

And so it goes as we work on moving forward



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The Gaming Authority passed the 2015 casino budgets at the Feb. 3 meeting. I believe this was a step in the right direction.

I think that the majority of the board can agree that what we have been doing in the past is not working and change is needed. We hired a temporary casino executive because we knew we needed to bring in someone with experience to help turn our operations around. Fred Buro, the temporary CEO brought his TEAM (casino management) to the board to present the budgets and the managers for each casino is being held accountable for their own budget.

I was very impressed by the excitement, appearance and professionalism of all the casino staff that came to present to the board that day. Everyone looked to me like they felt a part of that team and that they had a voice that mattered.

Not every decision will be welcomed but at the rate we were headed for the past several years was down a very scary road.

Our properties need some serious capital improvements for us to remain competitive and our front line workers need raises. This will cost us money.

We will need to change the way we do business to offset some of the costs. Some things may seem painful in the beginning but will hopefully keep us as a viable business in the future. We do not want to survive another year or another 5 or 10 but for many generations to come. We may also need to refinance our debt or extend it in order to make these needed changes. Nobody wants to do this but I think we all want to make our businesses better and generate more revenue. We can't do this with old slot machines and run down facilities. It would be a shame if we hired Fred and did not give him the proper tools to do what we hired him to do.

The board seems to continue to lose their voice. Board concerns were always addressed at a board meeting and are now being put off until the next day's workshop. This leads me to believe the chairman does not want the membership to know the concerns the board members have. The members fill out a form to address the board and many times the concern is not addressed then and there. I understand for sake of time that 13 people do not need to respond to the member but if one or more would like to address the member and we know the answer than by all means, let's answer the question. The tribal newspaper sign-up requirement was only advertised for one month prior to it being eliminated. Letters are being sent out that do not include the board of directors. We seem to have no control over the schedule such as when the prior board budget schedules were set and then canceled. A resolution was brought forward about limiting board member's unit reports.

Twice now the chairman has thrown tantrums and resigned as the chair of the Gaming Expansion

Committee. (Committee that discusses Lansing and New Boston projects.) How do you resign from that role and get back on and resign again? Are you trying to sabotage the project or does it interfere with the monthly visits to Capitol Hill?

I am all for our tribe fighting for our rights at the federal level and working with other tribes to get our messages heard but at what point do you decide that the work at home is just as important. That may be able to work if we could have business meetings while he was in Washington then we would all be working for the tribe at the same time. Instead we can only deal with non-essential issues during those times. Another reason we are not moving forward.

The most frustrating thing lately is the constant allegations. "A handful of board members," "some of the haters," "certain board members." If you have something to say, say it. Name the board members. Names make these allegations more credible. I sure don't want to hear this. If you cannot state a name behind the allegation than it must not be credible.

Now that we have a CEO on the casino side we should consider hiring a CEO on the government side as well. I am tired of hearing "we" like you are a staff member. I was a staff member and had to resign my job to take my oath of office. You are an elected official and the membership voted for the separation. I believe the board

when passing the delegation of authority in 2012 was hoping that a leader would emerge and do the right thing. It has been two-and-one-half years later and every time the issue is discussed the victim mentality returns. If you want to be a leader by all means step up and lead!

Shortly after being elected, we formed the TAP committee and have been almost stagnant for a year while deaths continue to devastate our communities. We compiled a list of survey questions six months or more ago and have all this data and we just recently found out that a person was granted a contract that we knew nothing about and she has all this sensitive data and just happens to be a relative of the chairman's. And then you hear about nepotism and cronyism.

I will never understand how you can go to D.C. and "save the world" but at home you "destroy your community."

After the January Newberry meeting when I introduced an elimination of position policy and mentioned that I was a part of this workgroup, the direction has now changed. Human Resources has now been placed on the agenda twice a month and the board is deciding what policies are need to be changed and in what quarter they get reviewed. So much for the all governmental departments, casino, human resources and executive staff making those decision on a first hand basis. No wonder staff gets frustrated and so much

time is wasted.

The campaigning has begun. We will be holding two down-state membership meetings. The dates chosen by the chair and he has enrollment doing mailing labels for different mile radius to send to the members about the meetings. Email blasts from the tribe's official list sent out on a Sunday night. I don't remember ever seeing mailings to members in the service area or email blasts for membership meetings. Service area members have to sign forms to speak not sure how these meetings will be structured. I want members to know that I am not against meeting with people, but I do not like the way things are handled. Last time we went to one of these, there was a removal petition for a board member who did not even have the opportunity of due process.

I was contacted a few weeks ago from a very nice couple from Gaylord who asked that I put their 65th wedding anniversary in this issue of the newspaper. Congratulations Martha and Jim, that is a milestone many of our people will never reach!

St. Ignace will be having its annual Family Fun Day at Little Bear East on Saturday, March 21, from noon-3 p.m. Anyone willing to donate or volunteer, please contact Shirley Goudreau.

As always, thank you for your phone calls, emails and messages. Feel free to contact me at (906) 430-0536, bridgett91@yahoo.com or bsorenson@saulttribe.net.