

# Tribe must apply policy and procedure equally



**DJ HOFFMAN**  
**DIRECTOR, UNIT I**

Part of the oath of office each and every member of the board recites consists of the following: *"In discharging those duties, I will honor the seven teachings of our people: love, respect, honesty, humility, truth, wisdom and bravery."*

As I write and re-write my report, I keep those words in mind. I will continue to focus on the issues facing the tribe, some positive while others not. I do not believe these reports are meant as a pulpit for mudslinging or character assassination. Quite honestly those actions are contrary to the very oath taken and counterproductive. I am a member of the board of directors. While I may not agree with an action or inaction, or cast a vote in the same manner as the majority at times —

I still must assume responsibility as a member of the board.

## **Workshops and meetings**

Over the course of the last month, countless hours have been spent in workshops and meetings related to budgets and overall operations. While a great deal of time and resources were utilized to hold these meetings/workshops, they were not as productive as they could have been. The tribe needs to establish policies and procedures for these activities to ensure their productivity and to essentially stop wasting the valuable time of employees who have jobs to accomplish. Too often at these meetings/workshops, entire departments sit idle in hallways waiting, standing by for their opportunity to make their respective presentations.

It is my goal to work with members of the board, as well as the chair, to incorporate a more productive and efficient process.

## **Casinos**

By the time this unit report arrives in your homes, our tribal casinos will have commenced the transition from its current COO to a temporary structure. While I would prefer to state that this process was planned out efficiently and effectively, it was not. Prior to the execution of this decision, a transitional plan should have been implemented. There are consequences when actions are taken without planning.

Within the tribe and its enterprises we have become a reactionary environment. We, as a tribal government, have worked on the issues that face our tribe in the interim, reacting to the situations at hand. We must become progressive and take an active approach to ensure stability of membership services.

For our tribe to become progressive, we need to change the way we operate. Accountability, profitability and efficiency must be enforced and adhered to. In the workplace, if individuals are not performing, replace them. If businesses are not performing, restructure them.

## **Gaming Authority**

Chapter 94 of the Tribal Code establishes the Gaming Authority. Under Chapter 94.108 Management of Authority:

(2) *The Management Board shall consist of all of the members of the Board of Directors. No member of the Management Board shall continue to be a member thereof after he or she ceases to be a member of the board of directors.*

Over the years, while many may wish to deny it, this has been one of the largest impediments to the overall success of our casino operations. It is essential that we remove tribal politics from the B\ businesses of the tribe. The only thing that the tribal board should be concerned about related to our

businesses is the bottom line. We as a tribe need to separate the businesses from the politics to ensure profitability and accountability. We need to commence changing the structure of the Gaming Authority composition itself to insulate it from these politics.

## **Policy adherence**

Tribal, casino and enterprise employees have certain rights established in the personnel policies and procedures adopted by the tribal board of directors. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that these rights are not being equally applied to team members.

Too often, policy and procedure have been, quite honestly, not adhered to. The following are just some of the recent examples:

- Positions have been filled on an interim basis.
- There is no adopted interim policy.
- Positions have been filled while still posted, prior to their respective closing dates.
- Postings have been shortened from 30 day postings to 3-4 day postings.

In addition, recently I had the unfortunate opportunity of serving on an appeal board for [REDACTED]. What I can say is that [REDACTED] was not equitable treatment of a [REDACTED]. The entire process was [REDACTED]. I realize that these blacked out areas appear confus-

ing; however, this is being done intentional to make a point. The process itself was done differently, information was omitted and quite honestly, all appeals, regardless of the team member, should be handled in accordance with adopted policy, and consistent with the existing procedures for appeals.

These are just a couple of examples to illustrate the breach in adherence to tribal resolutions and adopted policy. I state these examples merely to illustrate the types of activities occurring. We have adopted rules, regulations and policies — and it doesn't matter who you are, you must adhere to them. Those who believe they are immune from policy or accountability do not serve the tribe, they serve themselves.

Ultimately, the board (collectively) has not taken a corrective approach to these actions and inactions. Ensuring accountability is essential to protecting the assets of the tribe, which is a duty of each and every member of the board.

To ensure that these types of issues cease, I will continue to insist on adherence to adopted tribal policies and procedures. In addition, I will be advocating for a Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance, which would include a Tribal Employment Rights Office to ensure for the fair treatment in hiring and retention of employees.

*See "Hoffman," Page 22*

# From "Hoffman," Page 20

## FERC

The following excerpt is taken directly from the Cloverland Electric website:

*"The economic and financial stability of the entire Upper Peninsula is in jeopardy as a result of the recent Federal Regulatory Commission (FERC) decision. This decision proposes that all electric bill paying accounts across the U.P. assume 100 percent of the operating cost and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) upgrades needed for the Presque Isle Power Plant in Marquette.*

*"Under the proposed formula, Cloverland Electric Cooperative would pay 22.5 percent or approximately \$21.8 million per year. This amounts to an average residential member using 1,000 kWh seeing an increase of \$30 per month on the bill. A typical commercial account using 15,000 kWh would see an increase of \$500 per month. Industrial customers using thousands of kWh per month could*

*be forced to close."*

This is a major issue facing our tribe as a whole. It impacts individual members in the Upper Peninsula, impacts tribal services such as Low Income Energy Heating Assistance Programs, and is a serious threat to our casinos and enterprises.

For more information please visit: [http://www.cloverland.com/homepageScroller/calltoaction\\_copy1.aspx](http://www.cloverland.com/homepageScroller/calltoaction_copy1.aspx)

Or watch the presentation at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlBmO3nGcso>

## **Economic development**

The key to our tribe's financial successes is diversification of our business enterprises. While I may appear to be a "broken record" on this topic, I will continue to stress its importance as a member of the board. We need to make this an area of focus and empower individuals with the expertise to move us forward in this regard. I will be focusing heavily on this area in my next report.