

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022

## Sault Tribe members elect Austin Lowes as new chairperson

**SAULT STE. MARIE, Mich.** – Members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa have elected Unit 1 Director and Vice Chairman Austin Lowes as tribal chair. With an unofficial vote count in the Special Advisory Election of 6,539 votes recorded, Lowes was the projected winner out of three eligible candidates, having received 56 percent of the vote. Lowes will serve a roughly a one-and-a-half year term that ends June 27, 2024.

“Miigwech to everyone for your confidence in my leadership,” Lowes said. “There is no shortage of work to do to keep our tribe moving forward and ensuring our government continues to meet its citizens’ needs. I look forward to working with our community and our partners at the tribal, state and federal level to ensure the best possible outcomes for our citizens.”

Lowes received a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Lake Superior State University and a master’s degree in Social Work from Michigan State University. As graduate student, he was awarded fellowships from the National Congress of American Indians and the National Association for Social Work for his commitment to addressing tribal issues. His career as a social worker has taken him to three reservations, the Sault Tribe’s, the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, and the Bay Mills Indian Community, where he gained further insight into the needs of Indigenous communities.

The election was announced on Sept. 19 of this year to replace former tribal Chair Aaron Payment who resigned on May 11. Ballots were mailed to registered tribe voters on Nov. 7, and voters had until 5 p.m. on Dec. 7 to return them to the Election Committee’s post office box in Sault Ste. Marie.

The unofficial vote totals for this election were:

DJ Hoffman: 1,374 votes

Austin Lowes: 3,719 votes

Bridgett Sorenson: 1,446 votes

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For more information about the Sault Tribe, please visit [www.saulttribe.com](http://www.saulttribe.com).

**CONTACT:**

Josh Hovey

C: 517-712-5829

E: [jhovey@martinwaymire.com](mailto:jhovey@martinwaymire.com)