



Cowessess First Nation #73

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July 12, 2023

Governance Update Regarding Child & Family Safety and Wellness from Chief Erica Beaudin

Tansi/Aniin sikwa Relatives and Kin,

Your newest elected Chief and Council has been in office for almost 12 weeks now. It has been incredibly busy and a time of listening and learning about the many exciting opportunities and files our Nation is leading. This time has also been one where we have been entrusted with very heavy responsibilities and tasks we had and must undertake on behalf of our Nation.

One of the tasks is negotiating a 10-years Nation-to-Nation fiscal agreement regarding Bill-C92 and how the Nation will utilize the financial resources to ensure we have the best chance to support children and families as they move from vulnerable to strong family units. Listening to our membership and their experiences, using both research and our own First Nations child welfare experts, we realized that we had a long way to go to achieve this goal. We knew we had to govern in the best interests of our members and enact our Rights and Responsibilities as the governing table of Cowessess First Nation as elected by our membership.

Chief & Council, in coming to understand this file as well as others, have unanimously made the decision to begin moving governance into a new direction. This direction will see changes rooted in inherent and treaty rights. To start this new direction on Strengthening Nationhood, we established the *Taskforce on the Inherent Rights of the Child* which concentrates on a holistic Indigenous worldview in which all departments and entities work together to support the child and the family. We have consulted and attained experts in this field to ensure sound decision-making processes.

It has been decided through a Band Council Resolution on July 11th, 2023 that a restructuring of Chief Red Bear Children's Lodge (CRBCL) is in the best interest for the people of Cowessess First Nation. In order to align with the governance direction of your elected leadership, the CRBCL Board of Governors (BOG) has been dissolved. Chief & Council will act as an interim CRBCL Board of Governors as restructuring is undertaken. This is an interim measure, and we expect to return to an appointed Board of Governors by the end of August 2023. At this time we invite current BOG's and all other Cowessess members to apply when the posting is out.

To ensure continuity of the services that are benefiting our membership, we have appointed Pat Sparvier, past Chair of CRBCL as well as past Chief and Councillor, to act as a liaison between the interim BOG and the CEO of CRBCL. Further, current staff do not have to fear losing their jobs or being displaced under this action. Operations will continue alongside community engagement and operational and governance review.

This change will not affect current funding agreements in any way as our Nation's partners, both provincially and federally, have been advised and have continued to commit walking with Cowessess First Nation as we embark on negotiating the 10-year fiscal agreement.

We wish to thank the previous CRBCL board for their service and diligence in the positions they held. We also thank our membership for your continued patience and understanding as we commence developing and implementing a comprehensive and responsive child and family service delivery model for our community and Nation. We fully believe this pause and reset will be of full benefit to our children and families and will assist in the Strengthening of Our Nation.

Kininaskomitinawaw/Chi-miigwich.

Chief Erica Beaudin