



c/o Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, PO Box 160  
Sheshatshiu, NL A0P 1M0  
Ph: (709) 497-3854  
Fax: (709) 497-3881

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**Innu Round Table Meeting #17**  
**October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Delta Hotel and Conference Centre, St. John's, NL**

**Parties in Attendance:**

**Innu:** Chief Eugene Hart, SIFN  
Chief Gregory Rich, MIFN

**Canada:** Debra Keays-White, HC  
Chris McDonell, INAC

**Province:** Ron Bowles, NL/Lab & Aboriginal Affairs  
Donna O'Brien, NL/AES  
Susan Walsh, NL/CSSD (CYFS)

Note: a complete list of participants is attached

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**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

The Executive Director of the IRT Secretariat, Natasha Hurley, convened the meeting at 9:30.

All parties were present, members/participants identified themselves (see list attached).

Regrets sent in by Grand Chief Anastasia Qupee.

Natasha introduced a new employee of the IRT Sec - Dominic Rich, Community Wellness Systems Navigator. It was also noted that Donna O'Brien's new role within the Province is the Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Advanced Education and Skills.

**2. REVIEW AGENDA**

The agenda was approved.

**3. REVIEW NOTES/DECISIONS/ACTION ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The previous meeting notes were reviewed and approved. The Action Items were summarized and updates provided. Debra Keays-White noted HC has received up to date IRT reports as per the funding agreement reporting requirements.

#### **4. OPENING COMMENTS FROM THE IRT MEMBERS**

Chief Rich indicated that he plans to submit his name in the upcoming MIFN Elections scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in hopes to be re-elected for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as MIFN Chief. Chief Rich noted concerns with an increase of alcohol use and of gas sniffing within his community. He re-affirmed his commitment to an alcohol-free and drug-free election campaign. Chief Rich also spoke of his concern regarding aftercare services for children & youth following intervention/treatment for their substance misuse. He indicated that the trend has been that children whom receive treatment outside of the community tend to return to their addictions. Chief indicated the need for more local programming designed to help parents/caregivers assist in their child's transition back home. He also urged Health Canada to work with his community in finding solutions to address FASD within the community of Natuashish.

Chief Hart pointed out that alcohol continues to plaque the lives of Innu youth in Sheshatshiu and that suicide attempts are troubling. He advised that the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation took part in a process that looks to improve the Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Service Systems. Chief Hart indicated that Apenam's House, a residential treatment program based on the Brentwood Recovery Home and offered through the Social Health department seems to be working well in the community. He also said that the change to offer family based programming through the Charles J. Andrew Youth Treatment Centre also seem to be working well. Chief Hart shared that community members prefer to deal with their issues within the community and within their culture instead of having to leave home. Chief and council hope the parties can move forward together in finding solutions to these matters.

Debra Keays-White congratulated Natasha on her role. She mentioned that current Labrador Innu Health Program (LIHP) funding will "sunset" [expire/unless renewed] in April 2018 and pointed out the importance of demonstrating the impact that the additional programs have made. In addressing comments made by Chief Rich regarding FASD, FNIH Atlantic would like to look at how existing LIHP funding in areas such as FASD, mental health and maternal child health can be used to address the community needs. Through the All Chiefs Forum of the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs (APCFNC), the Atlantic First Nations Chiefs have identified health priorities that are now the Region's focus. These are mental health, addictions and chronic diseases. The work on FNIHB Atlantic's operational plan for 2017/18 continues. It will be submitted to Health Canada HQ in January 2017. Overall funding under LIHP remains constant for the next fiscal year. Debra also mentioned that the Atlantic Policy Congress is holding a First Nations Health Conference in November.

Chris McDonnell spoke about the leadership of both Chiefs Rich and Hart and the working groups. He mentioned the government is demonstrating support for the communities and its funding should support initiatives within the communities and hopes the year ahead will be positive.

Ron Bowles mentioned that some recent staff changes in the provincial government have resulted in some new participants on the IRT. He introduced Susan Walsh to the table as it is her first IRT meeting.

Susan Walsh spoke of her new role as Assistant Deputy Minister with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development working in the CYFS function. She has already visited Sheshatshiu and she is looking forward to visiting Natuashish soon.

## **5. ACTION LIST UPDATE**

### **a. IRT Workplan and Budget**

Natasha highlighted that most work objectives are on target for this year. The IRT Sec Board Meeting was held recently approved Finance and HR Policies.

Natasha reviewed the 2016/17 Forecast of Revenue & Expenditures for the IRT. She noted the total forecast revenue (INAC, HC and NL funding) of \$3M with nearly \$900K projected in direct support to IS clients, and that a balanced Budget was forecast for FY 2016/17. She also summarized the Year-To-Date Financial report (attached).

### **b. Income Support Program**

Kylie Rose provided a status update on the program implementation. The case load is 133 files between Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. It was noted that 60 of the active client files were transferred from the Provincial AES program to the Innu in April 2016 as part of the devolution agreement. There are 22 clients in active measures in the first quarter. A total of \$446K in assistance has been issued to clients. The office is working in collaboration with MIFN to hire a part time Community Liaison Officer situated in Natuashish. Joint monthly quality assurance reviews of the Innu IS Program are being conducted by the province and INAC. One 3-month compliance review has been completed and the next will take place at the end of October. Issues identified by the review process will be reviewed by the IS Sub Committee.

John Higham added that the most recent IS Sub Committee took place on October 5<sup>th</sup> and created a set of action items. A draft terms of reference for this committee has been shared with the committee members for comment and it is hoped to be presented at next scheduled IRT Meeting.

John mentioned that one of their major outstanding questions involves the National Child Benefit program. He reminded everyone that the Innu had long sought a reinvestment fund from the "savings" Canada reaped when Innu children were removed from welfare rolls. Most recently a fund based on the present case load was proposed, but INAC had noted at the recent IS Committee that Canada's decision was that it is phasing out NCBR this year so it would not be creating the fund for the Innu.

The Innu will research NCBR, to determine the facts, identify if provincial investment from its savings were made in the Innu communities, and to better determine the extent and scope of the issue. Then an informed decision can be made to draft a resolution addressing this issue. The RDG of INAC asked if the Innu could provide him a summary of the issue.

### **Action Items**

- ***IRT IS and MIFN to collaborate and hire Community Liaison Officer***
- ***IS Committee to develop a terms of reference***
- ***IRT Sec to prepare a draft summary for the RDG and to research details of the child tax benefit issue for Innu leadership.***

#### c. Justice Sub-Committee Update

Steve mentioned without the presence of lead coordinators for the Justice Sub-Committee, it has been difficult to develop a consolidated justice and policing agenda in the two Innu communities. Steve noted MIFN's submission to the Province last year with regards to establishing community-based justice workers in Natuashish comparable to Sheshatshiu was not approved by NL, despite the province encouraging a submission of the proposal. Chief Rich indicated the need for NL to continue the dialogue with MIFN to find ways to implement justice and policing services in Natuashish. MIFN's justice proposal has since been resubmitted.

Ron Bowles indicated that although the province understands the circumstances in Natuashish, it is restricted by the 2016-2017 budget cuts within the NL Government, He recognizes not having the services in Natuashish currently offered in Sheshatshiu brings challenges for the two Innu communities to meet and discuss common issues. Penny Winters noted that the Minister is aware of the original proposal but has not received a copy of the resubmission to date. Penny requested a copy be sent to her directly within the Department of Justice and Public Safety as it is currently undergoing a review of their financial planning cycle. Chief Rich said a response is needed as justice related files are piling up.

### **Action Items**

- ***Copy of MIFN's re-submission of proposal to be forwarded to NL Dept. of Justice and Public Safety.***
- ***NL to consider the resubmitted MIFN Justice Proposal.***
- ***IRT Sec to continue efforts to establish the Justice Committee.***

#### d. Child Youth & Family Services

Lyla Andrew reported that over 70 Innu children continue in placements outside of the Labrador Innu communities - 36 from Natuashish and 37 from Sheshatshiu. This continues to be a concern for leadership. Lyla also noted that the Working Relationship Agreement (WRA) efforts show an increasing trend of less intrusive care arrangements being more commonly applied by CCSD staff.

Jack Penashue spoke about the critical work being done through the WRA and the need for NL to support SIFN's proposal to hire 4 social workers to assist SIFN in implementing the WRA. Lyla pointed out that Natuashish will also require more resources on the ground to get them on par with what is happening in Sheshatshiu. Mary Jane Nui indicated that finding adequate housing which is a requirement for family reunification, is an on-going issue. Sometimes the only option available is to move into homes with other families, but even then, CCSD may flag history and lifestyle choices of others in that household which can create more barriers for children to return to parental care. She requests that CCSD also look

at the positive efforts caregivers are making. She also pointed out that FASD training for foster parents is needed to better meet the needs of those affected by FASD.

Steve spoke to the stats regarding the WRA and how the documented trends should encourage INAC to financially support the 4 pillars within the Labrador Innu Prevention Initiative Submission. These are:

- a transition plan for the Sheshatshiu Group Home to increase capacity for placements and establish training for Innu staff;
- A multi-year proposal to plan and develop innovative placement options to keep more Innu children/youth in their communities;
- To develop a practice framework which will turn the care approach into necessary tools to manage prevention programs in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish and;
- Recruitment and Staffing of 2 Social Worker and 2 front-line workers positions to form coordinated teams delivering prevention services to Innu Children.

Jack has also been having ongoing discussions with the province to get 4 social workers hired under SIFN's social health department. These positions will support WRA efforts with the following duties:

- Develop and support increased in-care placement options and supports;
- Integrated services with community social health staff;
- Deliver client specific case planning activities (including participation in on-call); and,
- Develop and facilitate child and family focused programs to facilitate the reunification process of children with families and community.

Rick Healey noted that the province started looking at keeping children in the community a year and a half ago. To achieve this goal, more placements are needed. The transition plan for the group home is a good start. Susan mentioned that she sees progress and potential for major improvements. The province is very supportive of the proposals put forward by the Innu and acknowledged that prevention is very much required. The province indicated that the costs of the four social workers requested in the SIFN/Social Health Proposal, would be reflected in the federal-provincial funding agreement (CYFS) so it the Province encouraged INAC to consider funding that initiative directly as well.

INAC/Joe Behar said he heard a lot of powerful things at the CYFS meeting held on Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. It gave him some hope and insight around how outcomes will improve with focus on the front line relationship. They are very open and receptive to get the resources in place to get things accomplished. The province's involvement is very important and INAC will respond with a final decision in the next week for funding on the initiatives.

#### **Action Items**

- ***Innu to provide a summary proposal of the four pillars of the prevention initiative and to add the SIFN/Social Health request for 4 BSW positions to support the WRA. Note: The summary was provided and follow up meetings were held in Ottawa on Oct 26<sup>th</sup>. Funding was approved in November.***

## **6. HEALTH UPDATE**

Debra Keays-White provided a status update on LHS, noting that the office is now down to 2 staff (Patsy and Nympha) operating from an office space in Goose Bay. The financial savings made due to the decrease of staff offers the Innu communities an opportunity to realign available resources to meet identified needs in their communities. HC, MIFN and SIFN have engaged in discussions regarding allocation of resources.

Debra indicated that HC staff continue to be involved in the working groups structured under the IMC Sub Committee (Health and Healing Sub – Committee of the IRT).

The IMC was unable to have the meeting in September; however, the meeting is now rescheduled for Oct 27<sup>th</sup>.

The DWWG (Diabetes Wellness Working Group) held a meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup> and commenced work on the Innu Diabetes Strategy Project. First step of project (establish a steering committee) is in progress. It was noted that the diabetes workers and youth fitness coordinator in Sheshatshiu ran a very successful soccer league this year. New membership has been added to ToR and the DWWG membership list has been updated.

The FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) WG had a meeting on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The FASD Train the Trainer program has not been implemented yet. The FASD Action Plan is completed, and has been taken to the Health Directors for final input. Once it is finalized by the FASD WG it will be sent to the IRT for approval. The idea of developing an Innu FASD Prevention Strategy has been discussed. It was noted the new Co-chair is Marie Soleil Penashue (FASD Liaison SIFN).

The Working Group on MHA (Mental Health and Addictions) is currently inactive. Last meeting held on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. In an effort to re-establish the group, Kristen Sellon has agreed to be the chairperson. The Health Coordinator (Annie Picard) is working with one of the LCCM Coaches, Paula Gallant, to find a way to get it back up and running.

The MCH (Maternal Child Health) Working Group is also inactive, but June Fry (Innu Child Health Coordinator) is taking the lead in coordinating follow up with recommendations found in the 2016 MCH WG review. Progress is being made in having the Band operated MCH Programming situated under one building.

The HiM (Health Information/Data Management) Working Group has the new coordinator in place, Tracy Farmer (DPRA). Tracy held a meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup> with the Innu Health Directors. Steve said the HiM project took a pause in the summer as a replacement for Leonor Ward was recruited and the re-prioritized work plan was developed. The group is now focused on completing the 2016/17 Workplan and will be focused on three priorities, including the Innu interpretation of the 2015 health data.

Dominic Rich (one month in the job as CWSN) said the position allows him to help the Innu understand their health items better. The Elders tend to find they have problems understanding health related documents when they are received because of the language. Many do not have an English education and have a hard time interpreting the English words. He reported that a plan to reorganize the Non-insured Health Benefits task group has been

developed and is being considered by the health directors. ***Note: Dominic has been given the go ahead from Health Directors to move forward with NIHB working group.***

Melody Morton Ninomiya presented the FASD Working Group action plan (Attached). They want to hold a community forum in both communities to explore Innu parenting values. It's important to make sure the people involved in the working group understand the CYFS Working Relationship Agreement between the province and MIFN/SIFN. FASD issues have a direct impact on other social services and programs such as CYFS, education and health. The plan identifies the need to secure funding to have a dedicated Speech and Learning pathologist and Occupational Therapist available for Innu children. In SOFN they want to establish Mentorship for Parent Support Workers and Addiction workers. In Natuashish, parent support workers and addictions workers must work collaboratively with the SLP and OT. They want to find a way for parents to seek help within the planning Process of the WRA without feeling danger of losing their children. Also funding for a team of people from both communities to visit a FASD friendly school in Winnipeg or Kenora would be very beneficial. Subject matter experts such as Nancy Poole, could help establish a team to discuss developing a community-wide Innu-specific FASD prevention strategy and evaluation process. They request that the IRT Health Coordinator attends the FASD WG meetings. The group also want to provide training in trauma-informed practices.

Debra noted some very concrete steps in the FASD action plan. Annie mentioned it has been a year and a half working towards this and she's very happy with the progress. Chief Rich commented that we should get the momentum going and get more resources regarding FASD in the communities. It's a growing problem that needs to be addressed. Katie Rich believes the schools should be involved. It was reported that the FASD trainer will be coming to Sheshatshiu to meet with representatives at the school but it is not confirmed if the trainer will be going to Natuashish.

The Capacity Development Funding and Initiatives are going well. All projects are in progress. The LCCM/ALCCM are going well. Next session runs from October 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. Dates have been set for January 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 for the next IMC Health Planning Forum. The IRT Office of Youth Health has the MIFN Youth Advisory Committee established, the first meeting is pending. Sheshatshiu Ussinium Youth Centre is open.

#### **Action Items**

- ***Follow up status report on FASD WG Action Plan***

#### **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

HC/Wade Were presented on Jordon's Principle (attached). This was passed in the House of Commons in December 2007 in honor of Jordan River Anderson. INAC and HC were tasked with implementing it in 2008. In January 2016 the Government of Canada was ordered to take measures to implement its full meaning and scope. In July 2016, \$382M in new funding was approved for a new approach to JP: A Child-First Initiative. This immediately ensures First Nations' children with a disability or interim critical condition living on reserve have access to needed health and social services within the normative standard of care. In the next three years, they will track health and social services needs

and requests, as well as develop a long-term approach aligned and integrated with health and social services across jurisdictions.

Ron Bowles said they are very happy with the progress and look forward to working on it. Katie wishes more resources were available in Natuashish as travelling to St. John's with a disabled child is very hard. Bart Jack spoke about the disabled children in Sheshatshiu and the hard time they have getting to school. Joe Behar said they will pass on the information and follow up on it in regards to help for special needs children on both reserves.

#### **8. NEXT IRT MEETING**

It was agreed that the IRT Meeting #18 will take place on February 9<sup>th</sup> in Halifax, NS. Pre-meetings will be conducted on February 8<sup>th</sup>. **Note: Delta Barrington in Halifax has been booked for IRT meetings.**

The Innu leaders may also consider holding a principals meeting in Ottawa sometime early December.

Prepared By: Alicia Penashue

Reviewed By: Natasha Hurley

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#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Agenda

List of Participants

IRT Sec Operational Workplan and Budget 2016-17

Income Support Program – presentation

IMC Report

FASD presentation

2016/17 Capacity Development Status Report – September 2016

Jordan's Principle – Child First Initiative presentation

**IRT MEETING October 6<sup>th</sup> 2016 – List of Participants**

Name	Organization	Phone	E-mail
Jack Penashue	SIFN Health	(709) 897-5721	<a href="mailto:jpenashue@sifn.ca">jpenashue@sifn.ca</a>
Annie Picard	IRT Secretariat	(709) 897-4593	<a href="mailto:apicard@irtsec.ca">apicard@irtsec.ca</a>
Kylie Rose	IRT Secretariat	(709) 899-6007	<a href="mailto:krrose@irtsec.ca">krrose@irtsec.ca</a>
Lyla Andrew	IRT Secretariat	(709) 899-3612	<a href="mailto:lylaandrew@irtsec.ca">lylaandrew@irtsec.ca</a>
Joe Behar	INAC	(902) 661-6265	<a href="mailto:behari@aandc.gc.ca">behari@aandc.gc.ca</a>
Gregory Rich	Chief MIFN	(709) 899-6017	<a href="mailto:kanikue@gmail.com">kanikue@gmail.com</a>
Steve Joudry	IRT Secretariat	(902) 221-3377	<a href="mailto:sjoudry@irtsec.ca">sjoudry@irtsec.ca</a>
Natasha Hurley	IRT Secretariat	(709) 899-2410	<a href="mailto:nhurley@irtsec.ca">nhurley@irtsec.ca</a>
Eugene Hart	Chief SIFN	(709) 899-1282	<a href="mailto:ehart@sifn.ca">ehart@sifn.ca</a>
Wade Were	FNIHB	(902) 426-4968	<a href="mailto:wade.were@hc-sc.gc.ca">wade.were@hc-sc.gc.ca</a>
Mary Jane Nui	SIFN Council	(709) 899-0879	<a href="mailto:mnui@sifn.ca">mnui@sifn.ca</a>
John Higham	Chignecto	(506) 536-2378	<a href="mailto:john.higham@chignectogroup.com">john.higham@chignectogroup.com</a>
Jackie Whelan	CSSD	(709) 944-9369	<a href="mailto:jackiewhelan@gov.nl.ca">jackiewhelan@gov.nl.ca</a>
Donna O'Brien	AESL	(709) 729-5151	<a href="mailto:donnaobrien@gov.nl.ca">donnaobrien@gov.nl.ca</a>
Ron Bowles	LAO	(709) 896-4449	<a href="mailto:rabowles@gov.nl.ca">rabowles@gov.nl.ca</a>
Tom Keagan	INAC	(902) 661-6424	<a href="mailto:tom.keagan@aandc-aadnc.gc.ca">tom.keagan@aandc-aadnc.gc.ca</a>
Penny Winter	JPS	(709) 729-1084	<a href="mailto:pennywinter@gov.nl.ca">pennywinter@gov.nl.ca</a>
Chris Appleby	LAO	(709) 729-1773	<a href="mailto:applebyc@gov.nl.ca">applebyc@gov.nl.ca</a>
Susan Walsh	CSSD	(709) 729-3473	<a href="mailto:swalsh@gov.nl.ca">swalsh@gov.nl.ca</a>
Danny Barrett	HCS	(709) 729-3756	<a href="mailto:dbarrett@gov.nl.ca">dbarrett@gov.nl.ca</a>
Debra Keays-White	HC	(902) 478-2465	<a href="mailto:debra.keays-white@hc-sc.gc.ca">debra.keays-white@hc-sc.gc.ca</a>
Chris McDonnell	INAC	(902) 661-6262	<a href="mailto:christopher.mcdonell@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca">christopher.mcdonell@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca</a>
Marie-Josée Grondin	INAC	(613) 301-5880	<a href="mailto:mariejosee.grondin@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca">mariejosee.grondin@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca</a>
Nick Paradisis	MIFN	(709) 897-4109	<a href="mailto:nick.paradisis@gmail.com">nick.paradisis@gmail.com</a>
Katie Rich	MTIE	(709) 478-8970	<a href="mailto:rich.katie@gmail.com">rich.katie@gmail.com</a>
Mary Janet Hill	SIFN	(709) 899-1938	<a href="mailto:mjhill@sifn.ca">mjhill@sifn.ca</a>
Cynthia King	AESL	(709) 729-1334	<a href="mailto:cynthiaking@gov.nl.ca">cynthiaking@gov.nl.ca</a>
Dominic Rich	IRT	(709) 899-2077	<a href="mailto:drich@irtsec.ca">drich@irtsec.ca</a>
Elena Andrew	MTIE	(709) 899-4809	<a href="mailto:eandrew@innueducation.ca">eandrew@innueducation.ca</a>
Rich Healey	CSSD	(709) 729-0088	<a href="mailto:rhealey@gov.nl.ca">rhealey@gov.nl.ca</a>
Brad Richards	CSSD	(709) 729-5417	<a href="mailto:bradleyrichards@gov.nl.ca">bradleyrichards@gov.nl.ca</a>
Bart Jack	MTIE	(709) 899-1306	
Alicia Penashue	IRT	(709) 899-5022	<a href="mailto:alicia.penashue@irtsec.ca">alicia.penashue@irtsec.ca</a>