

Nisga'a Nation

— Special Assembly Summary Report

KEY ISSUES, RESPONSES & ACTION ITEMS FROM THE ASSEMBLY RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS



Sayt-K'ilim-Goot
one heart, one path, one nation

MAY 7-11, 2018 / GINGOLX

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Introduction

Special Assemblies of the Nisga'a Nation are provided for by the Nisga'a Constitution.

In May 2018, the Nisga'a Nation gathered for a Special Assembly in Gingolx for several days to discuss central issues facing the Nation.

In respect of that Assembly, this report summarizes and identifies:

- the key issues that were articulated by Nisga'a citizens;
- the responses by NLC in relation to the issues identified; and
- the particular actions items that were, from the record of proceedings, items which respondents indicated that Nisga'a citizens could expect to see some form of follow up.

Where possible, the report has attempted to incorporate the language of the speaker, (i.e., to use their words and expressions). Minor edits have been made for clarity, and some duplicated questions and responses omitted. Where there may appear to be ungrammatical expressions, this is often due to notes which attempt to capture the actual speaking style of the speaker or which occasionally capture comments in point form.

It is hoped that this report will provide:

- a review of some of the key issues that arose from the conference to ensure that the comments of Nisga'a citizens are afforded an opportunity to be heard;
- information in response to these questions and comments; and
- identify any action items to ensure that follow-up can be tracked.

Questions inconsistent with the rules of the Special Assembly are omitted. In some instances, following the Special Assembly, additional information has been included to provide further details in response.

With Thanks

The biennial Special Assembly of the Nisga'a Nation was scheduled by the Nisga'a Lisims Government (NLG) Executive to take place from May 7 – 11, 2018 in the Nisga'a Village of Gingolx. Notice in Accordance with Nisga'a Law was distributed to the Nisga'a Nation on March 5, 2018.

This report will summarize and pay tribute to the many individuals who worked collaboratively to make the Assembly a success.

Host Community

First and foremost, NLG wishes to express heartfelt gratitude to the host community of Gingolx for their tireless efforts in being our gracious hosts. Their work included providing:

- food – daily continental breakfasts, morning and afternoon snacks, lunches and two evening dinners on Monday and Tuesday respectively;
- rental of facilities – Gingolx Memorial Recreation Centre;
- parking – First Aid attendants.

NLG Staff

Many thanks to NLG Senior Management and all departmental staff who contributed to the success of the Assembly. Namely, the core group of staff that assisted with Sunday set-up, the staff that began their days extra early to open registration at 7:30 AM each day. Thanks to Andre and Andrew for all of their technical assistance with virtually everything!

Webcast & Photography

Thanks to our Communications Officer – Videographer, Paul Mercer and IT Team Andre Cardinal and Andrew Borne for making the livestream possible, within the limitations of infrastructure that may have caused some sound and picture quality issues to viewers.

Nonetheless, the Special Assembly livestream is broken down by day and morning or afternoon reporting sessions, and is available for viewing at the following link:

<https://livestream.com/accounts/8043264/events/8190577>

In light of the tendency of personal and confidential information being raised by delegates – often with respect to a third party (i.e. children in care, elderly parents, medical patients, etc.) during question period on March 28th, the Rules Committee provided direction that only Reporting Sessions be aired and Question Periods would not.

The direction of the Rules Committee was reversed on Wednesday May 9th.

While preliminary research has shown an additional cost of upwards of \$15,000 with our existing livestream account, we will explore the possibilities of a more economical, user friendly software that will allow for the restricted access registration of online viewers for Nisga'a delegates and invited observers.

We also thank Charles Moore for providing his photography services throughout the week. Photographs may be available for viewing at our online photo album at:
<http://nisgaanation.zenfolio.com/f577297676>

Many thanks to our Citizenship Registry Manager Cherie Mercer for the development of a registration software system linked to the citizenship database that allowed for a quick, streamlined registration process.

Below is a record of attendance for the week:

Day	Elder	Adult	Youth	Child	Observer	Total
Day 1	149	184	29	15	26	403
Day 2	155	216	36	17	36	460
Day 3	173	216	45	18	22	474
Day 4	157	212	38	16	28	451
Day 5	128	140	31	11	15	325

Guests & Lunch Hour Presentations

Monday – AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde

Tuesday – Boarding Home Program & Indian Day Schools Volunteer Group

Wednesday – Miles Richardson, Andrea Reid, PhD student

Thursday – Yagaba'anskw – Wii Ksim Lax Siilda

Friday – ECDA Signing Ceremony with Minister Scott Fraser

Follow-up

- This Summary Report on Special Assembly proceedings,
- Debrief with NLG Staff within the week.



Executive Panel

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / EXECUTIVE PANEL REPORT

SUMMARY / DURING THIS SESSION, CITIZENS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THEIR QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS TO THE EXECUTIVE PANEL. THESE INCLUDED, BUT WERE NOT LIMITED TO: THE QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) INITIATIVE, BC HYDRO RATES, ELDERLY, HEALTH, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, NISGA'A CHILDREN IN CARE, HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE, HOUSING, NISGA'A FISCAL FINANCING AGREEMENT (FFA), INCOME TAX, REVENUE SHARING AGREEMENTS, AND NISGA'A PACIFIC VENTURES (NPVL).

Subject / Quality of Life (QoL)

Comments

- QoL: Is there an opportunity to move this to the villages?
- Quality of Life: Give it to us, the grass roots. That project and funding should go to the villages.

Response

- The QoL strategy falls under the Executive Director. We can certainly take a look at that option.

Subject / Housing

Comments

- Housing issues, and settlement trust: is there an opportunity to set up a separate Trust for housing?

Response

- Housing is designated as a priority.

Subject / Language & Healing Centre

Comments

- Concerns raised in regard to language and need of a healing centre.

Response

- We are scheduled to meet with representatives next week. It's our intent to support the Chairperson, Council of Elders' strategic plan.
- A healing centre was proposed – there is a need.

Subject / Income Tax, Nisga'a Pacific Ventures (NPVL), Elders Centre

Comments

- What happens and how do villages participate in decisions in regard to income tax.
- NPVL: Have heard over the years how accountable they are. Would like to see a report from them.
- We had a proposal for an elders centre and identified a piece of property. This centre will go a long way in helping to address needs.

Response

- Income tax provisions were negotiated as part of the Treaty.
- NPVL: We have a shareholders meeting coming up. We are the shareholder and hear your concerns.
- Gitlaxt'aamiks and NVHA did a proposal for an assisted living centre.
- Elders council meeting heard a lot of issues on health. We were told at the effective date of the Treaty that we become truly Canadian, British Columbians.

Subject / Foster Care

Comments

- Children in foster care: what is the status of our Nisga'a children that are in care?

Response

- The NCFs presentation is tomorrow, your question can be asked at this time.

Subject / Nisga'a Fiscal Financing Agreement (FFA), Youth

Comments

- FFA: What are the indications why negotiations are behind?
- We need a youth report as well, at the political level: we need to mentor the youth.

Response

- Negotiations: Motion to support extending the current FFA. It would be in our best interest to negotiate a new FFA with the new policy in place.

Subject / Hydro Rates

Comments

- Hydro bills: Suggestion for Nisga'a to negotiate geographic zones.

Response

- The issue of high hydro costs was raised with the Premier, he was going to have his colleague look into this.
- We have a meeting coming up in Victoria and will follow up.

Subject / Highway 113 Maintenance

Comments

- Highway 113 maintenance: The contract ends this year. We should be looking after our own highways. We have an opportunity to bid and look after our own highway.

Response

- Gitlaxt'aamiks raised this issue on maintaining the highway with a Nisga'a construction company. We encourage the four village governments put together a proposal and bring it to the executive so we can begin lobbying the appropriate Ministers.

Subject / Revenue Sharing Agreements, Long Lake Hydro

Comments

- How is this shared with villages?
- We need to take a look at that agreement that ties in with Quality of Life.

Response

- Long Lake hydro: Located Northwest of Stewart BC. Hydro development was in existence before Regional Power came along.

Subject / Nass Valley Landmarks

Comments

- Why not put up signs at landmarks up and down the Valley? There are stories behind these landmarks.

Response

- Important landmarks: The Chairperson is listening, and working together with Lands and Resources. This could help to educate our children.

Subject / Wind River Kinscuch Lake Project

Comments

- Why aren't we getting updates on the goings on in our land?

Response

- When issues arise in the Nass Area that require an executive decision, then administration, through different records brings those issues forward to the Executive.

Subject / Medical Marijuana

Comments

- Medical marijuana: Suggestion to put a team together to work on this.

Response

- Medical marijuana: This subject has come up at the Executive and WSN. In conjunction with federal and provincial legislation, the Nisga'a Nation is also looking at this.

Subject / Benefit Agreements

Comments

- Benefit agreements: These need to be released to the people.

Response

- Benefit agreements: There is only one that is currently operational – Brucejack, and there will be a signing ceremony on Friday. Other benefit agreements are not yet operational and are confidential to the Executive.

Subject / Comment, Encouragement

Comments

- Encouraged to hear from President's report, the willingness of Trudeau and his cabinet, and ongoing dialogue.
- Land Claims Agreement Coalition (LCAC): Continue the dialogue, continue the good work.

Response

- Statement: No response required.



Finance

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / FINANCE REPORT

SUMMARY / IN THIS SESSION, CITIZENS RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT A NUMBER OF ISSUES INCLUDING THE COMMERCIAL FISHERS FUND, MAINTENANCE OF NLG BUILDING AND GROUNDS, NISGA'A PACIFIC VENTURES LP (NPVLP), PROPERTY TAX, VILLAGE GOVERNMENT REVENUE, SETTLEMENT TRUST AND BC HYDRO.

Subject / Commercial Fishers Fund

Comments

- There should be a financial audit of the Commercial Fishers Fund.

Response

- This is part of the annual audit. Initial contributions were \$5.75 million. Some monies were used for the Commercial Fishers' Vessels Upgrade Program and the purchase of commercial licenses and quotas. The Fund is still there, roughly \$12.5 million. The vessel upgrade program ended in 2015. The use of the remaining funds would be up to the Executive and WSN.
- Fisheries will be on tomorrow afternoon. They are well aware of this fund and can discuss it then. Be mindful of the panel, that they take direction from your elected members.

Subject / NLG Building Maintenance

Comments

- NLG building and grounds: needs to be taken care of.

Response

- *Nisga'a Capital Finance Commission Act* (CFC) is responsible for the asset. This was brought up and was discussed. Roughly \$270 thousand to complete. As with painting, etc.

Subject / Nisga'a Pacific Ventures LP (NPVLP)

Comments

- NPVLP accountability and compliance with *Financial Administration Act*: Has NPVLP complied?

Response

- A response letter was provided to Phyllis Adams. Upon receiving permission, it will be released to the public via the Special Assembly.

Subject / Property Tax

Comments

- How often is there a property tax increase? How is it determined that property tax is increased? Looked for a property tax booth. Would like more information for the citizens.
- We should have BC Assessment here with an information booth.

Response

- BC Assessment will assess your property, and put a value on it. The tax rate is based on applicable rates set by the Province for residential property in the rural area. Your property tax is based on the assessed value of your property and the tax rate applied to it. Please contact BC Assessment if your value has increased and you disagree with it (appeal process).
- BC Assessment sends out notices, and you have until January 31 to dispute their value by filing a complaint (appeal). Property tax notices will go out in a couple of weeks. Property taxes are due July 1st of every year. October is when a property goes up for tax sale. You have one year to redeem.

Subject / Village Government Revenue

Comments

- Can the four village governments be a part of this so that the revenue can be reported?

Response

- This question will be advanced to the Executive.

Subject / Settlement Trust

Comments

- What would it cost us to have a report once every six months, a comprehensive report from Royal Trust of the Nisga'a Settlement Trust?

Response

- Royal Trust provides a monthly update to the Finance Directorate, and an extensive twice per year review takes place with the Finance Committee. Would need direction from the Finance Committee to provide for further reporting.

Subject / BC Hydro

Comments

- What is the value of the agreement (1% for hydro poles) to be on Nisga'a Land?

Response

- Hydro rates are outside of the finance directorate.
- Hydro revenues go into the general pot for Village Governments for spending.



Lands & Resources

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / LANDS & RESOURCES REPORT

SUMMARY / DURING THIS SESSION, QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS WERE RAISED ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES PERTAINING TO NISGA'A LANDS & RESOURCES. SEVERAL SPEAKERS EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE MUSHROOM HARVEST, TRAPPING, AND THE HOT SPRINGS. OTHER TOPICS INCLUDED FIRE TRAINING, SIGNAGE FOR LANDMARKS, MEDICAL MARIJUANA, INVASIVE SPECIES, NISGA'A LANDS & TITLE OFFICE, AND LAND TAXES.

Subject / Update Mailing Address

Comments

- Update mailing address at Lands table or at NLTO office.

Response

- If you update your address your name will be entered into a draw for \$200.

Subject / Landmarks

Comments

- Why doesn't NLG put up signs for landmarks, so our young people and future generations know about our adaawak and our stories?

Response

- We are actively working on signs on the highway, we will try put a plan in place and try to get a budget together.

Subject / Hot Springs Entrance Fees

Comments

- Should people be charged to enter into the hot springs?

Response

- Realize it's a sacred place. Designated as Forest Recreation.
- When someone is not following the rules, they are deemed as trespassers. The first three rules are no drinking, using marijuana, and no fires. People do this late at night, and leave NLG staff to clean up after them. Enforcement and Lands monitor this place on a regular basis.
- There is no overnight parking or camping, and no tents. Built tubs for better services.
- Economic Development found grant money to build and upgrade the hot springs, and improve access, and hope to continue to build and improve services to the public.

Subject / Medical Marijuana

Comments

-

Response

- Nothing wrong with people wanting to start now.
- License: There is a process that David can walk people through. Its challenging, it takes time, but can it be done. You have to be willing to go through the process.
- People can apply for LOO. For legal activities, you should be able to get a license.

Subject / Invasive Species in Gingolx

Comments

- (Invasive species) are killing off our salmon berries and blueberries. As you drive out of the community going up the hill, take a look to your right. There are no salmon berries at the waterfront anymore, they used to be all over the place. All other berries are going also. We need to know how to deal with this, how will the bears make it? (This has been) noticed for a couple years now, we need to take care of it before all the berries are gone.

Response

- We have resources available to be involved in (combatting) invasive species. There are mitigation plans, and people willing to help, please contact the Director at NLG.

Subject / Mushroom Grounds, Mushroom Market

Comments

- Will fines be issued in the mushroom picking grounds? We watch what we bring in and what we bring out. There are lots of camps that have refuse in them. Is there a way to have a clean-up program to clean-up what's out there? It's the same today as it was 7-8 years ago.
- Can the money from permits being paid into NLG be used to facilitate this program?
- We have no control over the mushroom market, it's time for Nisga'a to do something about the mushrooms so that the Asian Market comes to the Nisga'a Nation. Have a mushroom season for Nisga'a citizens only.
- Mushroom picking: If someone makes \$10,000 picking mushrooms, NLG should receive \$2500 of that total amount.

Response

- Litter in woods during mushroom season: All the money together paid for permits may pay for an hour in a helicopter. There is not a lot of money, we do work on this. Our staff take out truck loads of garbage. We don't have the funds for a clean-up program.

Subject / Mushroom Picking Permits, Enforcement

Comments

- Mushroom picking: Lucrative business prices go up and down why are we the ones (being charged)? Why are you monitoring us?
- My common-law (partner), has lived in the valley over 30 years and pays non-Nisga'a fee for permits. She comes from Bella Bella, but comes from Baxgaps wilp.

Response

- We charge everyone, not just Nisga'a citizens. This is legislation, fees for non-Nisga'a are a lot more than a Nisga'a citizen would pay.
- Enforcement catches individuals without permits all the time, out they are out everyday.

Subject / Fishing & Trapping

Comments

- When out fishing and trapping, we respect what we take out of the river. With that being said, we are forced to follow NLG policy.
- While fishing, citizens have to follow the mandate, how does that affect us in following years? Who regulates others and our neighbours?

Response

- Enforcement (works with Nisga'a) and our neighbours on and off Nisga'a Lands.
- Question should be directed to Fisheries & Wildlife.
- We have a quota allocation for salmon, the remaining share is for everyone else.
- Sports fishermen come out of this share, the Director of Fisheries & Wildlife will have a better answer.

Subject / Trapping

Comments

- Why was I told the angoskw was two separate things? If NLG abolished angoskw, why do I have to trace the lineage of my trapline?

Response

- Trapline: Fundamentally it's a place your family has used since time immemorial.
- The Treaty doesn't distinguish angoskw.

Subject / Hlu Isgwit

Comments

- (Regarding) Page 59, column one, paragraph two.

Response

- I meet with BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), once a year, sometimes twice a year, generally before winter, and around this time of year to ensure we are all on the same page with what our expectations are. Laxgalts'ap needs to know who is who, who can they call if the gate is closed. Also have each of the four villages, the NVHA, and anybody basically who needs to have a say on what the priorities of our Highway 113 are going to be. What is the cost of maintaining our roads, who are our stakeholders?
- Jade Wright is the contact person in regards to Highway questions and in regards to MOTI.

Subject / Hlu Isgwit

Comments

- Hlgu isgwit belongs to a family. How does NLG maintain this property without consulting the owner?
- *Lands Act*: Mother wants to know about the Certificate of Possession (COP), prior to the Treaty was told the land would be given back. (This) has not happened. Brought this up in 1998, and at the last Special Assembly, what is NLG going to do about this?
- Garbage in the village: NLG needs money to control this.

Response

- How does NLG (manage) ownership of the hot springs? Unsure of the question. (It is the) same way gwinya came into possession, on May 11th, 2000 when the Treaty was signed, all lands that were fee simple came to NLG as ownership (crown land) prior to the Treaty.
- All villages work together to pass legislation, it is not done individually, they are all elected members who pass this legislation.

Subject / Wildland Fire Training

Comments

- What is the status of wildland fire training, including the fire?
- We only have one access road, what is the status of training? How can our guys get involved, especially the New Aiyansh Fire department?
- If (we have a) wildland fire, how can we send 20-30 guys to do this? Tried to do this last year, have to have registered number. Is this something NLG can help with ?

Response

- The crew is very well trained, and willing to share that experience. Training would be required for any village person to participate, will get back to you as soon as possible.

Subject / Nisga'a Land Title Office (NLTO)

Comments

- As Nisga'a citizens we need to reduce mortgage fees, pay higher rate for what?
- 18 years into the Treaty, time for the land registry to be run by our people who are trained to do it. We still have to work with a consultant in NLTO. Really grateful for the update on the hot springs as there are lots of issues, it is a sacred place.
- When are we going to stop using contractors? When is NLTO going to start using their Nisga'a that are trained?

Response

-

Subject / Hot Springs

Comments

- The sign has “no dogs allowed, no alcohol on site,” had discussion when it says no alcohol you cannot buy any there so they bring their own. No alcohol allowed on site, should say this instead: “People drinking there with kids, should respectfully put alcohol away.”
- Concerns about dogs jumping into hot springs.
- Littering is happening. Charlene Ousey and her husband are out every day picking up garbage. If we can assist them and keep our lands clear it would be wonderful. (For example), legislation on highways says that littering will be an offence, and you will have to pay a fine.
- It’s a disgrace, what is happening? It is a sacred place and is not meant for parties or drinking.

Response

-

Subject / Tree Farm Licence (TFL), Stumpage Fees

Comments

- Supposed to compensate it, but haven’t seen anything.

Response

- Show the map to the Director personally, to best answer this question.

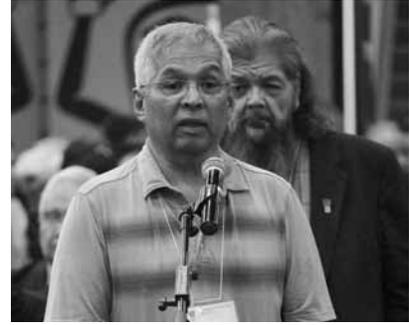
Subject / Land Taxes

Comments

- Paying land taxes: Read the Treaty, it tells you you have to have special assemblies like this where people should have the right to answer if people should pay taxes or not?
- (1913 Permission Permit). Enforcement asks us for a permit. We don't need a permit. We only need permission from chief Kamsiwaas.

Response

- Trapline – traditional ango'oskw, but the province defines it as "catch and sell furs" because of the way it unfolded, the traplines are coincidental. Trapline owners are not chiefs of families.



Fisheries & Wildlife

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / FISHERIES & WILDLIFE REPORT

SUMMARY / IN THIS SESSION, SPEAKERS VOICED QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS COVERING A RANGE OF ISSUES INCLUDING THE COMMERCIAL FISHERS FUND, LICENSES AND QUOTAS, THE CRAB BOUNDARY, ENFORCEMENT ISSUES, RESOURCE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT, THE FOOD FISHERY AND FISH FARMS.

Subject / Fisherman's Fund, Licenses & Quotas

Comments

- Missed the opportunity to buy halibut licences. One halibut license that we possess has never been used by any of our Nisga'a commercial fishers. Pickfee quota: Where's ours? 18 years to talk about what that commercial fisheries fund is for? Start up costs? Financial statement on the commercial fisheries fund? 11 million dollars? Put a plan together so we can go into your office next week so you can help us out. One of the fisherman received a \$30,000 cheque and I had to go through the PO system. People are laughing at us at the docks as Nisga'a people.

Response

- We don't have the authority as a department. The elected officials are here.

Subject / Agenda, Food Fishery

Comments

- Why is DFO and Enforcement not on the agenda?
- Food fish catch: Is there a report on how much each village takes? Salmon enhancement is back in Gingolx. I applied for work and didn't get hired.

Response

- We do have the numbers on how much each village takes, it's not reported here due to the time crunch we have here but we can get those numbers for you. We do know how long it takes the fish to get up the river through the different coloured tags. In regards to the work for the people from Kincolith, we do have a couple of Kincolith people on our staff.
- DFO is not here. We do have an enforcement agreement with them to work together with Nisga'a Fisheries and Wildlife department. Tidal waters are different from inland waters. We are trying to get the upriver personnel down here.

Subject / Fisheries Trust Fund

Comments

- Fisheries Trust Fund: We were told yesterday to bring the situation up today with Fisheries and Wildlife. Someone needs to take the leadership role and deal with it. We had a report that there were 58 fishers who benefited from the trust, then down to 18, where did the other fishers come from?
- I am proud of the capacity building this department does.

Response

- Thank you for the compliment of the crew. There were 65 gillnets in 2004, but the economy and fishing time has changed. We used to be able to fish days at a time, now we fish six hours in a day. We suggested to close, and the salmon are not back, that's why there's no fisheries. It will take some time to get the salmon stocks back.
- We have lobbied for the pickfee licences. Licenses that have been retired and brought back to the aboriginal communities. We are eligible within the provisions for the Treaty. Commercial fishermen, members of the shareholder groups. On provisions for recommendation, I hear the concerns of our fisherman. We need a recommendation from the finance committee (I make no guarantees).

Subject / Crab Boundary

Comments

- When is the crab boundary going to be moved? We've been talking about this issue over and over. 50 fleets of white people with their crab traps, (used plastic containers). How do you monitor the crabs that go out of our area?
- Would like to see NLG tap into the trust fund.

Response

- There is some paperwork being done with the Deputy Minister regarding this issue.

Subject / Enforcement Issues

Comments

- Ishkinish: Are non-Nisga'a erecting a permanent structure in the area?
- Recreational fisheries: Adding an additional surcharge to a license? They are done online, we can add an additional surcharge to fish on our land. Add an additional surcharge to fishing guides fishing on our land.
- When are we going to invest in a platform for our marine program where we could be out there 24/7, where Nisga'a Fisheries and DFO could work hand-in-hand on the waters? Our fish numbers are declining, we need more enforcement.

Response

- Our staff have checked and they are a licensed guide outfitter.
- Permanent structure: if they are not following the *Nisga'a Land Act* they will be removed.

Subject / Resource Protection

Comments

- What are the plans to protect resources in our Valley?
- Concerns about sport fishers on our land. We have to protect the salmon. We have every right to go out there first before the commercial fisherman go out there, it's in the Treaty. People from outside don't care about our salmon or our resources.

Response

- Our department meets a number of times a year with the provincial and federal governments to do the right thing. Our crews are doing a lot of work out there to sustain our salmon numbers. We'll continue to do what we're doing and other governments as well.

Subject / Fisher's Grant

Comments

- I've applied for grants but haven't received one grant. Why don't we have our own crab licenses here? Licensing, council members and Executive are making money on Inland fishing.

Response

-

Subject / Fish Farms

Comments

- Fish farms: 29 licenses are up for renewal. Take a stance against these fish. Sign a petition against the further renewal of those licenses.

Response

- Statement: No response required.



Programs & Services

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / PROGRAMS & SERVICES REPORT

SUMMARY / DURING THIS SESSION, A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS WERE EXPRESSED ABOUT NISGA' A CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES (NCFS), CHILDREN IN CARE (CIC), AND SUPPORT FOR NISGA' A FAMILIES IN URBAN AREAS. OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN ADDRESSED NISGA' A LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS.

SUBJECT / NCFS, CIC and Support for Nisga'a in Urban Areas

Comments

- How many Nisga'a children are in care?
- When will an advocate be set up for the parents whose children are in care?
- When will there be a Nisga'a NCFS worker set up in Vancouver to assist the families there?
- How many Nisga'a Resources do we have for the Nisga'a children in care?
- What is being done to oversee that Nisga'a homes are open in urban areas for Nisga'a children in care?

Response

- Child and Family Services oversees 335 Court Resource Team (CRT) files.
- It is definitely on the radar for a Nisga'a NCFS worker to be set up in Vancouver.
- There are only four files active in court level currently, ensure that NCFS is working actively with Children in Care (CIC) and with family members, as a delegated agency.
- Advocacy: Currently, there is no position but we work actively with families and help them in understanding the process.
- Currently, there is no position set up for Urban Locals. MCFD is not delegated to practise outside the four Nisga'a communities.
- Three (staff work) in Gitlaxt'aamiks. One in Gitwinksihlkw. There are three extended family programs.

Subject / NCFS, CIC

Comments

- How do you ensure Nisga'a children are involved in Nisga'a culture? Is it monitored?
- When will our Nisga'a children be returned home when in foster care for extended periods of time?
- How many Nisga'a children are in non-Nisga'a homes?

Response

- Court Resource Team (CRT) work is critically important, and relies heavily in knowing it is a part of life and makes the best efforts in bringing Nisga'a children who are in care, home to ensure they meet their family and culture.
- How we ensure MCFD makes those connections for those children, is to ensure that they are registered to rightfully access

culture, and to inform MCFD that there are services available to registered Nisga'a children.

- The Wilp (house)/Pdeek (tribe) that the children come from (or identify who their Wilsilakws are), can set up family conferencing in speaking with Simigigat (Chiefs), and rightfully in identify their home community.
- Family Group Conferencing (FGC): Call family together, a social worker will say this is what you need to do, this is who will support this family, and identify people in that meeting.
- Standing in court: It is new for NLG to stand up in court for children and it requires proper planning.
- We get contacted by other social workers who put cultural plans in place, once the child is handed over to them there is no further action (MCFD).

Subject / Programs & Services, Education

Comments

- How are Programs and Services provided today verses pre-treaty?
- Education: What processes are in place? Are we using pre-treaty numbers, FFA, *Programs & Services Delegation Act*, target dates for completion-reviews, orientation?

Response

- Specific questions in regards to finance and FFA, data is being used for program funding, deep process, and consultations.
- Programs and Services staff and managers are talking with the appropriate Senior management, and will be completing program reviews specific to education, Social Development and engagement with the four CAO/CEO of each Village Government.

Subject / Nisga'a Language Revitalization

Comments

- Regarding mandate on page 41 on language revitalization: Language immersion, schools should be seen as an enhancement.
- How serious are we about language revitalization?

Response

- Certain files look after Language & Culture/Interim Nisga'a Language & Culture (INCLA).
- Under Ayuuhl Nisga'a Department (AND) and the Council of Elders (COE), working with NLG, there is promotion of language and culture. The Executive passed a resolution in 2015 that provided for focussing on planning for language and culture revitalization, and appointing members who have worked with language revitalization, to the Interim Language and Culture Authority. Language and culture continues to be an agenda item for both the Council of Elders and Executive, with administrative support from the Ayuuhl Nisga'a Department (AND).
- Nisga'a Nation has access to the Nisga'a Post-Secondary Education Assistance Program through the Village Government.
- Council of Elders adopted the draft plan provided by the Chairperson, Council of Elders, presented. INLCA is working on a framework. NLG is in discussion with Heritage Canada on the framework.
- NLG would like to engage with fluent speakers to hear ideas on language immersion and mentorship as well as hearing from the community.

Subject / Policies, NCFS, CIC

Comments

- I was approached about taking in children for foster care for six months, then they were removed. Received no call when children were removed.
- Why wasn't I told that the incident happened in the community, or given a phone call?

Response

- We would like to see more communications and conversations happen. NCFS will be going to talk in the communities. It's critical to have these conversations to ensure we are supporting you and that we are being supported as well.

Subject / NCFS and Ministry of Child & Family Services (MCFD) Guidelines

Comments

- Why are NCFS team leads, and majority of workers Non-Nisga'a?

Response

- We are working on succession plans, to guarantee having all Nisga'a workers, we are moving forward with this. We appreciate the team work and mentality, and are encouraged by talking with Nisga'a workers. There is awareness in developing our own Child and Family legislation, that culture is the biggest component, in the Constitution, Programs & Services, COE, Village Governments, families and wilps.
- We do operate under the same guidelines and standards as the MCFD, province, delegated under Aboriginal Services, and have dual accountability. Our Nation does have the ability to write our own legislation.

Subject / Office/Programs Terrace Nisga'a Lisims Government (TNLG)

Comments

- TNLG: How far are your boundaries?
- P&S database information, policy development: Would like to see this process halted. Would rather take all data from past 17 years and analyze it.
- Time to change P&S and take out NCFS under this directorate and receive separate funding. Suggestion to also move Child and Family Development. P&S is too massive. One of the biggest issues in regards to ministry files, is the need to create a law in regards to C-6 within the Nation. Recommendation to go to the Executive.

Response

- Keep lines of communications open. Lots of conversations. Meeting is set to occur May 18.

Subject / Education, NESS

Comments

- NESS split class levels: what is the cause of this? Why are we taking younger children and incorporating them with the older students? Teachers and TA's are being over-worked.
- Primary mandate of NESS was to have all Nisga'a children speaking Nisga'a fluently.
- In terms of professional development, WWNI, doesn't offer courses needed.

Response

- Age difference in classroom: Will defer to School District 92 Nisga'a for the planning of their classrooms.
- Nisga'a have successfully maintained a public school system in Canada. SD 92 Nisga'a is one of two indigenous public school districts in Canada, the other is the Kanawagee (Mohawk).
- Goals for other children to learn: Identify your concerns to your local Trustee.
- Collaboration is provided in areas of policy development, providing for the Education Conference.
- Wilp Wilxo'oskwahl Nisga'a Institute will be on the Education panel tomorrow, including the Education Administrators Working Group (Education Administrators of Village Governments, Deputy Director of Programs and Services, NLG).
- School District 92 provides for the information and stats, information that supports the students arriving late or not attending at all.

Subject / MCFD, NCFS, CIC

Comments

- Nisga'a children in care (CIC) is a system. How are we going to make it different for our children who are in care?

Response

- The system is broken. What we try to do is create safety nets, so children won't fall through. The situations are very complex, and it's difficult as workers to address them. Decisions made tear us up. We have strong Nisga'a values. We need to change and develop our own system. We involve families and leave it up to the family to make the best decisions for the children. We are there to support them.

Subject / NCFS, CIC

Comments

- I have been in Family Court since 2012, in Vancouver, and had a child in care.
- What will be done instead of policies and procedures, with Nisga'a families residing in the Lower Mainland, to take immediate action? Dealing with the court system on our own?

Response

- To clarify, away from Northwest corridor – Nass Valley, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Kitimat, any court proceeding will go through the Ministry.
- Kristy White, Debra Febril are Court coordinators.
- Court matters: Advise MCFD, Urban Locals are there for programs and services, to ensure parents can go for support.

Subject / Education, Language & Technology in School System

Comments

- How will we be on par for technology use in school?
- How do you envision our Programs and Services programs in the next two, five and 10 years?

Response

- We all have to answer and be responsible for this, we need to have these conversations, and will be going out to Village Governments, and having community consultations.
- Family wellness: What are we doing for strategic planning for family wellness?

Subject / Residential Schools

Comments

- The Ministry/foster system is seen as the modern day residential school system. We need a change, we see many children in the Ministry who attend camps, and deal with the effects of trauma.

Response

- We are aware of the impacts of residential schools, and have a lot of capacity to address this. AJP is well versed on this topic and is looking at these time lines. We are decolonizing the survivors, it is important. It is understood that this is a collaborative process. We have lots of programs and administration. When looking at the bigger picture, the impacts and trauma, there is a lot of work to do and it will take a lot of time and compassion. People have the ability to change.
- We have skilled people and different programs that are delivered in the Valley that work closely with the C-6 team.

Subject / Ayuuhkl Nisga'a

Comments

- Language revitalization: Regarding resources offered within communities, (raising concerns to COE).

Response

- COE/INCLA will be providing time to hear from you following the presentation on Language and Culture on Friday, May 11.
- Youth: Provided under communications department presentation tomorrow afternoon.
- Funding: Finance presentation is tomorrow as well.

Subject / Language

Comments

- Suggestion for immersion in Nisga'a language and that it be taught at an early age. We need to focus on how to revitalize our language (Head Start).

Response

- NLG does work collaboratively with Village Governments who provide for Head Start programming.



Economic Development / NEST

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & NEST REPORT

SUMMARY / IN THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT A RANGE OF ISSUES INCLUDING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES, UNIONS, FUNDING FOR TRADES TRAINING, DRUG & ALCOHOL SCREENING, VETTER LODGE, NEST FUNDING, URBAN LOCAL FUNDING, NEST & SCHOOL DISTRICT 92, AS WELL AS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

Subject / Youth Involvement & Opportunities

Comments

- How do we get young people involved?
- We have young people who are ready to go to work, but there are no opportunities. Is there an opportunity to train these people to become entrepreneurs?

Response

- We will engage the youth through our programs funded to the Village Governments. NEST has engaged SD 92 and will secure visits to classes to share labour market opportunities, trends and services available so that they may begin planning their careers after they graduate by ensuring they have the requisite high school credits.
- NEST has partnered with BCIT, Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Skills Training (BEST) to deliver entrepreneurial skills training. NEST would be happy to deliver this type of training with age appropriate and skill level appropriate training to young entrepreneurs
- We'll provide updates via social media and to Nisga'a Newsletters. Please watch for programming announcements.

Subject / Unions

Comments

- Where does NEST stand with the union?

Response

- NEST is very pleased with its relationship with the unions. We meet with unions in a quarterly fashion. As of July 18, 2018 we note that the Provincial Government has made a significant announcement about infrastructure construction and that they are targeting Indigenous workers and unions as significant participants.
- We'll provide updates via social media and to Nisga'a Newsletters.

Subject / Funding Requirements for Trades Training

Comments

- Why are some people getting funded for trades training and others being denied for the same training? Can you explain your criteria for the funding?
- How do I get the funds to get the training for the job I want?

Response

- On a case-by-case basis we review every application. We measure the demand or employment opportunities that may be accessed after training. We measure the skills and existing knowledge of the applicant, we measure the training history of applicants to ensure that the training they are applying for is consistent with their history and employment goals.
- To ensure and protect our clients' privacy, we are unable to comment on any specific application. If you know someone that is not satisfied with their response from NEST please encourage them to connect with the NEST Manager for follow up.
- NEST will watch for appeals or additional requests from clients.
- Please call the NEST head office at 1(844)633-2210 and start an application. NEST will receive applications for training.

Subject / NEST Funding

Comments

- Where does the funding come, how did NEST come into being?

Response

- NEST core funding comes from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) as part of the Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS). NEST also acquires funds from other funders such as BC or other provincial agencies related to Indigenous Labour Market Programming.
- In 2010-2011 the Nisga'a Lisims Government triggered a clause in the Treaty and expressed their desire to deliver training programs on behalf of the Nisga'a Nation. In 2013 NEST was the direct result of that hard work and negotiation with ESDC and an existing ASETS organization to transition program funds to the Nisga'a Nation and NEST.

Subject / Urban Local Funding

Comments

- Is there an opportunity to cooperate with Urban Local or Friendship center in Vancouver to provide these services?

Response

- There is an opportunity to collaborate with Tsamiks and ACCESS to deliver labour market programming to Nisga'a citizens that reside in Metro Vancouver. NEST will work with NLG to deliver programming to Nisga'a that reside outside of Nisga'a Lands.
- Please watch for announcements.

Subject / Drug & Alcohol Screening

Comments

- Is this process of intensive screening exclusively applied to Nisga'a?

Response

- No it isn't. Pre-employment alcohol and drug screening is applied to all applicants of companies or projects that use that screening as part of their recruitment strategy.

Subject / Employment/Workplace Issues

Comments

- Is there a possible way to get a Nisga'a liaison/employment counsellor to go into workplaces when there are issues with their employment?

Response

- This type of service is beyond the scope of NEST as it pertains to employers at large.
- NEST does support its clients through to employment and on site as needed. NEST does not participate in disciplinary or operations of any employer.

Subject / Vetter Lodge

Comments

- Why is Vetter Falls Lodge being assisted by NEST? How can a central government run a B&B?

Response

- NEST provided training and support to Nisga'a citizens that were eligible and had an immediate employment opportunity with an employer. This is part of NEST's programming and NEST can do so with other employers (or B&B operators). Please contact NEST at 1(844)633-2210 to explore labour market programming and your business. We are always enthusiastic to help Nisga'a companies and hire Nisga'a citizens in meaningful employment.
- The second question is beyond the scope of NEST. Please contact NLG with your question.

Subject / NEST and SD 92

Comments

- What is the relationship between NEST and SD 92 for those who seek work experience hours? How can local entities assist in making this a success?

Response

- NEST has engaged SD 92 in the context of delivering career information to students. NEST has not discussed employment opportunities at SD 92.
- There would be a complexity of delivering and supporting labour market programming in a union environment but NEST is happy to support this in any way it can.

Subject / Apprenticeship Programs

Comments

- What NEST needs to do with the big companies who move into our territory is negotiate an apprenticeship program with the companies where our ticketed citizens can go and work and get hours and experience. This would alleviate the problem of everyone obtaining certification and coming up against a wall where they are told they need experience first.

Response

- NEST supports work force development at big companies that come in to Nisga'a Territory. Negotiation of opportunities is beyond the scope of NEST.
- Please consider sharing your idea with your elected representative. NEST is prepared to support any initiative as it pertains to companies and the Nisga'a Nation.



Health

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / NISGA'A NATION HEALTH PLAN 2015 - 2020

SUMMARY / DURING THIS SESSION, NISGA'A CITIZENS EXPRESSED MANY CONCERNS ON THE TOPIC OF HEALTH. AMONG THEM WERE: QUALITY OF CARE AND THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PHYSICIAN SERVICES, PATIENT TRANSPORTATION AND EXPENSES, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, MEDICAL SERVICES PREMIUMS (MSP), THE NON-INSURED HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM, ALCOHOL & DRUG TREATMENT AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND PALLIATIVE CARE. IN ADDITION, SPEAKERS ADDRESSED THEIR CONCERNS REGARDING EMERGENCY SERVICES, OFF-RESERVE SUPPORT, PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT FOR ELDERLY, AND PRESCRIPTIONS, AS WELL AS HEALTH FUNDING AND THE NVHA BUDGET.

** Note: Due to the high number of speakers in this session, the Chairperson announced that the panel would hear all the questions going forward and NVHA would respond at the end. NVHA took the names of each citizen who asked questions, and announced that they would be responding directly.*

Subject / Thank You

Comments

- Thank you to the Health Board for the help we got when we lost our brother Vern, had to go to Prince George, and the help from you guys is greatly appreciated.

Response

- Statement: No response required.

Subject / Medical Service Premiums (MSP), Palliative Care

Comments

- How is NVHA going to cover the monies owing on medical service premiums?
- Seem to be following the same as the province, is not our mandate to look after our people?
- How soon is palliative care going to be in place?

Response

- NVHA is completing a review of all the NVHA health programs, usage, medical justification, reason they're traveling, completing review and developing recommendations as result of the review.

Subject / Annual Funding, Patient Travel, Medical Shuttle Bus

Comments

- Need clarification of annual funding amounts.
- Why are meals cut for day trips, including for elders and people on limited income?
- Why has the bus stopped bringing citizens to and from their appointments?

Response

- Annual funding: \$10 million of the \$15 million was for expenses of NVHA.
- We're doing everything we can to provide to eligible Nisga'a Citizens.
- There are limited parking spaces for safe access to the bus, and there are no bus zones at all locations in Terrace. NVHA applied to the City of Terrace to request bus parking.

- If the funding is the same for the last five years, why are some getting large pay-checks and services are being cut?
- With an increase in the 2018-19 funding (page 39), will that show a reinstatement of lost services or an increase of salaries?
- The increase to the budget from NLG has yet to be passed from our NVHA Board during the transition phase before the services, and developing physician services can be communicated.

Subject / Observations & Recommendations

Comments

- Deficit with the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB): For Citizens who have access to employer health benefits and Nisga'a Citizens (with Non-Nisga'a Band Status) with access to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) benefits, is it recommended to utilize NIHB as a last resort? This will impact many service deliveries (i.e., NIHB, dental, vision, physiotherapy, pharmaceutical expenses, etc). I asked about this and was told no. There is an obligation to help the Nisga'a Citizens.
- Specialty physician services can be brought into the valley through NEADOP that covers their services and travel. The deadline to apply for services is October.
- Are orthopedics not covered through NEADOP any more?
- There are benefits to in-person physician appointments as opposed to tele-health services. Are the two on-site physicians covered through NVHA?

Response

- * See note on Page 45.

Subject / Mental Health Programs

Comments

- I compliment the NVHA on services provided, my brother takes advantage of it.
- I met with mental health members in Terrace to request services be offered in Aiyansh. They said no, our people would have to go out there. Any plans to expand this kind of work so our people can access trained professionals to work with the families to recognize the symptoms and have activities to do?

Response

- Off-core land services: Don and Lorna have put forth a NVHA guide to counselling which was sent to management to have it passed so that this department could use it as a guide. It does say in the criteria that any crisis should be covered, not just off-core land Nisga'a citizens. NLG stated that all Nisga'a citizens should have access to all services. It did not sit right to only allow off-core citizens to utilize the services. We are in the process of approving all crisis related counselling.

Subject / Rules of Procedure, Health Services Funding

Comments

- Suggestion to take comments from Nisga'a Nation as they are.
- Support for previous speaker who has years of service with NVHA and knows everything. Suggestion that Nisga'a Finance Committee find out how much of the \$16 million was paid for doctor's services.
- There are many low income families and elders who may need prescriptions, we're Treaty, if it means \$2000 for each elder, and they need that medication. Very few are aware of the Exceptional Circumstances service.
- Village government is receiving phone calls that NVHA is no longer offering Home Support services, referring to Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government. We'll assist as long as NLG Executive can transfer that funding to the Village Governments.

Response

- * See note on Page 45.

- A citizen was referred by NVHA to Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Government to pay for the invoice of respite care at Terrace View.
- Concerns that various program deliveries are outdated – including treatment centre – that are creating a deficit for the NIHB program.

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Alcohol & Drug Treatment/Prevention Programs, CHR Programs

Comments

- Thank you for the care provided while brother was in hospital for 4.5 months.
- What about the Assisted Living program that was supposed to happen in Gitlaxt'aamiks?
- In 1979, alcohol and drug counsellors were hired with a vision that the majority of our people would be sober. Prevention work is missing or not visible.
- We need our own treatment centre instead of investing thousands of dollars to refer clients out.
- Community Health Reps (CHR) back in the day also did a lot of community engagement with prevention programs and home visits, not visible today.
- Health care staff should not assume visits are alcohol related, or ask patients if they are coming off a two-week drunk. This is hurtful.

Response

- It is a dream that the majority of our people will become sober, the reality is yes, there is a considerable amount of Nisga'a that are sober.
- Our cwc's have been doing many jobs besides Alcohol and drug counseling. In the cities, there is a single sign on the door of alcohol and drug counselors, "if you need mental health, you go across the hallway" so-to-speak. We need to look at the amount of work our cwc's are doing. Prevention programs are done on a daily basis but the one that is publicly done in each village is the Nisga'a addictions awareness week hosted in the fall.
- I whole heartedly agree that we need our own treatment centre, a lot of clients fall through the cracks when they have to wait for treatment which can be up to three months in the worst case scenario.
- Our counselors are trained not to assume anything from a client, it is client centered.

Subject / External Services, Patient Travel, NVHA Emergency Services

Comments

- When is NVHA going to meet Northern Health for kidney health care? Prefer to stay in Aiyansh for service.
- How long is “short term”? Greatly appreciate the information.
- Is patient travel covered when a specialist appointment referral comes from a physician outside of NVHA?
- When will the medical facilities in the Nass Valley be equipped for patients experiencing a heart attack? There is a limited time frame to maintain the quality of life.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / NIHB Policy, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Transition

Comments

- Request to see the NIHB policy. Educating the citizens may eliminate the frustration.
- Teen pregnancy prevention: When there are no prevention programs, it contributes to the deficit.
- The transition in June 2017 was not during an AGM but during a special meeting. Would like the background on how transition started and happened.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Support Off-Reserve

Comments

- What kind of support is there for elders who live off-reserve? Does NVHA track the services provided?
- Do you track people who live off-reserve and what are the numbers?
- How can we support elders and seniors living in homes? What are their supports? There are challenges to taking care of an elderly mother who had chronic kidney failure. Help was received after going to the Nisga'a Administrative Decisions Review Board (NADRB).
- A recovery house would support the homeless in Terrace.

Response

- Our off-core services do track all client interactions with service providers, and amount paid for services.

Subject / Quality of Service

Comments

- Went to see two different doctors at NVHA for a health condition and was not satisfied with their quality of service. Opted to go to Terrace and ended up being referred to Kelowna for a specialist appointment. Had limited financial resources to travel.

Response

- * See note on Page 45.

Subject / MSP, Health Services

Comments

- Received a large bill for medical expenses that also impacted personal tax return.
- In a response by emergency services after hours, a patient in dire need to see the nurse was told to make an appointment on Monday morning. If anything happened to the patient, that nurse would be held accountable.
- Tele-health: we have clients suffering with cancer who don't want to live in the hospitals. When cancer patients are going to be seen at health centres, how can we expect them to stand in front of a computer when they're very ill? Why can't we have real doctors? What are the costs for tele-health?
- For NIHB what are the credentials of the Committee determining who and what gets covered for pharmacy coverage?
- Improved mental health programming is needed that would support the clients' needs to feel a part of the communities.
- Concern for lack of health care for Non-Nisga'a patients living in Nass Valley, i.e., Home Support that would alleviate some stress of family caring for their family member.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Five-Year Health Plan

Comments

- Encourage public education on NVHA policies, this may alleviate the long line-up here today.
- Is the “community input, collaborative planning, serving all communities and strengthening connections with NLC, School District 92” is in place?
- Is the health committee being re-implemented? Consider including front-line workers who are going to be expected to deliver the services to our people.
- What is the measurement of success for quality of life? Have we measured this yet for our people? How are we going to do it?
- We are three years into the Health Plan now and it would be nice to say there’s an increase in the mortality rate. Prevention measures need to be in place. It’s there but not big enough, including promoting health and wellness.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Self or NVHA Referrals

Comments

- What the difference between Connie sending us out and, trying to do my own thing?
- What is the difference if I make my own appointments in town or here?

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Data Management, Emergency Services and Patient Travel

Comments

- Health staff accessing data on computers: concern that this may impact medical history of patients, i.e. what if a misdiagnosis happens like Long QT, which is in our family?
- Referred from NVHA Emergency to MMH Emergency. Proper information was not sent and had to complete a whole assessment. What if the issue was serious? Patient travel services during an emergency and after hours is difficult. The Nurse wasn't able to arrange for accommodations and travel.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / NVHA Presentation, Physician Services

Comments

- Section 4, bullet 9 "Provide staff and how to deal with difficult clients." Be mindful describing our people, this wording is very disrespectful.
- Appreciation for Dr. Kilpatrick. Have started going back to NVHA for physician services.
- Encourage doctors to open up businesses here. Provide a liaison to explain policies and procedures. Speaker offered her services to NVHA with traditional medicines.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Prescriptions, Clinical Therapist Services, Gingolx Renovations

Comments

- Why are so many doctors giving different prescriptions all of the time?
- Why are prescriptions not filled? And who decides what is filled? What are their credentials? My grand-daughter experienced a delay in receiving prescriptions.
- A former clinical therapist was terminated and personal files were given to the Village Government. This is a breach of confidentiality.
- Daughter was being locked in with the therapist. Who is accountable?
- When will the clinic in Gingolx be renovated?

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Elders' Activities

Comments

- One concern coming from a senior is that most of them don't have enough money for a yearly pass for swimming or any other exercise for seniors.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Health Services – Various Concerns

Comments

- Motion that NVHA reinstate on-call patient-travel services on weekends.
- There was a podiatrist who came in that served elders. Request to readdress that service.
- Northern Health electronic medical records systems: request that records can be upgraded to be accessible by both NVHA and MMH to prevent any misdiagnosis.
- Many prescriptions have been prescribed to my mother for pain management. After consultation with her doctor, opted to decrease the amount of medications she's taking. Support for medical marijuana that helped mother so much.
- Suggestion to change medication coverage for terminally ill patients (i.e., read on social media of a stage four cancer patient being denied medication coverage).
- Request for more follow-ups from patient-travel, i.e. for travel and accommodation.
- Appreciation for the in-person consultations at the pharmacy. Have moved my preferred service back to Terrace.
- Why is there a deficit over the last three years? Are the staff qualified for the positions they hold? Request that the Board look at budgets, i.e., homecare.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Rules of Procedure, CHR, Medical Expenses, Elders

Comments

- Why do you plan a Special Assembly and only give us two minutes to air our hurts when we have built them up for two years?
- Health services haven't changed. CHR's don't visit elders like they used to in the past.
- Why does my daughter have to repay medical expenses with her eye?
- Request to build an elders facility in the Nass as a place to go to when family can't look after them.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Community Mental Health

Comments

- Suggestion: Have activities for mentally handicapped (i.e. social activities to do things together, such as simple crafts). They will have others to talk to besides their parents, and some youth would be educated so that they aren't hostile to mental patients.
- There is a lack of permanent mental health professionals. They are needed due to past abuses suffered by our nation.
- Mental health services: Psychology or psychiatry treatment for young and old is needed for the wellbeing of people who need help with mental issues, such as ADHD.
- If treatment happens in the valley the doctors will be familiar with patient's issues. Money needs to be found to make this permanent so we can have a healthy nation.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Alcohol and Drug Recovery

Comments

- Is it possible to start a mental illness addiction program, i.e. for alcoholism?
- We have youth already addicted to drugs and alcohol. We also have youth who do not have any work skills at all. How will these people ever get work?
- I feel there is a need for many more workshops for mental illness and addictions programs. Nisga'a Valley Health, with Professional Social Programs invites professional social workers from Northern Health from Prince Rupert.
- Alcoholics and addicts know how to fake their progress in healing and are good at saying that everything is okay. They know how to show false pride and happiness.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

Subject / Medical Transportation, Meal Tickets

Comments

- Suggestion: have medical transportation for Fridays because doctor's waiting lists are a very long to wait for next appointment dates.
- Desired Benefits: Accommodations for those stuck (elders): for those who really need meal allowance when travelling to town, (especially those on low income, some doctors' appointments are more than an hour).
- I would like to see meal tickets (\$10 - \$20). I have low income. We need meal allowances on day trips.
- Suggestion for client pick up at home (I live 20 minutes from bus departure). Stick with one vehicle.
- In dire need of our own medical van for the days of Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Some clients have appointments on those days and it is a drag trying to get a ride when we don't have a vehicle, it's life and death. This can save lives and we won't miss important appointments where we can get pushed back months or years.
- I would like to see NVHA bring back the \$20 meal tickets, and no more switching buses on the trips, especially in the winter time. Suggestion to pickup and drop off patients at their home.
- We need better transportation, and better accommodations on all health/dental trips for example.

Response

* See note on Page 45.

NVHA Response

- *Recognize there are a lot of problems that need to be addressed, including finding solutions for enhancing treatment programs.*
- *Information was provided on the Residential School Treatment program, Nisga'a Addictions Awareness week, and Gitwilgenx program (a traditional intervention program).*
- *Information was provided on current programming with mental health and grief recovery support.*
- *Names of all the speakers were taken and will be contacted directly.*



Education

Question & Answer Session

REFERENCE DOCUMENT / SCHOOL DISTRICT 92 NISGA'A, EDUCATION REPORT

SUMMARY / IN THIS SESSION, CITIZENS SPOKE ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES CONCERNING EDUCATION. THESE INCLUDED STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTIISM, BUDGET CUTBACKS, TEACHER AND STAFF LAY-OFFS, AS WELL AS SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS AND ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES. SEVERAL SPEAKERS ALSO EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR NISGA'A LANGUAGE COURSES, COURSES FOR ELDERS, TEXTBOOKS, AND THE INCLUSION OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HISTORY AND NISGA'A TREATY HISTORY INTO THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

Subject / Nisga'a Language Courses, Special Needs

Comments

- Course selection 2018/19 for language choices: Nisga'a was not listed.
- Students with special needs: What can be done to provide for them?

Response

- SD 92 Nisga'a: Nisga'a is offered K-12, will inquire within.
- Special needs students have three Student Support Teachers, scheduling the support to integrate on course offerings they need.

Subject / History of School District 92 Nisga'a

Comments

- The history of how SD 92 Nisga'a came into place should be addressed to the public and to be taught in schools, no questions.

Response

- Statement: No response required.

Subject / Nisga'a Elementary Secondary School (NESS), Textbooks

Comments

- Suggestion regarding NESS: We need little textbooks. How can we work ahead without textbooks?
- Some students think the work is too easy, how will they be prepared?

Response

- Textbooks: Communicate with school principal to ensure budget is sufficient to purchase books. Most of the textbook resource base has moved online.
- Response to students being un-challenged: Will pass comment onto teachers. Will pass onto NESS staff.
- Board level in regards to textbooks: This is being addressed, reviews of the strategic plan are moving forward with children's best interests in mind.

Subject / Teacher and Staff Lay-offs

Comments

- In regard to the lay off of Teacher Assistants and five teachers, are there any lay-offs at the board office?
- Suspension of students: Recommendation to change back and have school board set out guidelines.

Response

- We will not address issues specific to staff members, children or community members out of respect of privacy.
- Staffing issues and lay-offs: It is standard practice across the province and at the end of each year that staff are technically laid off to collect Employment Insurance (EI) during the summer. We are looking into re-vamping programs in schools (breakfast and use of staff), but we are faced with some budget level considerations. There is no longer a district principal, and we cannot afford to staff full-time teachers and principals in all schools. Some resources are needed.

Subject / Water & Waste Water Treatment Training

Comments

- Water and waste water treatment: Lack of places on entities/institutions to enlist for training and introduction course. Would it be possible for WWNI to sponsor an introductory course within the Valley?

Response

- Will inquire within and discuss with Education Administrator (EA) from each respective Village Government. BCIT looks into waste water training. Will respond through your EA.

Subject / WWNI, Courses for Elders

Comments

- Are you ever going to offer courses for elders? We live in a world of technology now. Enrolled at WWNI at age 60 in First Nations language (Nisga'a) already fluent.
- What qualifications are needed to enroll?

Response

- For elders taking courses at WWNI, after age 65 tuition is free.
- Computer course: will need to have credits.
- We welcome elders into our buildings as much as they are able.

Subject / Budget Cut-Backs,

Comments

- Education systems: Political leaders to trustees, why are we accepting cut-backs for teachers?
- Educational plans: most high-school students provide for leisure outside of school.
- Teachers were passing students without them being at the level or grade they are in, what are we going to do to stop this?

Response

- Teacher and Teacher Assistant (TA) lay-offs are standard practice across BC, reapply for the next year.
- There are 18 children for every one adult.
- Better curriculum, textbooks for our students are needed. In regards to budgets, we cannot operate to full capacity. Need support from the Nisg-a'a Nation.

Subject / Curriculum, Residential Schools

Comments

- Sending home of young students: Why are these children misbehaving? We need to look at things differently, how we can change?
- Suggestion that residential schools curriculum is taught in school systems. Those who attended lost their culture, language, and identity.
- Comment on the importance of learning and education in the home community. Our young people are not shipped away to obtain an education.

Response

- Happy to say that as a result of a request with nlg for funding, we received substantial support about the folks in questions – elders, to bring them into the building.
- Curriculum: Province-wide, the history of residential schools and what was done to First Nations will inform all students in schools of the impacts in hopes that this will not happen again. This will be introduced as we move forward.

Subject / Education

Comments

- As a Treaty Nation, with SD 92, and wwni, we can control our education and our young people within the Nass Valley. To be very honest, there are very few real grade 12 graduates. We are funding students up to three years for College and Career Prep (CCP) and not meeting the needs of the Nation.
- There is a problem with the entire education system within Nass Valley. Suggestion to have Wilp Si'ayuuhl Nisga'a (WSN) at NLG to work with all education systems.

Response

- Nothing would make us happier than to sit with all components in education and collaborate together. We look forward to the opportunity to gather all who are responsible for education for the Nation and engage in those dialogues that lie before us. We welcome the opportunity to connect and build bridges in pooling together where appropriate.
- Language courses offered in SD 92 have not changed at all. We make adjustments based on who is providing instruction, administrators and reduced staff. We look at ourselves and the entire system.
- Sometimes it does happen, in terms of students who are graduating.
- Children and school: Superintendent was very clear on student absenteeism, the levels are outrageous.
- Students from Gitlaxt'aamiks: Absenteeism numbers are extremely high.

Subject / Attendance

Comments

- Lack of student attendance is a concern, as well as lack of teacher support.
- Union: Should possibly adopt a policy to have some teachers there who have been there since the opening of SD 92.

Response

- Extracurricular activities support: Strictly voluntary. We invite parents to come forward and offer interests, or have teachers volunteer.

Subject / Nisga'a Language & Treaty Courses

Comments

- Language: half instruction time on language in schools taught for one day a week.
- Are you offering a Nisga'a Treaty course within the new curriculum for high schools? If so, when will it be implemented?
- What is the SD 92 plan on language revitalization and heritage society apart from the education plan?

Response

- SD 92 Nisga'a: Language is minimum based in offering Nisga'a language classes for a minimum of a half an hour.
- Nisga'a Treaty course is offered and is based on student interest.

Subject / Parent Advisory Council (PAC), Lunch Program

Comments

- The Parent Advisory Council is helping out with schools and students. The lunch program is lacking.

Response

- PAC: Our principal in Laxgalts'ap ensures that a PAC meeting is held every month.
- An initiative is being brought forward to reinstate the breakfast program in schools.

Subject / Student Attendance, Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Comments

- Are there any trauma information programs in schools?
- Absenteeism: What are we doing about getting our children to go to school?
- Concerns at school: It is up to parents to ensure children attend school.
- Anti-bully day: Any capacity in having initiatives happening every month during the year rather than just every year?

Response

- Will work with students, to move forward in improving student attendance, initiatives.



Reflections from the Executive Officers

Concluding Remarks

EVA CLAYTON / OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CORINNE MCKAY / OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

BRIAN TAIT / OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON

Eva Clayton / President

Good morning to all, good morning to the Honourable Minister, and to his team.

On behalf of the Nisga'a Nation, thank you to the host community for hosting the peoples' Assembly, thank you for your incredible hospitality.

To NLG staff, thank you for all of the work done to make this peoples' Assembly happen. All of your work has not gone unnoticed.

Thank you to the Co-chairs of the Special Assembly. Not an easy job but a job that needs to be done.

We listened throughout the week to all comments, questions and concerns from the citizens. It is your job to bring concerns to government, to see what we can do within our means.

Listed are the concerns I picked up on:

- Special Assembly: Concerns in regard to it being held bi-annually versus annually, this will be discussed by the Executive.
- Quality of Life: Work is ongoing at NLG level to address the QOL of our citizens for this particular year. Suggestion to go to four communities: this will go to the Executive.
- NCFs: Heard the concerns of our people. I received the structure of NCFs and will review this structure. It is very important to provide that protection of our children.
- BC Hydro: Heard the concerns of the high costs on Nisga'a Lands. NLG met with BC Hydro officials last year. They let us know other First Nations expressed similar concerns. On May 1st there was an announcement of the Customer Crisis Program, a three year pilot project, that will provide eligible customers with temporary payment options. Encourage Nisga'a citizens to utilize this crisis program.
- Highway 113: We have heard the suggestions of the people, that Nisga'a get together and create a Nisga'a Construction Company to maintain Highway 113. We can take a look at the viability if it were to go to the four village governments or go national.
- Enforcement: Many concerns, it is important for you to continue to raise the concerns that are happening on Nisga'a Lands. You are the eyes and ears of the government. At a recent executive meeting they expressed similar concerns as you have. This is a work in progress.

- Residential schools: The inter-generation trauma we continue to face as a result of Indian Day School, the boarding school, and residential school. The government will be supporting this volunteer group.
- Youth: Thank you for your concerns and suggestions, that we have a youth representative with the Council of Elders. Administration has taken note and will incorporate them once we have a Youth Organizing Youth coordinator.
- Second access route: We heard the concerns of the one exit. I was invited on May 4th to do a tour on the cranberry connector which is in a bad state, and is in need of repairs. There were eight stakeholders in attendance on May 4th. I made suggestions that we cannot leave the meeting without a proposed plan. The Assistant Deputy Minister committed funds to begin the preliminary work. We hope to have the further development of the second access.
- Nisga'a Fisheries Fund: You want answers. The government will take a look at that.
- Halibut licenses: Quota, salmon enhancement program. Work is ongoing in this area.
- Medical marijuana: Heard the suggestion, will bring it to the Executive for preliminary work.
- Health questions: Disappointed there was not enough time to deliver the responses. Committed that we will have the 47 points and bring them to the new board. I suggest that the new board go out to the Nisga'a Nation and have a meet and greet, and provide you the answers on those 47 points.

Thank you.

Corinne McKay / Secretary Treasurer

Good morning to all.

Listed are the issues that I have noted throughout the week:

- Language: We have a meeting next week on language with a representative regarding the commitment from the federal government on Indigenous language. A meeting will be held with the members of the Nisga'a Language Authority.
- We have a provision in the Nisga'a Treaty to enact legislation for Nisga'a Language and Culture and we will consider this because of the Indigenous Languages Legislation and the need to provide support for our languages in a meaningful way.
- An announcement by Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation of a \$50 million for Indigenous languages, encourage our citizens to lobby to Minister Fraser for a fair share to the Nisga'a.
- Health: In July 2015 the lack of doctors was raised at WSN as an Urgent Matter. Our position was that we would draw down legislation to establish a Public Institution, however the recent changes to the *BC Societies Act* allowed for the Executive to change the manner in which the Board Members are selected. We have commissioned a health report with 69 recommendations to address many of the health concerns that have been raised this week. There was a three year time frame to carry out these recommendations.

Health Canada provides funding through FFA for BC Medical, so there should not be any citizens being invoiced. See our administration if you are being invoiced for BC Medical.

NVHA is still obligated to convene an Annual General Meeting and report and present Audited Financial Statements.

- Assisted living: A while back NVHA had an approval for an additional 12 beds, and there was a change in the provincial government so proposal fell off the table. We have included an Assisted Living facility in the FFA negotiations.
- Sports and recreation: We adopted a policy which encourages attendance and good grades for students.

- Programs and services: Heard the issues of concern and have talked with senior administration to consider structure of government similar to that of the Provincial Government.
- School District: There will be an educational review. This has been approved through our budget process, to follow-up on the concerns being raised by citizens and the calls from two communities for Independent School Status.
- Fisheries: We need to preserve our resources and support Enforcement in Recreational Fisheries closures.
- Commercial fishermen: Will bring this forward to the finance committee. We will determine what is available in the fund, and provide a recommendation to the Executive for consideration.

Thank you to the hosts for work done to provide the amazing feasts throughout the Assembly.
Thank you for your hospitality.

Happy Nisga'a Day and a great Mother's Day.

Brian Tait / Executive Chairperson

It has been a week of sharing and experiencing as taught by our former leaders.

We began this Assembly to bring back the traditional laws to make this Assembly yours. Our former leaders, to make this their Assembly, they have to adopt it. We brought that back. This is where you voice your concerns when adopting the agenda. We need some work to truly make it your agenda.

Communication is still in question today. Thank you to the members of the delegates of this Special Assembly for raising the importance of communication.

Thank you to the delegates for their words, which gave us advice and in bringing our theme alive.

We are celebrating Nisga'a Day, and it is only fitting to hear our past leaders and ancestors on the floor. It was difficult for facilitators when going beyond the rules adopted. This happens everywhere.

What is important, is the truth of your stories, and facts you share, that we bring alive in our deliberations. Your voices do come alive at Executive meetings. Your leadership in your communities bring them to the Executive meetings.

This is not the only place to raise concerns, there are meetings at the national level and Village Government level.

We heard many good suggestions from our people, one is the recommendations that were circulated. We will bring them to the Executive and make those recommendations come alive.

Your government has a code of conduct and is based on Nisga'a principles.

We heard a lot of experiences, great ideas, and truths in the last five days.

My position in government is to provide direction and give life to what happened today. We have to follow the number one law in the Nisga'a Nation which is the Constitution. Our job is to remove barriers and improve our service to you. We will do the best of our ability with your help to do just that.

In the past five days, the toughest job in any Assembly is for people facilitating and chairing meetings. It is difficult to follow the rules you adopted, it gets challenging and they manage to get the job done. Put your hands together today to the co-chairs.

Thank you.