

Revenues are decreasing, health insurance costs rising



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Working on tribal budgets is

never quick or easy. The board again is given a preliminary budget from our divisions that we can't fully fund. We have to decide what tribal priorities we fund and which ones will have to make do with less money.

Our revenues are decreasing from our businesses. Our health insurance costs are rising exponentially and we can't catch up. We have seen this time and time again since 2008. We have previously cut all divisions by an equal percentage, we have cut unessential personal, cut travel, cut supplies, cut reserves, cut hours, benefits and wage increases. Those have all happened several times since 2008.

Now we again face a budget

deficit and nothing but disheartening and painful items left to use to balance the budget, but please believe that we are working together and diligently to figure out the best way to move forward.

We are currently working on the St Ignace Midjim's problem of old and deteriorating gas tanks and equipment. The tanks and building are over 20 years old and about to fail. We need to act soon to advert an ecological problem such as a gas tank leak. The board is looking at all the possible solutions and will come up with a plan soon.

We are constantly reviewing policies and procedures of the tribe. We just recently passed our

cultural leave policy. That policy allows time off work to attend funerals, sweat lodges and other cultural activities. It is a great policy and can be a very sensitive item so great care is given so it can be used respectfully and correctly by our team members.

The tribal board does approve grant submittals and then grant budgets when we receive the grant awards. These items are quite common on our board shop agendas but great care is given to these items by the board. We have attachments to the back of the resolutions that explain in great detail what the money is for, where the money is coming from and how the money is spent. They also contain all the signatures of the

executives who must sign off on the paperwork being submitted as being correctly processed. Lastly, the paperwork states whom this grant serves and how many it will affect during the year.

Sometimes it may look like the board is indifferent to these when they come up for a vote and a unanimous consent is given to proceed but a lot of work and effort has already gone into it and the board has more than once reviewed and discussed these items before they are put on the tribal board agenda to be voted on.

Thank you for all the phone calls and e-mails. Keith Massaway, 702 Hazelton St., (906) 643-6981, kmassaway@msn.com.