

# Some positive changes in spite of frustrations



**DJ HOFFMAN**  
DIRECTOR, UNIT I

The past month has been a time of frustration. However, while there are many items I disagree with, some positive changes have still occurred.

## Casinos

The casino budgets have been approved and it is my understanding that many changes will be taking place soon. I did not vote for this budget (SEE POLICIES).

## Policies

The board adopted policies, rules and regulations for the tribe. As I have stated in the past, these are not optional guidelines for individuals to follow at their respective whims. Currently, these policies are being violated on a continual basis. The historical complaints of jobs being filled without posting and policies being ignored have been muted while history repeats itself. We, as a tribe, are on a very slippery slope that needs immediate corrective action. Positions are being shuffled under the terms "interim," "acting" and "temporary." Those who politically championed against such activities are currently their primary enablers. I ask that any, all interested tribal members to please feel free to contact your representatives and let them know that adopted policies apply to everyone not just a select few. ALL Jobs must be posted and filled in the appropriate manner. ALL policies must be adhered to by employees and the board.

The entire board can be contacted by emailing SaultTribeBOD@saulttribe.net.

## Attendance

The board has added Wednesday workshops. While the intent behind these workshops is based upon moving forward on issues and actually getting things done for the tribe,



Sault community and its frigid temperatures in the winter or rainy days in the spring. Now imagine how 490+ students spend recess, athletic practices, Christmas concerts, awards ceremonies, etc. (See photo at right). Currently, the children are bussed back and forth to Big Bear for gym class and athletics. The school rents space at outside venues for its concerts and events. In this case, the demand for space for these children is high and the supply is inadequate. The school needs a new, larger gymnasium to accommodate the children. This is not merely the opinion of elected officials; it has been discussed and debated continually with members of the tribal board and school board as well as direct input from parents and staff.

In the next few months, I will be working with fellow board members, as well as anyone who strives to make this necessity a reality. It can be done with existing funding and needs to be done for the current and future children of JKL Bahweting School. While the tribe and school may not see eye to eye on every issue, it is time that we do something positive and move forward.

## FOIA

I am pleased to announce that Chapter 15, Tribal Freedom of Information Ordinance, is in effect (Feb. 6, 2015). To view the code online please visit <http://www.saulttribe.com/images/stories/government/tribalcode/CHAPTR15.pdf>.



## Economic development

At the last board meeting, the board approved the following Resolution 2015-43, Developing an Economic Director Position (See resolution in upper right hand corner of this page). The purpose of this resolution is to develop a job description and cost associated with the adoption of this position. This step is a positive move towards our tribe actually diversifying and enhancing our current and future business enterprises. While it is a small step, it is progress. I am hopeful that the tribe will move forward in funding and posting this position so that a qualified economic (development)

director can move us forward. Our existing businesses could also use a central focal point to ensure their sustainability and future success. Currently, we do not have this type of structure. The tribe's existing businesses fall under the chief financial officer.

The tribe has many opportunities for diversification. There are existing businesses with positive cash flow that the tribe should consider targeting. The combination of the tribe's tax-exempt status and the businesses existing cash flows would enable the tribe to diversify exponentially. We do not need to recreate the wheel, nor do we have to swing for the fence on every type of business venture that we partake in (casinos). Small steps can lead to long-term sustainable returns. An economic (development) director can help make these options a reality.

## Housing

Recently the tribal board spent two days meeting with the tribe's Housing Authority and members of the Housing Board of Commissioners. While there are several contentious issues that need to be worked on, it was a first step towards hopefully rectifying many of these issues for the tribal membership and residents of housing.

One area that needs to be looked into is the development of housing opportunities for our single and single parent members. While it has been proposed in the past, mainly during elections, we truly need to look into affordable housing complexes such as apartments in the near future.

## Communications

As I previously reported, I

have been working on the development of a weekly newsletter, website, and blog to place all of the information (excluding confidential materials such as employment and proprietary materials) that I receive online so that you may have access to it. The website will be ready Feb. 28, 2015. If you would like to subscribe to this, please e-mail me at [djwhoffman@hotmail.com](mailto:djwhoffman@hotmail.com).

## Draft resolutions

The following issues have draft resolutions that will be submitted to the board of directors for review this month:

- Commence working on the provisions for a "right of recall."
- Pushing for legislation to ensure equality in the treatment of our respective membership in rights under tribal law.
- Amending the removal code to reflect the membership's constitutional rights, which are hindered by the current version.
- Work on legislation to allow the tribal membership to challenge the constitutionality of actions taken by the tribal board.

I will continue to push forward with members of the board who wish to be progressive. I will also continue to work with members of the board to ensure that we become innovative in our approach to economic diversification, membership services and stepping out of the non-progressive box that we appear to be confined to.

Sincerely,  
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RESOLUTION NO: 2015-43

## DEVELOPING AN ECONOMIC DIRECTOR POSITION

NOW, THEREFORFE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Membership/Internal Services Executive Director is hereby directed to: (a) develop a job description for an Economic Director position; (b) identify internal and external funding sources; and (c) report the findings back to the Board of Directors in thirty days.

## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, as Chairperson and Secretary of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, hereby certify that the Board of Directors is composed of 13 members, of whom 12 members constituting a quorum were present at a meeting thereof duly called, noticed, convened, and held on the 3 day of February 2015; that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at said meeting by an affirmative vote of 10 members for, 1 members against, 0 members abstaining, and that said resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.

Aaron A. Payment, Chairperson  
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