

# Director Sorenson: Consistency is a must!



**BRIDGETT SORENSON,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT III**

At the July 7 meeting, the board passed a resolution to amend Tribal Code Chp. 21: Marriage Ordinance. The changes were that a tribal member no longer needs a state of Michigan license to marry and marriage is between two persons instead of a man and woman.

The board voted to establish a 2015 budget for the Epoufette Harbor with the grant award of \$601,972.85 from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. This will allow the tribe to move forward with the work to make this dock a place for our fisherman to launch into Lake Michigan, which is badly needed.

The Wequayoc Cemetery policy was also passed. There will be no fees for burial plots. Eligibility for burial is enrolled members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and their immediate family members, any other person who has family members already buried there, and repatriated human remains. For the complete policy please see saulttribe.com

There will be an honoring our veterans ceremony at the Wequayoc Cemetery on Aug. 3 at 3 p.m. to honor those veterans buried there.

At the July 21 meeting, the board voted to go forward with building a gymnasium for the JKL Bahweting School. This will allow for the children to have a place to play when the weather is bad instead of having to be bussed to the Big Bear. This will also increase the size of the caf-

eteria. The cost of the project is not to exceed \$1.2 million with the loan to be repaid with the lease payments the tribe charges the school.

It has been about a year-long process but everything is finally set to move forward with building bathrooms at the Hessel powwow grounds. The tribe received a \$10,000 grant from IHS and we will be paying \$6,835 out of tribal support. The board also voted to spend \$8,475 on repairs and maintenance to these grounds. With that vote, there will be \$16,340 spent on the Sault grounds and \$5,000 was added to spend on the Munising old tribal center grounds for their powwow.

The board also passed a budget for \$13,000 to have a new well at the site of the Wequayoc home. The tribe received a \$10,000 grant from IHS for this and will need to spend \$3,000 out of tribal support. Hopefully once the well is replaced, we can move forward with utilizing that property for cultural uses.

The health center advised the board of its plan for succession. The Health Division director will be retiring within the next year and other vital positions as well in the near future. All of our divisions and enterprises need to consider succession planning for the future benefit of the tribe. There were two votes taken at the July 21 meeting on whether to allow for an assistant health director position to be added and posted. The position was put in its 2016 budget and even if the board voted "no," the position probably would have went through later unless the board voted "no" on the whole budget. The first vote failed on hiring an assistant health director. After closed session, it was brought back for another vote and ended in a tie with the chair breaking the tie to hire that position. The position will be added to the list of key employees and will need seven votes of the board to hire and fire that person. I voted "no" on both votes because, as I said at the meeting, I think we are better off to post the health director position because it will

takes months to find someone and get them through the hiring process. The current health director would then be able to train the incoming director because there is no guarantee the assistant will become the director and then the new director could have input on who their assistant will be. You will hear all kinds of B.S. about why people voted the way they did as the vote is criticized. The chair threw a tantrum to make sure there was another vote.

At the July 7 meeting, Linda Knowing submitted a removal petition on Director Glyptis. The petitions were given to our executive secretary, Joanne Carr, and she gave copies to the tribal registrar, Julie Salo. Julie verified the petitions and the board was sent copies of the petitions. The board had 15 days to hold a public meeting to determine whether the petition, on its face, appears to meet the criteria of Tribal Code Chp. 16.

The July 21 meeting was within the 15 days so the board had to take action. Linda Knowing was allowed to present evidence at this meeting. She read the charges and statements from the police report and the court reports. The board then had the option to request the opinion of the legal department or outside counsel on the facial sufficiency of the petition. The board voted 6-5 to have an outside legal opinion. I voted "no" because we have had several investigations that have been conducted by our general counsel and when the petitions came forward on Director Hollowell last year, the general counsel advised the board.

The board can dismiss the petition if it is facially insufficient or they can decide that there is support for probable cause and set the date, time and place for an initial hearing and select a hearing officer and the hearing board, which is three outside attorneys who have no involvement with tribe, relationships with a member of the board or the petitioner and have never provided advice to the board in any capacity.

During the meeting the board heard from many members from Unit V that were very upset that there were no signatures from their unit. They felt that they elected the person and nobody else should be able to vote them out. During the Hollowell process, we were told by our general counsel that once you take the oath of office you represent the entire tribe and that a person maybe very well supported in their unit and the members may be too close to the situation to be able to make that decision.

The problem I have is that no matter what board member is subject to the removal process, the process should remain the same. During last year's removal, the chair called a special meeting to remove Director Hollowell, had a reporter from the *Sault Evening News* in the audience, had radio ads, etc. She was never given due process. Nobody should be treated this way. There needs to be consistency and not choosing sides.

There have been invitations to the board to send directors to meetings and nominations for committees or boards. Some board members have sent emails asking to be considered and are scoffed at because they don't see eye to eye with the chair. This is about the best interest of the tribe, not who you like or don't like. This prompted me to send a reply to the chair because he was acting like a high school drama queen. The chair turned around and posted on Facebook I called him a "queen." When asked by members to supply the email, it was deferred to a later date and then never did appear. All I can say is how many men do you know who post on Facebook that "so and so called me a name." I hate to waste my breathe or paper space but wanted to set the record straight on what I really said. After the July 21 meeting, myself and two directors carpooled to the meeting and he took a picture of me coming out of a gas station and put it on Facebook accusing us of voting the same because we rode together. This behavior is stalking and needs to stop. I will

continue to fight for what is right even under these circumstances.

I would like to thank Jeff Holt, Jake Sillers, Tamara Roche and Jessica Dumback for their hard work on this year's Sault Tribe Golf Scholarship fundraiser. This event usually raises about \$70,000.

I would like to wish all the high school seniors who will be leaving for college the best of luck. You are making your parents and tribe proud for taking the next step to self-sufficiency; study hard so you have choices and better opportunities.

The Rendezvous of the Straits PowWow will be held at the Father Marquette grounds in St. Ignace on Aug. 22 and 23.

I welcome comments or concerns at bsorenson@saulttribe.net, bridgett91@yahoo.com or (906) 430-0536.