

Prescription drug abuse action plan under way



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UNIT II

I would like to start out by apologizing for not submitting a unit report in the last edition of the tribal paper. Our unit had a very busy month with powwows and events that ended the summer. In our unit we held the Rexton Youth Empowerment Powwow, all hosted and run by our children. Newberry held an amazing event that keeps growing stronger and larger every year and Hessel celebrated our 20th year of gathering. I would like to say ‘thank you’ to all who donated their time to make these gatherings happen for our community. A special “chi miigwech” to our own Mukwa Giizick drum — you

guys do us so proud and we are very grateful to have you carrying on our heartbeat.

We followed up from the first meeting to discuss and implement a tribal action plan for the well known problem we are facing in Indian country — prescription drug abuse. A Fox Valley representative has come in to assist in a detailed forum. Our plans for the immediate future (October) are to create an advisory board that will develop a strategic plan, evaluate the problems and statistics within each unit, hold community meetings, provide monthly mandated reports (to membership and leadership) and formulate communication on access to resources. The goals will be developed with input and involvement from the community and after attending the first meeting, we have tribal members and employees who have a direct knowledge of the problems and affects. After attending, it’s critical we take what has been worked on in the past (many said we dropped the ball before) and make a plan that will not only provide better resources for families but also reduce the painful experiences our families face.

I went in with many questions about our process and resources

available—one thing without question is our 24-hour immediate crisis service. If you or yours need immediate care, we have access to services immediately. We asked about the process and confirmed it’s in place. Don’t wait to call or inquire, after leaving, I saw that we have commitment and this is a priority for the tribe and for the people in distress. I will be part of this process and keep updating through my unit reports.

The board has been busy with many items requested to be discussed at the board level, by request of individual board members, tribal members and staff. Many pressing issues are facing our administration. We are without an Elder Division director or a Human Resource director and we are posting for both. Both of our executive directors, also our CFO, resigned so we have struggled in the administration set up. The chairman recommended, and a majority of the board agree, to appoint Angeline Boulley (Education director) to the position of interim executive director and has recommended to not post or fill the education director position again. Also by recommendation and appointment, our former controller, William Connelly

was selected to fill the position of the CFO. I’m not clear on the recommendation for his past position but will clarify at the next discussion and report. Both Ms. Boulley and Mr. Connelly have stepped up and I’m grateful to them. We have discussed the hiring of a CEO and the issue has many factors to consider. My position has not changed. I think it’s an opportunity to fit it in and reconstruct our set up, but at this point I’m in the minority of this direction. The chairman recommended adding positions of an assistant chief of staff and an executive chief of STAFF, along with a promotion to a current staff member and three membership liaison positions. A majority of the board did not pass this, but seeing that the chairman’s office is in desperate need of staffing, I made the motion for him to hire an executive assistant along with two membership liaisons for his office. This will be of assistance to all units and the office of the chairman. I will keep reporting on the status of our organization structure.

At the Munising meeting two weeks ago, a majority of the board passed a portion of our 2013 schedule B governmental budgets. The amount approved

slated a \$3.5 million spending deficit. I voted ‘no’ and requested if it passed we meet directly and request cost saving measures from the department managers to reduce this amount. I will not consider any cuts to the Elders budget or our youth Education budget. All priorities need to be identified and recommendations need to be selected based on what can be reduced that does not affect dollars and services to the membership. We will begin the sessions soon as we held a 30-day timeline on this.

With the five executive positions vacant, the forecasted deficit in budgeting, the needs in all our units increasing, the board has much work to do. I will be at the table for every discussion and solution to move us in a direction that is healthy and with the mind set to not destabilize our administration and workforce and keep our direct services in tact.

I look forward to hearing from you through calls, email and Facebook. As always, I can meet face to face if you would like:

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