

WOLASTOQIYIK WAHSIPEKUK FIRST NATION

GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

MINUTES of the General Meeting of Members
of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation (hereinafter: PNWW),
held on June 8, 2024, in Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec.

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1. Opening prayer and appointment of the chair of the meeting

Larry Jenniss, general manager of the First Nation, opened the WWFN general meeting on Saturday, June 8, 2024, in Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec.

Guidelines on the conduct of the meeting were explained to members.

The opening prayer was recited in French by Nicole Aubin and in English by Ernest-Daniel Nicolas.

Grand Chief Jacques Tremblay offered the customary greetings and reminded members that the last annual general meeting was held in 2019, as the COVID-19 pandemic prevented such in-person gatherings from taking place.

The Grand Chief appointed the chair of the meeting. Pursuant to article 2 of the Maliseet of Viger First Nation's Code of Deliberative Meeting Procedures, although the Grand Chief is the ex officio chair of all the First Nation's assemblies, he named Christian Rock to serve in this capacity.

Mr. Rock's appointment was seconded by Ursule Tremblay and adopted without objection by the meeting.

2. Presentation of the rules of procedure and determination of a quorum

Christian Rock, meeting chair, outlined the rules of procedure applicable to the meeting, referring to the Maliseet of Viger First Nation's Code of Deliberative Meeting Procedures dated January 2012, including the necessary adjustments for the WWFN.

Me Laurence Maher confirmed that the required quorum, set at seventy-five members under the Maliseet of Viger First Nation's Code of Deliberative Meeting Procedures, was present. A quorum was determined to have been reached, and the meeting was declared duly convened.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Christian Rock presented the meeting agenda, noting that the order of the items between 10 a.m. and noon had been slightly modified, but all items were included.

Sylvie Lavoie made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented and Diane Daigle seconded the motion. As there were no abstentions or objections, the agenda was adopted.

4. Formation of the Proposal Drafting Committee

Pursuant to article 3.1.3 of the Maliseet of Viger First Nation's Code of Deliberative Meeting Procedures, Me Laurence Maher was appointed chair of the Proposal Drafting Committee, a role that requires her to abstain from taking part in debates.

The committee members are: Me Laurence Maher, chair; Nathalie Rioux and Ivania Aubin-Malo, secretaries; and Caroline Pigeon, observer.

5. Adoption of the minutes of the general meeting held on August 9 and 10, 2019

The meeting chair presented the minutes of the general meeting held on August 9 and 10, 2019.

A motion was made to adopt the minutes by Martin Rioux, seconded by Mélyna Bilodeau. The minutes were adopted as written.

6. Financial Report as at March 31, 2024

Christian Rock, meeting chair, invited Michel Sirois, Senior Manager, Client Relations and Business Strategy at Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, to join the panel to present the results for the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2024.

In accordance with article 16.3.3 of the General By-law, Mr. Sirois, auditor of the WWFN's financial statements, reported to members on the financial statements for the fiscal year that ended March 31, 2024. The members followed the reading of the financial statements using the documents before them.

The 2023–2024 annual financial statements were proposed for adoption and were adopted.

7. General manager's report

The general manager, Larry Jenniss, presented his activity report. He explained the reasons for his involvement with the WWFN.

- The *Financial Administration Act* (FAA) as the basis: a robust framework inspired by ISO standards, which led to a review of procedures, better transparency and greater communication with members.
- Advanced strategic planning: three key areas (territory, culture, economic development), with the identification phase now complete and the next step focused on actions and procedures related to human resources.
- Landmark projects: the Putep 't-awt Observatory, the outreach cultural centre and the “Sqotesol” online language revitalization program.
- Management and adaptation: regional development supported by consultations, resilience in the face of unforeseen events (relocation following water damage) and diversification of communication tools.

The meeting chair specified that the general manager would not be answering any questions, as his role is administrative. Members who wished to ask questions were invited to direct them to the elected officials of the Grand Council.

8. Activity report from Grand Chief Jacques Tremblay

Before the Grand Chief's presentation, the meeting chair addressed the elected officials, urging them to focus their reports on an overview of the period ended and to refrain from presenting political platforms in anticipation of the following day's elections. Each elected official was allotted ten minutes for their presentation, followed by a five-minute question period.

- Arrival in 2016 was marked by a lack of financial transparency; transparency committees were established with volunteers to restore trust.
- Key developments: agreement on the Port of Cacouna (2020–2021), the Kataskomiq project with road access to support development scheduled for 2026, and wind energy partnerships strengthening territorial recognition.
- Economic situation: decline in the shrimp fishery, healthy lobster stocks, compliance with crab quotas, difficulties in the groundfish fishery; need to diversify into aquaculture and fish farming.
- Recognition and vision: agreements with nations and governments without the surrender of rights, increased territorial affirmation (including Kataskomiq), a shift from a survival mindset to long-term development (7 and 14 generations), and re-election by acclamation.

9. Activity reports from Grand Council members

(a) Kévin Morais — Governance, traditional activities and fisheries

Kévin Morais presented his overview of his areas of governance, finance, traditional activities and culture over the past four years.

- Prioritizing sound governance since 2019: passing of the *Financial Administration Act* (FAA) with the support of the First Nations Financial Management Board, enabling communities to opt out of the federal system.

- Major reforms: modernization of regulations, codes and policies (governance, HR, finance, information), addition of guidelines on ethics, audits and working conditions, approved by members, leading to dual certification (February 9).
- Cultural vitality: return of the pow-wow following the pandemic, cultural initiatives (botanical guide, workshops, history book, informational signs), and the creation of a platform for learning the Wolastoqey language and a cultural centre.
- Economic development: the impact of climate change on fisheries (decline of the shrimp fishery, stability of the crab fishery, importance of the lobster fishery), exploration of new species (redfish, tuna), diversification, resource optimization and creation of specialized jobs.

b) Martine Bruneau — Economic development

Martine Bruneau, who has served in office since 2020, presented her overview on the economic development of the WWFN.

- Significant energy revenues: participation in the Régie intermunicipale de l'énergie du Bas-Saint-Laurent (~\$900,000 per year) and projects through the Eastern Energy Alliance (new power plants totalling ~900 MW).
- Infrastructure projects: development of the Kataskomiq multi-service rest area (slated to open in spring 2026) and reconstruction of administrative offices following a disaster and rising costs.
- Tourism development: opening of the Putep 't-awt site (marine mammals), addition of a digital tour and an electric shuttle, and launch of Tourism Wahsipekuk.
- Local economic growth: expansion of maple syrup production, review of models to engage members and expansion of the Matuweskewin gift shop with a wider range of products.

c) Richard Bélanger — Health and education

Richard Bélanger, who has served in office since 2020, outlined his overview of the mandates he was responsible for since his election.

First half of the term: Territory and culture

- Reorganization of traditional activities: creation of the Wolastokuk Traditional Activities and Occupation Committee (WTAOC), and launch of a youth territory guardian program in partnership with Parks Canada to preserve Wolastokuk.
- Cultural and organizational strengthening: policy revisions (hunting, fishing, activities), better allocation of territories, hiring of a dedicated staff member and training of members in the Wolastoqey language.

Second half of the term: Health and education

- Educational success: more than 2,000 post-secondary graduates thanks to funding programs, with representation on the FNEC to advocate for the Nation's educational needs.

- Improved health services: establishment of a community health program, improved access to services (Jordan's Principle, uninsured individuals), creation of a website and a dedicated full-time position.

d) Shirley Kennedy – Communications, culture and finance

The meeting also heard the report from Ms. Kennedy, who presented an overview of her responsibilities.

- Enhanced communications: modernized website (including a Members section), video segments, optimized community communications and an increased social media presence to improve transparency and engagement with members.
- Public outreach and social acceptability: delivery of content (publicity, press releases) to promote the Nation and foster harmonious coexistence with local and national communities.
- Traditional activities and territory: exclusive hunting agreement (Parke), establishment of a base camp, community hunting pilot project, Guardians program, and development of food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries (lobster).
- Disciplined financial management: establishment and chairing of the Finance and Audit Committee, monitoring of financial performance growth of surplus, demonstrating sound management.

10. Report on the specific claim regarding the Viger land surrender

A historical video narrated by Nicole Aubin and covering the history of the Viger land surrender from 1764 to 1868 was presented.

Me Benoît Amyot of the law firm Cain Lamarre provided an overview of the legal aspects of the specific claim.

- Context for specific claims (2008): claims of up to \$150 million possible for historical wrongs; process initiated in 2017 and supported by extensive archival research.
- Major milestone in 2023: official recognition that the surrender was illegal and the launch of negotiations with Canada.
- Ongoing process (up to 3 years): assessment of damages (land value, loss of use since 1869, social impacts) with the assistance of experts; final approval subject to approval submitted to the Grand Council and the members via referendum.
- Challenges and outlook: financing primarily through repayable loans; the importance of unity and a timeframe of one and a half to two and a half years to assess the possibility of a reasonable agreement.

The Grand Chief confirmed that he received the letter acknowledging admission of the claim, dated September 15, 2023, and emphasized the importance of standing united to achieve a favourable outcome, particularly given the ongoing economic development (wind power, partnerships with

Hydro-Québec, claims for compensation for loss of use). Me Amyot explained that a timeframe of approximately one and a half to two and a half years is needed to determine whether a reasonable agreement can be negotiated.

11. Activity report from the Council of Elders

Nicole Aubin, chair of the Council of Elders, presented a detailed report on the activities of the Council of Elders and the Citizenship Council, covering the period from August 25, 2018 to June 8 and 9, 2024, when the general meeting was held.

- Increased Council activity: a sharp rise in meetings between 2020 and 2021 (up to 14 per year, often held remotely), followed by a steadier pace.
- A period marked by key events: cultural and spiritual activities, institutional partnerships and participation in major community events.
- Major organizational changes: deaths, resignations and appointments within the Grand Council.
- Key initiatives: establishment of the Citizenship Code Committee, projects promoting cultural appreciation and member recognition, demonstrating commitment and dedication to passing on traditions.

In accordance with a decision made at the beginning of the general meeting, there was no question period addressing the Council of Elders' activity report.

12. Submission of proposals and deliberations

Meeting chair Christian Rock expressed concern about the time required to review the eighteen proposals in detail. Grand Chief Jacques Tremblay proposed postponing the deliberations until no later than June 7, 2025.

However, several members expressed a strong desire to hold the deliberations on site. Danielle Dionne called for transparency and the option to attend council meetings via videoconference. Following various remarks, the Grand Chief withdrew his proposal to postpone. The meeting conducted its deliberations by limiting comments to three per resolution.

RESOLUTION 24-01 — Representation of each family on the Grand Council

PROPOSED BY: Marie-Claude Aubin

SECONDED BY: Jean-Sébastien Bérubé

BE IT RESOLVED THAT our elected Grand Council shall consist of representatives from the community's various large families filling the five seats up for election;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the proposal shall take effect immediately;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT tomorrow, June 9, 2024, the members of our Nation shall ensure the representation of their community by electing one council member from each of the families to fill the five seats up for election.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-02 — Postponement of member proposals

PROPOSED BY: Grand Chief Jacques Tremblay

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the proposals be accepted and deliberations be postponed to a later date, no later than June 7, 2025.

WITHDRAWN by Grand Chief Jacques Tremblay following comments from members who wished to deliberate immediately.

RESOLUTION 24-03 — Number of council members

PROPOSED BY: Édith Bélanger

SECONDED BY: Mathieu Pigeon

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the necessary amendments be made to allow for an increase in the number of council members to seven, or three more than at present.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-04 — Frequency of assemblies

PROPOSED BY: Patrick Savoie

SECONDED BY: Stéphane Brière

BE IT RESOLVED THAT we shall hold meeting to discuss the various issues, topics and activities involving our community.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-05 — Increase in food for community distribution

PROPOSED BY: Pierre Jenniss

SECONDED: Dominique Chopin

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the fish box for community distribution be adjusted based on the quantity of fish and seafood, rather than on its cost. Each box of fish distributed to members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk Nation shall be enhanced to contain a minimum of 20 lb of fish in total, ideally consisting

of the following species: turbot, cod, redfish, salmon and halibut, in addition to other seafood currently offered, such as scallops.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-06 — Number of seats on the Grand Council

PROPOSED BY: Pierre Jenniss

SECONDED: Dominique Chopin

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the number of terms in the same position within the Grand Council shall be limited to two, for a total of eight years, be they consecutive or not. Effective as of 2024 and retroactive to previous terms.

WITHDRAWN by the proposer.

RESOLUTION 24-07 — Regional groups for workshops

PROPOSED BY: Camélia Blanchette Ruest

SECONDED BY: Isabelle Baron

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Nation establish concentrated regional groups of members based on the number of members in each region. These groups will be able to host various workshops so that members can meet, get to know one another and pass on their knowledge to future generations.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-08 — Communication

PROPOSED BY: Danièle Dionne

SECONDED BY: Félix-Antoine Downs

BE IT RESOLVED THAT email communication shall be prioritized for the distribution of such communications.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-09 — Creation of online cultural video segments

PROPOSED BY: Isabelle Dallaire

SECONDED BY: Luc Dallaire

BE IT RESOLVED THAT videos, short video segments or online presentations shall be produced and made available via Zoom or Teams for members residing outside the region, with the option to view them on demand.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-10 — Improvements to the Members section of the website

PROPOSED BY: Marie-Hélène Baron

SECONDED BY: Isabelle Baron

BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1) a member profile be created to allow each member to update their contact information and communication preferences; (2) a comprehensive directory of rights and services be established with clear guidance; (3) relevant documents, such as by-laws and policies, be added to the Members section.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-11 — Formal welcome for new members

PROPOSED BY: Marie-Hélène Baron

SECONDED BY: Isabelle Baron

BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1) the Nation make a personalized phone call to each new member; (2) a welcome package be sent; (3) a welcome ceremony attended by elders be organized.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-12 — Creation of an investment fund to assist members

PROPOSED BY: Doris Bouchard

SECONDED BY: Isabelle Baron

BE IT RESOLVED THAT (1) a fund be established using unspent COVID-19 funds and other funds to be determined, and that it be dedicated to member services; (2) a committee be formed to establish allocation criteria (improved health coverage, adult education, vocational training, seniors' assistance for the pow-wow); (3) a person be hired to manage applications.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-13 — Hiring of a youth coordinator

PROPOSED BY: Lisa-Maude Bérubé

SECONDED BY: Catherine Desjardins

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Band Council appoint a coordinator to organize events and activities for people aged 15 to 35.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-14 — Opening of Council meetings to members

PROPOSED BY: Mathieu Pigeon

SECONDED BY: Édith Bélanger

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council meetings be open to members, recorded and streamed online, with members having the opportunity to ask questions and voice their opinions.

WITHDRAWN by the chair due to concerns regarding the security of confidential information. The resolution may be resubmitted with revised wording.

RESOLUTION 24-15 — Submission of records to the Council of Elders

PROPOSED BY: Hélène Brière

SECONDED BY: Alyre Bélanger

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of Elders regularly receive copies of records of the Grand Council's meetings in order to review the decisions and offer guidance based on ancestral knowledge.

WITHDRAWN by Ms. Brière, as an agreement already exists that aligns with this objective.

RESOLUTION 24-16 — Full reimbursement of expenses for ancestral knowledge workshops

PROPOSED BY: Hélène Brière

SECONDED BY: Kateri Aubin Dubois

BE IT RESOLVED THAT all members be eligible to participate in training sessions on ancestral knowledge, with full reimbursement of all expenses (mileage, meals, etc.).

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-17 — Fairness in hotel accommodation allowances for the General Meeting

PROPOSED BY: Mathieu Pigeon

SECONDED BY: Christian Rioux

BE IT RESOLVED THAT overnight accommodations be provided to all members who wish to attend the AGA in order to encourage greater participation by families and to facilitate networking with other members, thereby ensuring fairness among members.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-18 — Social media interactions

PROPOSED BY: Lisette Moreau

SECONDED BY: Marianne Chevalier

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Nation allow member interactions through the Nation's Facebook group.

DEFEATED BY A MAJORITY

RESOLUTION 24-19 — Recognition of Indian status for the 6th generation

PROPOSED BY: Éliane Nicolas

SECONDED BY: Maxime Bouchard

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the WWFN Council advocate for Indigenous rights with the federal government so that children whose parents were born after 1985 are recognized as having Indian status on the same basis as those whose parents were born before 1985.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY

13. Meeting adjourned

The general meeting of June 8, 2024, closed with prayers by Nicole Aubin and Ernest-Daniel Nicolas. The elections of members of the Grand Council will be held the following day, Sunday, June 9, 2024.

These minutes were prepared based on the transcribed recordings of the general meeting held on June 8, 2024, with the assistance of an artificial intelligence tool, and were reviewed and validated by a human to ensure their accuracy.