, I'm kind of losing my voice too. I was just saying that I agree with Representative Blatz's suggestion. The price of gas is already quite high.

And we do expect it to probably continue to get higher just due to what's happening internationally. And I think this conversation really shows that we also need to look at how to open up participation in other ways and how to allow things like virtual participation in the voting at the gatherings. The Constitution lays out that the gathering is an equal branch of our government with decision making authority, especially around special resolutions and the ratification of constitutional amendments.

And so I believe it feels undemocratic to limit participation in those important votes to only those that have the good enough health or the good enough finances to be able to attend the gathering. Did we get it all that time?

[Chair]
Yeah, got it all that time, Representative Chernow. We'll take the comments back with respect to voting and perhaps cover that on a different agenda. Representative Paul-Alook.

[Representative Paul-Alook]
Can I bring forward a suggestion to add a tier above 450? As Representative Chernow was mentioning, my community is very similar where it's 850 kilometres one way to get to Smoky Lake. And that would be right from community, not counting rural address.

So I think that there's a lot of people in similar votes. And if we added another tier, I mean 450, it's barely over half of the one way distance for a lot of people that are invested in and wanting to come. So that would be my suggestion.

[Chair]
Thank you. Secretary Bramfield.

[Secretary Bramfield]
Thanks for the discussion, everyone. And I think everyone feels the same way about this. So I guess I'm looking forward to move forward.

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I think what I'm hearing and would recommend is that this be taken back to do a further cost analysis or estimate of what a round trip would look like or if we add additional tiers and the estimate of how many citizens we think are going to be there and access the gas cards. Obviously, that won't be a perfect cost analysis. But based on the discussion, I think that's what we need to do at this time.

[Chair]
Read my mind, Secretary Bramfield. Is there any additional feedback you'd like administration to consider in their review of this council before we give them some more work to do? Do you have any questions for Council, Taylor, or do you have enough to work with?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
I have enough to work with.

[Chair]
Very good. I have a motion then to refer this back to administration for further review.

And to return to a future council meeting, please. Secretary Lisa Wolfe. Very good.

Secretary Collins. Second. Lovely.

Any further discussion, debate? Any opposition to the motion? Motion carries.

So referred back to administration. Thanks for that. And I think you have a discussion item here as well, Taylor, with respect to accommodations.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Yes. So this one doesn't have a memo or a briefing note attached to it. It's just a verbal reminder.

So as we all know, each district, along with the president, the women's representative and the youth representative has five rooms slash campsites if anyone would like to camp for citizens to attend the gathering this year. So we do ask that please ensure that the rooms and or campsites that are going to citizens are citizens who will attend. Last year, unfortunately, we had quite a few no shows.

So I would just ask, really make sure that your folks show up and make use of the rooms that we do have. As we know, Slave Lake has limited hotel space and great camping space, but very limited hotel space. So if we can really utilize the space that we do have, that would be great.

And then I have been advised that an email will be sent out to you before next Friday with the instructions on how to submit your citizen names and any further instruction you may need.

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[Chair]
Thanks Taylor. Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
So I'm not sure if I was listening or what happened. It's five rooms and campsites or is it five rooms or campsites?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
Five rooms or campsites. So if you have a citizen who would prefer to camp, by all means, we have the space and the campsites booked for them. If they do need a hotel room, then we can make that happen as well.

[Secretary Collins]
So if I could, Mr. Chair, some more clarity.

If there, will it be two queens per room? Because then it gives more people to be able to attend. Also, the question is applicable to the campsites.

Can there be more than just one? If you have an RV and you have your youth want to have their tents beside, like what if we could get some more clarity on that? Because certainly that ends up happening.

Thank you. And the questions will be asked.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
For sure. So it is, the rooms will have two beds in them. I do ask you adhere to fire codes.

That's the only thing. Beyond that, you can have as many people as fire code allows in the room. The campsites, I believe you can have an RV trailer and potentially and a tent.

Sorry, I'm just looking at my accommodations coordinator for confirmation. But yes, you can have an RV and a tent.

[Chair]
Thank you. Secretary Sarah Wolfe.

[Secretary Sarah Wolfe]
Thank you so much for the update, Taylor. I just wanted to confirm that the five rooms or campsites, when you're delegating them to citizens, it's a collaboration between district captains and the Citizens' Representatives, correct?

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
That is correct.

[Chair]
Any further discussion on this? Very good.

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[President Sandmaier]
I just have a comment. I haven't been there yet, but I've heard from the team because they went and visited, but the campsite is beautiful. So there's, I think, as Taylor has said, there's a limited amount of hotel space. So if you do camp or like to camp, for your own accommodation, I encourage you to do that.

[Chair]
Secretary Lacombe? Yeah, I just want everybody... What?

That's irrelevant.

[Secretary Grant Lacombe]
Quit interrupting me. I just want everybody to know that Slave Lake has more than just Big Fish Bay for campsites, right?

So they have out in Widewater, they have a campsite there. They have two campsites over in Canyon Creek, even into Devonshire and then along to the golf course out in the provincial park.

There's campsites over there too.

So it's not just... Yeah, it's not just Big Fish Bay and Slave Lake. I just want you to know that.

[Chair]
Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Secretary Collins?

[Secretary Collins]
The information that Grant just shared is probably good information. Can that be shared along with the information that you send to ourselves and to our district captains? Because certainly other folks, they're going to want to camp, but they may not all want to be in that one place.

So if that additional campsite information could be provided, that would be great. Thank you so much, Grant.

[Events Manager Taylor Masters]
That's something we can provide for sure.

[Chair]
Very good. Okay. Any other discussion?

If not, we will move on. Seeing no one else, we will move on to the next item on the agenda under Secretary Reports, Agenda Item 10A, the Economic and Rural Development Portfolio Reports. Secretary Dibb, the floor is all yours.

[Secretary Barry Dibb]

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I thought you said it was after 1.30. Okay. Thank you. Motion.

May it be resolved that the Citizen Council of the Economic and Rural Development Portfolio Update be accepted for information as presented. Background. The Métis Works Business Summit Series has been developed to create practical space for Métis entrepreneurs, job seekers, and partners to connect around procurement, business growth, workforce development, financing, partnership opportunities.

The summits are intended to strengthen the Métis business capacity, improve access to the opportunity, and build relationships that can produce lasting benefits to the Métis citizens and communities across Alberta. The first summit was held in Calgary on March 11th, with additional summits scheduled for Slave Lake on Saturday, March 21st. That's the day after tomorrow, and Edmonton on Monday, March 23rd.

The content of the Calgary summit was intended to align with current economic reconciliation priorities related to strengthening Métis entrepreneurship, increasing participation in procurement and project opportunities, supporting sustainable economic growth, and engaging citizens in partnership in the identification of local and regional opportunities. These summits are not only about business development, but they're also about strengthening relationships, sharing knowledge, building a growing network of Métis businesses leaders across Alberta. Delivering of the summit series has and continues to depend on sufficient multidisciplinary effort across teams, which leadership and coordination provided by Mr. Tyler Fetch and Katie Suvanto. They are awesome. Current status. Calgary summit was successfully delivered on March 11th and provided a strong foundation for the upcoming Slave Lake and Edmonton events.

The event brought together Métis businesses, industries, organizational partners, and government presenters for a full day of networking, keynote remarks, panel decisions, skill development, and procurement focused training. Programming in Calgary focused on several key areas. Promotion of Métis entrepreneurship through keynote and peer-based business leadership content.

Procurement readiness, including a presentation from the government of Alberta and federal procurement processes. Supplier registration, tender navigation, and indigenous procurement opportunities. It was fantastic.

Workforce development and training supports access to capital and financial pathways for the Métis entrepreneur and networking with Métis businesses, partners, and organizations throughout the day. The event was structured to support Métis entrepreneurs in building a relationship with one another. Better understanding how to pursue vendor relationships, prepare for larger opportunities, connect with organizations already supporting Métis economic participation.

Specifically through presentation from Procurement Assistance Canada, Rupertsland, Apeetogosan Development, Inc., and Métis Urban Housing Corporation. From a strategic

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perspective, these summits are valuable to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, and its citizens as they strengthen our relationship with Métis-owned businesses and external partners and create clear pathways into procurement project participation and future partnership. Attention is now turning to the upcoming summits in Slave Lake and Edmonton.

Slave Lake, Saturday, March 21st, 830 to 430. At the Legacy Centre, Edmonton, Monday, March 23rd, 830 to 430. Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, West Edmonton.

These events will build on the Calgary Foundation and will continue to expand outreach to Métis businesses and citizens in different parts of the province. They also provide an opportunity to deepen regional engagement, identify district specific priorities with respect to Métis-owned businesses operating in their geographic areas, and further strengthen the network of Métis entrepreneurs, partners, and institutions working toward shared economic objectives. Overall, initial feedback from the first event has been positive and the Métis Works Business Summit series is emerging as a strong platform for convening Métis entrepreneurs and partners around tangible economic opportunities, practical business supports, and relationship building.

I'd like to add a little bit. I'm very happy to hear in my area that the Northern Lakes College is supporting the Fairview College, which was going to be shut down by fall, and it's going to be open by fall now, and that is great, and it's definitely going to help with all the trades, and I thank everybody that tried to help them up until then. Even if they weren't successful, it's a big thing from them people that helped.

I think it's so great for our area, and I would really like to thank Tyler and Katie and their group for putting this on, and the Métis Works Business Summit is, I think, is great, and I would like to say one more thing. I feel to be a little bit relaxed doing this now, and I have to thank the two people on either side of me, Mr. Lacombe and Mr. Ward. They're making me better, so you can't get rid of me that easy yet.

Thank you.

[Director Fetch]
And I will add one thing. 8:30 to 4:30 and supper, and there's a dinner, and we had a keynote in Calgary that I hope we, did we record it, Katie? Because it was, it'll blow everybody's socks off, I think.

It was one of the most amazing things. He connected the cart train from Fort Garry to St. Paul and the tenants around preparing and the excursion to being an entrepreneur today, and then he took it and made an AI video of what he thinks it might have been like. So you get, there's these carts going across the prairie, people talking, the chiffon dress, like it was, it blew me away.

And it's the second time we've had him talk, and both times I was absolutely floored with just his thought process and being able to make those connections. And that's what we've

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done in the past, and we're going to keep doing is relying on our entrepreneurs to share with our entrepreneurs the stuff, you know, that they'll help each other and grow each other and make us proud and make sure that we maintain that pride to be Métis entrepreneurs. So it was amazing.

[Katie Suvanto]
So yes, we've recorded all of our speakers, and we've identified over 15 companies that are multi-million dollar companies within Alberta Metis Works, and we continue to have that support through them and growing. And now we're probably, 10 years ago we had a smaller group, but now we've exploded again and hope that, it's slower in different areas, but Slave Lake, we're hoping it grows a little bit bigger next year.

[Chair]
Thank you both for that. Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
Awesome, that's wonderful, and it's really good to hear that the Métis Works summits are successful and are bringing out entrepreneurs so they can collaborate, cooperate, and work together to move the Métis economic world forward. I have a question, or two questions actually. One is, will there be more of these, and how do you pick and choose where you hold a summit?

And I say that because Cold Lake is booming. There are many, many non-Métis businesses that are saying, where are your Métis businesses? And if we have multi-million dollar Métis businesses, we need to go and showcase that because there is a big chunk of federal monies there with the jets.

You guys are probably tired of hearing me talk about these jets, but we still don't have a Métis flag waving there among this billions of dollar initiative. So if it sounds like I'm trying to ask, can we have one in Cold Lake, that's truly what I'm asking. And so I put that on the table, but on a go forward basis and on a bigger picture for the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, I'm really curious as to how are we preparing our entrepreneurs and our communities for impacts, economic impacts, with respect to any major projects that may be happening within our province.

Specifically, we know that there's all of the conversations that are going on between Alberta and the federal government and these various agreements that are being signed. At the end of the day, it's going to result in some work and some projects. Are we ready?

Are we preparing? Are we getting ready for that? And that is my thoughts about going forward so that our government is prepared to take this next economic step as we build Canada through the Build Canada Act.

Thank you.

[Chair]

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Go ahead, Katie.

[Katie Suvanto]
Well, that was loaded. So what we did with the Alberta Métis Works list was divided by territories. And the areas where it had the highest rating of Alberta Métis Works members are the areas that we chose that were the closest.

And then what we did for the citizens, reps, and other officials was say, okay, you have the majority of people around Slave Lake, Alberta Métis Works members, so we're going to have it there because it's the closest for others. It's hard for them to get away to areas that are more north or whichever, but you have 17 in Slave Lake and surrounding area, and you have four in Fort McMurray and Cold Lake. So it didn't make economic sense for us to send everybody up to those locations.

So that's why we chose that this year, and it'll be something that we change looking at next year. In addition to the procurement aspects or what might be happening, we actually have companies coming to us now. So right after our Calgary meeting, we went with Enmax, and we're looking at putting a relationship agreement together with them.

We're taking all of our Métis businesses, and we're looking at what everybody's looking for with respect to machinery, what they have, what they can access, what capital that they have, or whatever they can rent out. And it's from everybody from like a baking company to an infrastructure company. So those lists have been provided to us, and that's why we're pushing everybody.

If you're a Métis company, you should really be signing up for Alberta Métis Works because that's how we're going to be sending out those lists. TC Energy has asked us for the same thing, and we're going to be doing it with more of our other partners. So that's how we're growing that, and that's an exciting next venture.

[Director Fetch]
And I would add, we have done in the past where one of our industry partners reaches out and says, hey, I need a list of companies that are doing this in this area, and then we can share through Alberta Métis Works that list of companies. And we've shared them out further because we don't know everybody, right? So we're trying to build that list so it's really quick and easy because you know how business works, right?

They work at the speed of business, and so we need to be able to react quickly to be able to get them the information. But it's how do we identify that they're Métis-owned businesses, that's Métis Works, and then being on that list is a way to be able to connect to those opportunities. And that's what we're trying to promote and build it because it's more than just a list of businesses.

It's also a list of businesses to be able to provide opportunities, bring to these events, and they talk to each other. They've grown together. Like this is the one thing that came out of everything.

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Every one of these events is that they really benefit from being able to talk with each other and grow, and people have made partnerships. We've been able to connect our businesses to opportunities. Like TransCanada reached out one day and said, hey, what's the name of that company that I was talking to?

And so we reconnected them, and now they're a supplier for them. That's what these are for, right? They're really to give businesses opportunities, and you can learn from each other because you don't have to make the same mistakes as somebody else.

They'll tell you what they did, right? And so that's how we see the benefit, but we're growing Métis Works to be able to be that mechanism.

[Chair]
Thank you.

[Director Fetch]
Oh, and I was going to say also procurement. With the Procurement Assistance Canada, they help what their job is. They're paid to help businesses access procurement, and DND, Department of National Defence, they have their own body, but they also assist people in accessing those opportunities.

So it's really by connecting with the people who can help you and navigate that system, because it isn't an easy system. That's one of the ways that we've been able to do that. But I know that you're talking about a much bigger picture, and we're trying to build out that ability to support people just because I can't get them the job, right?

But I can open the door and try to provide you supports so that you can be better positioned to get that job and build your business that way.

[Chair]
Representative Ward.

[Representative Ward]
Can you hear me there? I'm going to highly recommend that any business that wants to be a part of these economic forums should go, because when you have Procurement Canada there, they're actually helping that business how to apply, right? They walk you through that process, right?

If you want to be procurement for the Government of Canada, right? They also showed you how to set up a system in which, if something isn't happening in regards to your business, that it'll flag it as soon as that does come up, and it'll go directly to your business to say, okay, here's an opportunity for your business to apply to Procurement Canada, and then they will help you apply. Procurement Canada will help the business apply to become a supplier, and that's just not physical.

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That's also contract work, like consultation work. I really encourage any business to go because it'll just open your mind and open the business's mind as to what is available for us to move forward in conjunction with Canada. Like, I can't recommend it enough if you're a business owner.

[Chair]
Madam President?

[President Sandmaier]
I asked the Chair if I could just say something funny. It's not funny. Well, it kind of is.

I was teasing Representative Ward and Representative Schnell in Calgary, because they were keeners sitting in the front row and taking lots of notes. So, if you want to know anything about Procurement Canada and National Defence Procurement, they have all the answers.

[Chair]
New resident experts. Secretary Ekeberg.

[Secretary Ekeberg]
So, I got a question for you, Secretary Dibb. So, we have quite a few people that comes to this Métis Works Summit and all that. How can we as a government, or not necessarily a government, but you as economic development, or Katie or Tyler or whatever, but how can we attract more industry to the table? How can we bring more people to the table?

[Secretary Dibb]
That was going to be my question. So, thank you. I'll see if I can answer it.

I'm getting elbowed on both sides of me here now, so I may as well ask it. Are we restricted to only these three summits, or is there enough budget to do one a week?

[Director Fetch]
There's a second part to that question. Is there enough sanity? So, we do invite our businesses, right?

We invite businesses, partners, relationship agreement holders, but other businesses as well. We have people reaching out constantly as a point of contact, right? And we're trying to feed opportunities out to businesses.

So, we invite as many, we spread it out. When we did last year, we sent little postcards, we had letters, we sent out to people in the area, right? And so, we invited as many people as you can, because the whole point isn't just our businesses getting together as well, but it's opportunities for them.

And sometimes there's opportunities from business to business, Métis business to Métis business, but we also know there's a lot of people out there who have big companies that

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are doing a lot of work and looking to hire people. And there's a big push right now in economic reconciliation and companies building out economic reconciliation plans, strategies. And so, they are creating space within their operations for Indigenous businesses to participate.

One example was TransCanada, they switched their coffee supplier to an Indigenous coffee roaster, which is a massive contract for all of TransCanada. I mean, if I was in that business, I would be drinking more coffee than I drink now, right? So, it was a huge opportunity for one small coffee roaster.

So, it's a wide range of opportunities and we need to connect our businesses to them to be able to find out, because they know their business, I don't. I just know, I have an idea of what they do. But when they start talking, they find opportunities.

So, we do invite other businesses, non-Métis businesses to come and interact with our businesses so that they can find those opportunities with the broader industry.

[Chair]
Katie?

[Katie Suvanto]
Another thing we've done, Secretary Ekeberg, is we created the Business Networking Circle. It's based on the BNI, so Business Networking International, and we invite all of our Alberta Métis Works companies to meet once a month. We provide them with an opportunity with respect to procurement or growing your business.

In addition to that, once a month meeting that we have online during lunchtime, some people show up, some don't, some show up more in different months. But we also work with RLI, and Pinnacle, and APPE, and we bring everybody together that will work in helping build, identify, and grow their businesses.

[Chair]
Secretary Collins?

[Secretary Collins]
Has your mic on? Oh, here we go. Thank you for all that information.

I see that there is a lot of support there for our Métis entrepreneurs. And I know I had asked a question about how are we preparing. So maybe I'll leave that question with your team so that you can put some thought to it.

And instead of just a quick answer because I asked it, maybe just leave it with you folks and just think, how can we start doing this so that we're prepared and ready? Because I have a feeling when they do the major project stuff, it's going to be at a drop of a hat. So we're not going to have, you know, like months, and months, and months to prepare.

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So I'm just making that suggestion as a proactive, proactive, get ready piece. So with that, Mr. Chair, if I'm prepared to make the motion to accept his presentation for information.

[Chair]
I think Secretary Collins, given your suggestion that you'd like to have them thinking about that in the back of their mind, perhaps we don't accept it for information and we direct them to bring it back to next council after giving your suggestion some consideration. How would you feel about that?

[Secretary Collins]
Lovely.

[Chair]
Representative Dunfield, are you okay to second that?
[Representative Dunfield]
Yes.

[Chair]
Very good. Is there any further discussion on this one, given that it's going to come back next month for discussion as well? Secretary Ekeberg.

[Secretary Ekeberg]
I just want to say Mr. Dibb, you did a fine job and I appreciate that.

Thank you very much.

[Chair]
All right. Further discussion on the motion?

Debate? Any opposition? The matter is so referred back to administration.

We'll talk about it again in April. Thank you, council. That takes us to the next item on our agenda, which is 11A sub I, self-government update.

Our president leads this portfolio and I believe we have legal counsel as well to assist. President, the floor is all yours.

[President Sandmaier]
All right. So you have a briefing note in front of you and I just want to, I have Jason Madden on to assist me with this information as it is very fluid and happening very quickly and Jason also has a hard stop at three our time, I believe. So the motion is be it resolved by the Citizens' Council that the self-government update on the Canada Alberta Memorandum of Understanding and draft cooperation agreement on environmental and as presented.

I'm not, I don't know if I, if you guys want me to go through the whole thing because we don't have a whole bunch of time but we did send out the letter that I sent to IAC on Friday

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evening was sent again to you guys in your, it should have been in your inbox yesterday along with the cooperation agreement that IAC has signed with the draft cooperation agreement that IAC has signed with Alberta. We do have concerns. We've made it very clear in the letter and I've made it very clear with Alberta, with Minister Sawhney that we also have some concerns with this draft cooperation agreement.

I met with her last week. The letter went out on Friday. On Monday, we received an email request from IAC for a meeting to discuss our proposed amendments.

Jason, did you want to chime in a little bit here?

[Jason Madden]
Sure. So, I think everyone, you know, was, who participated in the joint district council, citizens council, you know, meeting that we had and everyone has that memo that shows the long history of how for, you know, going on 20 plus years, we've been fighting battles on a whole bunch of things and we've got a bunch of green check marks on some of these things, whether it's, you know, harvesting agreement, but, you know, that harvesting agreement isn't perfect in any means because it excludes, you know, the South, but, you know, it at least replaces the, you know, that unilateral policy that, you know, that Alberta put in place that just identified, you know, 25 dots and drew circles around them.

You know, we've made huge progress on, you know, self-government with Canada as based upon the Daniels case. We've made, you know, we're regularly consulted federally, you know, on projects that Canada, you know, engages reviews, whether through the Canadian Energy Regulator or the IAC, I forget what its name is, the Impact Assessment Agency. And, you know, we get consulted, you know, on a whole bunch of other things, but we know the challenge that lies with the provincial government and the complete lack of consultation with the Otipemisiwak Métis Government through its district councils and the nation as a whole on everything.

And they've created that Métis credible assertion process that people have been, you know, kind of running around like gerbils and wheels on for the last, you know, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government's application has been there for six years now. And, you know, others have even had theirs in longer and, you know, and Alberta just plays the game of dividing and conquering and delaying out decisions. The cooperation agreement, you know, and how it's drafted, you know, around this concept of harmonization or defaulting to Alberta, you know, in relation to these decisions, you know, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand how highly problematic that is, and, you know, could really swamp us if all of a sudden Canada started vacating the field and not consulting with us on major projects, as well as a whole host of other projects. And we've also will highlight that, you know, these sorts of cooperation agreements have been signed with about four or five other provinces now.

And Alberta's is quite different than all of those other provinces and quite different and problematic in a whole bunch of ways. Now, as the President indicated, we've had a lot of

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meetings with, you know, federal officials and, you know, federal leadership who have essentially said, you know, we are your partner, we're committed to the self-government agreement, we're in treaty negotiations with you where, you know, we recognize you as an Indigenous government, etc, etc. But, you know, the challenge is, you know, the fine print, and also, you know, you know, we know the wolf in sheep's clothing, that is the province of Alberta when it comes to consultation with the Métis.

And, and so Canada can't be willfully blind, or, you know, acquiesce to this with when they know they're going to be leaving us in the lurch. And that's not a good partner, that's not honourable. And, you know, they know there is this problem here.

And, and they need to proactively deal with us and work with their partner, i.e. the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to make sure that Alberta doesn't get away with these sorts of things. And so, you know, this can be done by providing clarity on the, you know, in the cooperation agreement that Canada is not going to leave us at the altar, to use another analogy, and that, you know, and that also we are recognized as an Indigenous Peoples, capital I, capital P, and an Indigenous rights holder within Alberta by Canada. And that should mean something because as we know from the Daniels case, it's the federal government that has the constitutional responsibility to advance nation to nation, government to government relationships with Indigenous Peoples, not the provinces or territories.

And that is why we're negotiating the treaty. And we've negotiated the self-government agreements with Canada, not provinces. And so what we're doing and, you know, the President, and I'm sure this may, you know, you've seen the letters, you know, wrote to the Prime Minister in November, wrote to Premier Smith in January, just, you know, wrote to the Prime Minister again with that briefing note that everyone has seen as well.

And as I said, all of those meetings have been positive with the federal partners. But, okay, you know, be a partner and make sure you are not, you know, you know, feeding us to the wolf and I'm not even sure that Alberta's in sheep's clothing on this issue. And, you know, I will also say there's been a lot of stuff from Alberta saying, oh, well, the MCAP process, the Métis Credible Assertion process works.

No one's suing us. We are consulting with the Métis, even though they're only consulting with the Métis settlements, but they, you know, they leave that out, you know, with, you know, when they're talking to their federal partners. So this is really like, we can't allow this pitch to go by.

We know what will happen if this comes to pass and that, you know, you leave the fox in charge of the hen house. You know, it will just mean that what little consultation has been happening will become even less. And so we are, you know, as the President said, you know, that memo or the cooperation agreement came out March the 6th, we are, our response came out like less than a week after.

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We are locked and loaded on this and need to be aggressive on this. And hopefully Alberta, you know, sorry, hopefully Canada will make amendments to this cooperation agreement to, you know, address this issue, which would be great and which would demonstrate it. But if not, we're going to have to, you know, make some noise on this.

And, you know, because this, this could, you know, really, you know, undermine, you know, you know, where we're going, if Canada's all of a sudden going to begin deferring to Alberta on some of these issues. So I'll leave it at that, you know, look at where we're on this, we're all over this, because it is so important to district councils, it's so important to the nation as a whole. And so what we are, you know, you know, and, you know, anyone who wants to understand what we're doing, it's pretty clear in the letters there, it's voluminous, and we are creating a record, just in case we ultimately have to go to court, you know, to, you know, remind our partner Canada that it needs to stand up for the agreements it has signed with us.

And, you know, not just saying, well, we, you know, we support those agreements, we're not going to enter into agreements with others that could completely undercut or undermine those commitments that Canada has made to us. So we're setting down track for this. Of course, we are always optimistic that we will be able to negotiate something with Canada, you know, put your money where your mouth is.

If you're, you know, committed to working with us, then the agreements that you're signing with Alberta should acknowledge that in the same way that, you know, they're following through on updating our 2023 agreement, or, you know, engaging in treaty negotiations. So those are, that's really where we're at on this. And, you know, we're, you know, we have that upcoming meeting with, you know, IAC to, you know, really impress upon them how they need to make these amendments, or, you know, we may have to consider your legal options on it, because you can't really read the MOU that was signed with Alberta.

And then, you know, this agreement, and, you know, they know how Alberta treats with, you know, treats us, you know, like, these agreements are setting out a process that will get to a certain result. And if you don't, you know, kind of get changes to it based upon ensuring Canada acts honorably, you may need to, you know, punch on these things to get people's attention. And I will say, you know, sometimes punching on these things is very helpful.

You know, we will remember, after the 2020-2021, you know, agreement was signed with the Manitoba Métis Federation, the Métis Nation of Alberta at the time, as it was called at that time, you know, went to court to, you know, sue Canada on that agreement. And what came out of that was getting the updated 2023 agreement, which dealt, recognized you in the same way. We ultimately didn't have to go to the full litigation on it, but you've got to be prepared to not let these pitches go by.

And I think that, you know, this is, we just want to make everyone aware that, one, we're absolutely not going to let this pitch go by, but two, we may have to crack the bat on the ball at some point in time if Canada doesn't make the amendments that are necessary, or

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provide us the written assurances we need, and also nudge Alberta in the way they need to, to say it's not good enough to just say you've got, you know, pardon my language, the MCRAP policy out there. You've got to make sure that you're consulting with the Métis communities that the Otipemisiwak Métis Government represents.

[Chair]
President Sandmaier, now that we have that on the public record.

[President Sandmaier]
Yep, thank you, Jason. I did send you a text. But thank you for that.

So we do have a meeting next week with IAC, and so we are very hopeful that, you know, they responded very quickly to our submission, and we're hoping that we'll have a positive meeting with them, and we will keep you all posted on that. I think that's all we have on that, so thank you. Thank you, Jason, for coming on and assisting me with the explanation on the briefing note and where we're going.

[Chair]
Council questions? Secretary Collins.

[Secretary Collins]
Thank you, Madam Chair, for the information that's provided to us, including the agreement, so we can have a good read of it. My suggestion is going to be that, and I will make a motion if we have to accept it, my suggestion is going to be because these, particularly the steps and the processes that are happening under the Build Canada Act are happening rather quickly, and I'm going to make a suggestion that as the steps need to be taken, and as we as a government require conversations and discussion and strategic thinking around what is our next steps, that those be taken quickly as opposed to waiting until we have a next meeting date, and further that if we are going to be talking strategies with how we as a government intend to address some of these pieces, that for myself, anyway, I like to talk strategy and those kinds of pieces in a rather confidential environment. And so I'd like to make some of those suggestions, particularly as we move forward with this, because as you said, it moved really quickly from when we got the, when we sent out the letter to the reaction, and so it tells me that these are going to move quickly and that we be prepared as a government to react quickly. And so Mr. Chair, if there's no anything, I'd like to accept or report an update.

[Chair]
Very good, thank you for moving the motion, Secretary Collins. Is there a seconder to the motion? Secretary Lisa Wolfe.

You're just out of my eyesight, Secretary. Madam President, did you have further commentary in respect to this matter before we go to decision?

[President Sandmaier]

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Yeah, I mean, we, as soon as we see anything, our team is watching very closely, and so is our legal team watching Canada very closely. So we are moving very quickly and keeping in step with the actions that Canada and Alberta are taking. Sometimes it's hard to be ahead of things when even the people, some of the federal departments didn't even know about this.

But we are moving quickly and we will continue to do so. So thank you.

[Jason Madden]
And I just want to point out one thing. On page four, and I think that, just to flag for people, on page four, five of the memo, and I'm just looking at this now, those amendments, like the amendments are what's in the actual letter that went out to government or the proposed amendments, not what's in the memo. They're slightly different because we, you know, legal did a review of those.

So that's the only thing that I would just flag that, you know, the proposals to IAC are those set out in the letter from the President to the IAC about the submissions and what's in one, two, three, four of page five are not what the proposal is. But this is an internal briefing note and this is just for information purposes anyways. But I just want to flag that because someone else may catch it when they look at that drafting, which is a bit different than what's in the IAC letter.

And the IAC letter went through a bit more iterations to, you know, in relation to the legal issues subsequent to, I guess, this memo.

[Chair]
Okay, thanks for that. Further discussion then, Council? If not, is there any debate on the motion?

Any opposition? Motion carries. The report is accepted.

That takes us to sub 2 under 10A, which is the transition report. I'll look for the manager. Jesus, she's already here.

Look at that. Go ahead, Nicole. The floor is yours.

[Transition Manager Nicole Shepherd]
Thank you. Though Otipemisiwak Métis Government continues to advance the transition process as of the date of this transition report, we have established district councils and 15 Otipemisiwak Métis Government districts. The transition team continues to work hard to support the transition from the old governance structure, meeting with local councils and newly established district councils to guide them through the transition process.

Incorporated district councils, the following districts have successfully adopted their bylaws as of the date of this report. Foothills Métis District 1, elections are complete for this term. Medicine Hat Métis District 2, elections are complete for this term.

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Red Deer Métis District 3, the district council participated in the recent elections and elected its district captain and councillors, and elections are complete for this term. Rocky View Métis District 4, elections are complete for this term, and a by-election for the vacant district captain position is to be determined. Calgary Elbow Métis District 6, this district council will hold an election to implement staggered terms.

By-election for the vacant district counselor position is to be determined. Jasper House Métis District 7, elections are complete for this term. Lac Saint-Anne Métis District 8, elections are also complete for this term.

For Edmonton Métis District 9, a by-election for the vacant district counselor position is to be determined. St. Albert Métis District 11, the elections are complete for this term. St. Paul-Cold Lake Métis District 12, this district council participated in the recent elections, and two district counselors were elected. Elections are complete for this term. Fort McMurray Métis District, the elections are also complete for this term. Lac La Biche Métis District 19, the elections are complete for this term, and they will be determining a by-election for the vacant district counselor position.

Athabasca Landing Métis District 20, there will be a by-election for the vacant district counselor position, and that will be determined, to be determined. Lesser Slave Lake Métis District 21, elections are complete for this term, and Wabasca-Desmarais Métis District 22, the district council participated in the recent elections and elected a district counselor, and the elections are now complete for this term. Districts with fully approved bylaws, the following districts have fully approved district council bylaws and are ready to call, or have already called a special meeting to adopt their bylaws.

Edmonton Whitemud Métis District 10, the bylaws have been fully approved by Citizens' Council in July of 2024. A transition meeting was held for the citizens of Edmonton Whitemud District on July 4th, 2025, and the transition team has attempted to contact the president and board members of the central Edmonton local without success. Fort Vermilion Métis District 15, on March 15th, or 13th, 2026, the MNA local council within the Fort Vermilion Métis District will meet with citizens in the district to review an updated draft of the bylaws for the Fort Vermilion District Council.

This report was written and submitted on March 10th, so since this report was written, an updated draft has been submitted for approval today, and the next report, transition report, will reflect that. Districts with partially approved bylaws, the following districts have partially approved bylaws and are ready to call a special meeting to adopt their bylaws. Once the bylaws are approved at a special meeting, the districts will submit their bylaws for Citizens' Council's full approval.

Grande Prairie Métis District 13, bylaws were approved in principle in April 2025. On March 15th, the two MNA local councils within the Grande Prairie Métis District will meet with citizens in the district to review an updated draft of bylaws for the Grande Prairie District Council, and again, this was written on March 10th, so those bylaws have been submitted

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for review today. Peace River Métis District 14, the bylaws were approved in principle in March 2025.

On March 14th, 2026, the three MNA locals within the Peace River Métis District will meet with citizens in the district to review an updated draft of bylaws for the Peace River District Council, and again, this was written in the past, and their bylaws have been submitted for review today. Districts with bylaws in review, the following districts are in the process of preparing district council bylaws. Conklin Métis District 18, the transition team is currently working with the Conklin local to finalize bylaws for the Conklin District Council.

In other updates, Calgary Nose Hill Métis District 5, participated in the recent elections and updated its district captain, and I see a correction. They have only updated or elected their captain, not their councillors, so that will have to be corrected following this meeting. Elections are complete for the captain for this term, and the captain will work to establish the Calgary Nose Hill District Council with commencing following the district captain swearing in and work on their bylaws.

The Fort Chipewyan-Métis District 16 transition information session for the citizens in the Fort Chipewyan-Métis District was held in September of 2025. Fort Chipewyan Local 125 held an election on November 25th, 2025, and elected a new president. The transition team is currently in the process of arranging an initial meeting with President Ruby Ladouceur with the intention of beginning the Fort Chipewyan locals transition to the Fort Chipewyan Métis District.

Again, this report was written on March 10th, and we have had that initial meeting on March 17th, and that will be reflected in the transition report in the upcoming citizens council meeting. So this one's really exciting. On January 15th, 2026, Region 2 held a special meeting and passed a unanimous resolution to approve the Region 2 Regional Council's transition, and work is currently ongoing to affect this transition, and that would be the first region to do this.

So I think that's really, really great. Another correction for Region 6 on March 28th, not the 14th, 2026 representatives from Region 6 will hold a special meeting to discuss the Region 6 Regional Council transition and proposed territorial entity bylaws. And last but not least, the Otipemisiwak Elected Official Orientation Program, OEOOP for short, our newly elected officials are invited to attend the next OEOOP session, which is held tomorrow, March 20th.

And that concludes my report.

[Chair]
Thank you, Nicole, appreciate that. Council, questions to the transition report? Secretary Chodzicki.

[Secretary Chodzicki]

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Thank you for that, Nicole. I'm just, as you're aware, we just had our election in District 3 for the captain, but unfortunately, we only have four councillors, where our bylaws state the minimum is five with a maximum of seven. I guess the question is, how soon can we have an election to bring those numbers up?

[Chair]
So I'll take that one. So the process for the districts to call elections when they have vacancies is they make their request to the Chief Electoral Officer. Chief Electoral Officer then works directly with them on scheduling because the Constitution gives the district's authority over elections.

I think after our discussions later today, we'll be able to better answer that question and give some contact pathways for those discussions to happen right away. Any other questions to the report? If not, I'll look for a motion to accept the transition report for information.

Representative Ward, seconded by Secretary Ekeberg. Any further discussion, debate? Any opposition to the motion?

Motion is carried. The report is accepted. Council, the remainder of our business on the agenda today, with the exception of key messages and the President's closing remarks, will be in-camera items.

So the majority of the rest of our afternoon should see us in-camera. I think we will recess, Council, for 15 minutes, come back at 20 after three, and I will look for a motion then to go in-camera and start working through these items. Council stands in recess for 15 minutes.

Motion to go in-camera and start working through the in-camera items. Representative Blatz moves to go in-camera. Secretary Chodzicki seconds.

Secretary Lisa Wolfe thirds that motion. Is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, we are in-camera.

Okay, Council. Some of us want to go, not all of us. I'll call the meeting back to order.

A reminder, we're in public session. People can see you and hear you. We have some motions coming out of the closed session.

First on agenda, item 12A, the personnel matter, looking to Secretary Lisa Wolfe for a motion to accept the resignation of the Chief Electoral Officer, effective April 1st, 2026.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
That is correct, sir.

[Chair]
If you'd kindly, is there a seconder to that motion? Representative Schnell? Any discussion?

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Debate? Any opposition to the motion? Motion carries, the resignation is accepted.

The next motion is a motion to direct Human Resources to undertake the recruitment process for a new Chief Electoral Officer as discussed. Representative Bramfield, I think this is your motion? Yes, it is.

Very good. Seconder on that motion? Representative Ward seconds.

Discussion? Debate? Any opposition to the motion?

Motion is carried. Administration is so directed. The next motion is Secretary Collins moves approval of the District Council bylaws using the motion wording as reflected in the briefing note.

I trust you're still making that motion?

[Secretary Collins]
So moved, Mr. Chair.

[Chair]
Very good. It's a long motion, which is why we're not reading it into the record. People will be able to find it in the minutes.

Secretary Lisa Wolfe seconding? That is correct. Very good.

Debate? Discussion? Any opposition?

Motion carries, bylaws are so approved.

The Judicial Tribunal Remuneration Review. Motion is be it resolved by the Citizens Council that the report of the Senior Executive Officer on the remuneration rates of the Judicial Tribunal and the request communicated by the Chair of the Tribunal are deemed received and the Judicial Tribunal remuneration rates be amended for the Judicial Tribunal members of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government as set out in the briefing note.

Secretary Karen Collins still willing to move?

[Secretary Collins]
So moved, Mr. Chair.

[Chair]
Very good.

Secretary Lisa Wolfe seconding?

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]

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That is correct. I second.

[Chair]
Good. Discussion? Debate?

Any opposition to the motion? Motion carries. The motion is amended as set out.

The discussion required no motions. It takes us into agenda item 13, key messages. Council, you have the benefit of your press secretary who joins us at the table.

What do you want to tell Kenny to tell everyone else? Secretary Bramfield.

[Secretary Brooke Bramfield]
Thank you. I have a few items actually. So I've been asked if we could post a date for our Citizens' Gathering with the specific dates and location obviously.

People are wanting to plan their summers and whatever else, especially if it's in, because it's in Slave Lake that there's lots of camping opportunities so maybe they'll want to plan more of a camping experience and go to the gathering, figure out their accommodations. So if we could create one right away, that'd be great. With the district council web page, it hasn't been updated with, from October or September, with Lac Ste. Anne, Fort McMurray, and Slave Lake district captains.

And of course we just swore in two more. So that will need to be updated. And then also the last thing is the live streaming.

Obviously we did live stream today, but it hasn't been, it wasn't posted or shared that we are live streaming our meetings. Like there wasn't a post on Facebook or anything that our meeting was underway with a link. So we just need to make sure we're being accessible and the people know that the meeting's actually happening and have a link to access to watch if that can be posted.

I don't know the day before or a couple days before with the link that they can tune in. Those are my three items.

[Press Secretary Kenny Trenton]
I'm just going to ask you just a follow-up question on the second one about the district. When you said district council web page, are you just referring to where the captains are or district council websites specifically?

Okay. Okay. Okay.

Yeah. No, that's what I wrote down. I just wanted to be a hundred percent sure on that.

And live stream posts. I was like, would you like one, like say maybe a week before and then maybe the day before kind of thing.

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[Chair]
Would that be satisfactory? Okay. Sounds good.

Very good. Representative Dunfield.

[Representative Dunfield]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of highlights for our youth. Just wanting to mention one of our youth from our Grande Prairie Métis district, Jordyn Bumstead, 13 years old, played for Team Maksymetz.

They won silver at Alberta Winter Games, youth 15 provincials, and they just won silver at Arctic Winter Games. So I can share that information and send it out to you. The other one I wanted to highlight for you was, and this is with permission from Secretary Ekeberg, is a youth from Lac La Biche, Katie Nashim.

Katie plays for OOKS, NAIT OOKS women's team, and they won provincials and she was named to provincial all-stars. So I'll get that information to you and share it as well.

[Press Secretary Kenny Trenton]
What sport is that? Did you say basketball?

[Representative Dunfield]
No, sorry. Volleyball.

[Press Secretary Kenny Trenton]
Okay.

[Representative Dunfield]
Volleyball. Oh, sorry. Volleyball and curling.

The 13-year-old is curling and Katie was volleyball.

[Chair]
Nice. Secretary Lisa Wolfe.

[Secretary Lise Wolfe]
Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to just give some highlights. This past week, well, I guess it would be last week, we had our veterans gathering, national veterans gathering in Vancouver, and we had all of our veterans from across the homeland that got to speak on wellness and take some training on the MIVAC account.

I have photos on that event and I'll send that over to you, Mr. Secretary. And also that Secretary Grant Lacombe and myself attended in the Devon Fish and Game fundraising show again, got to network and work with other ministers that came to the event. So we took some fun photos, so we'll send that out to you too.

[Chair]

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Thank you, Secretary. Representative Ward.

[Representative Ward]
This is going to be more of a personal note, but I want to really thank everyone who reached out when we lost our District Captain and the support that our nation and the people from our nation gave us was absolutely phenomenal. I want to thank President Sandmaier because we had a few late night conversations when all this was going through and it definitely helped me, but it also helped me to communicate to our people that we are being thought of. And one of the things that Andrea had pointed out in one of our conversations was that if we all live closer, we would all be making food so that the family could just help them with their grieving.

So we did as a nation get together and we did send them a gift card so that they could use when they were going through all of this. I really want to thank our self-government, Nicole Sparrow, with so much help that she gave us when we were trying to figure out a succession and what that looked like at a district level. Also, the consultation department, when we were going through what we were going through, they stepped up and said, can we help?

Can we help with some of these deadlines? And I really appreciate that. So that was Richard Bruno that reached out to us.

I really want to thank Brianna McDonald or Brianna Donald as well for all the support that she gave us at our district going through all of this. And then just so that everyone knows as well that so Adrian Pruden has stepped up to be our deputy captain, which I am very grateful for. We now have signing authority and are able to keep moving forward with some of the projects in our district.

Our district counselors, Donavan Taylor and Alana Newton have stepped up huge to help with what's going on. Our district captain, she's an amazing lady. She had a lot of irons in the fire and we are making, they've been able to help make sure that those embers keep burning.

So, and if I've missed anyone, please don't take it as a slight, but just know that all your words and your actions have not gone unnoticed by us and our district counselors in our district.

[Chair]
Thank you. Thank you, Representative Ward. President Sandmaier.

[President Sandmaier]
Just a couple things. With Representative Dunfield highlighting the two young, amazing athletes, I just want to remind everybody that we do have that citizen spotlight available as well. So if there is someone in your district or even outside of your district, I guess that you know that deserves some accolades, that is an option as well with a citizen highlight.

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I also want to say that I was really, when we were at the MNC Health Forum, Secretary Lussier and I were approached by an MNO citizen who I think most of her family actually lives in Calgary, her 93-year-old mother and some of her siblings. And she asked us if we would present her 93-year-old mother, who is a residential school survivor, with one of our residential school sashes. And Secretary Lussier and Knowledge Keeper Priscilla Paul did that this week and had a lovely dinner with them, a lunch.

I don't know if you want to say anymore, Nelson, but he did send me a picture, so we will, we can get that to you. And I can email Terry just to make sure if it's okay if we put her name in it, her mom's name in it. Yeah, make sure that it's okay before we do that.

And I know that Secretary Lisa Wolfe also has a residential school survivor that she's going to go visit, yes, with another sash. So if, again, if you guys are out in community and you have a residential school survivor that has not received a sash, please let us know.

[Chair]
Secretary Lisa Wolfe.

[Secretary Lisa Wolfe]
Thank you very much. I just also want to highlight what Representative Ward was just talking about. And one of the things that, just relaying, Captain Boyd, that she was also a veteran, you know, and she gave her life in service for many, many years as she also came over to the OMG and started doing her service here.

So I just want to make mention that there is a Legacy Fund white little buffalo sash lapel pin that you can buy to honour her legacy for this year, and it's $20. It's with Shauna and Shawna Quilts, and I think it'd be just lovely if we just honoured her service overall. This would be something that you would probably pay for individually.

I don't imagine our government would put in for that, but if you really wanted to be part of that, we can, you know, look at $20 from any of you, and they will make this little sash for us to wear for this year. But it's on the Shauna and Shawna Quilts, and if you want more information, I will screenshot it and send it to you directly. But I think it'd be kind of honouring for her maybe at the gathering this year to just acknowledge, you know, we all lose people.

We all lose people in every area, but I think sometimes when we lose somebody in a very special place in our hearts, it would be a nice way to honour her legacy without being too intrusive on the family. Thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Wolfe. Secretary Collins.

[Chair]
Secretary Lussier.

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[Secretary Nelson Lussier]
Yeah, it's like the, I think Kenny is making a post for this, like to say about District 5 and 6 in Calgary. Captain Lasanté and I have been working with the city for about a year and with Calgary Housing, Indigenous Housing, and we had a pipe ceremony on Monday and we got $2.34 million from the city of Calgary to buy some land, finally. We are extremely excited about that.

I know Kenny's team's working on a post. It's already up. Oh, it's already up?

[Chair]
Yeah.

[Secretary Lussier]
Oh, okay. Why didn't you tell me? I wanted to say something.

[Chair]
Because it went up during closed session.

[Secretary Lussier]
I couldn't say anything. Okay, yeah. We're really excited about that.

So we've been working with them for about a year. We had a team's meeting with Aaron and Bindu. Bindu came down to the ceremony and so we're really excited.

So I just want to make that good news. And also with that family, six of the daughters were involved with that and we had a lunch and they're all veterans, all six daughters, and they married all RCMP officers and they were, it was great. She's a sweet lady.

She's 93 years old. We had a great dinner for about two and a half hours. Priscilla Paul presented the sash and said a few words and stuff.

So it was really a nice, nice, nice morning. So yes, thank you.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Lussier. Any further key messages? Going once.

Okay, Kenny. Sounds like it worked today. Okay.

I missed two motions coming out of the in-camera discussion. So we're going backwards, sorry. Looking for a motion to refer the 2026-2027 proposed budget back to administration for review as discussed.

Representative Dunfield, did you still wish to make that motion? Yeah. Very good.

Seconded by Secretary Collins still? Correct. Very good.

Any debate? Any opposition? It is still referred.

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And a motion to refer the kahsketakihk development of constituting instruments back to administration for amendments as discussed. Motion from someone? Representative Paul-Alook.

Representative Schnell seconds. Discussion? Debate?

Opposition? Seeing none, the motion's carried. It is so referred.

Madam President, for your closing remarks, you have the floor. Sorry, Secretary Collins, did you?

[Secretary Collins]
I'm just getting hangry, so I was ready to adjourn, but I'll wait until our president makes closing remarks. Thank you.

[Chair]
Very good. Madam President?

[President Sandmaier]
I'm not going to keep it long, because I too have to get going to watch my son play volleyball. So I just want to thank everybody today for the conversations around the room. We had some great conversations, and I appreciate all of you, and I know it was a tough first meeting, Representative Blatz.

But again, welcome. Welcome to our table. I do have one announcement, and I see that Breanne has come to my side.
Go ahead.

[Breanne Donald]
Okay, I'll get to the point. My last day will be May 8th.

[President Sandmaier]
Tell them why. I know. Because why?

It's exciting.

[Breanne Donald]
I'm embarking on a nine and a half month international travel trip. I just wanted to say thank you to you all for your kindness and all of the laughs. This role has truly handed me opportunities beyond my wildest dreams and gifted me memories and cultural experiences that I will never forget and that will continue to lead me forward in life.

It's been a true honor to serve the nation in this capacity and become a member of this amazing community. I will return again, and I hope to serve the nation in some capacity in the future again. But until then, I wish you all nothing but success in your roles, and I don't like to say goodbye, so see you soon.

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[President Sandmaier]
So I just want to also on behalf of Citizens' Council, and I know all of you probably want to give her a hug too, but I just want to thank you for everything that you've done for this council, your dedication. You're an amazing person, and I'm very excited for you. Very excited.

I can't wait to hear all about your travels and all the fun that you're going to have. So she did have some, a couple really exciting things happen to her the last couple weeks. So if you haven't noticed, she has a really big rock on her finger too, so thank you.

[Chair]
No. Are you quite finished?

[President Sandmaier]
Yes, I'm finished.

[Chair]
Being nothing else on the agenda for Citizens' Council, no further matters. Council is adjourned until April 2026. Now you can go get a hug.

[Secretary Collins]
Move to adjourn, Mr. Chair and Bre, thank you so much for taking care of all of us.

[Chair]
Thank you, Secretary Collins. We stand adjourned.

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