

Chi McGwitch, Negee-awek! *

Join Me on A Positive New Path Forward



With my mom Gotnee (RIP) at my 2004 Swearing in.

Aaron A. Payment
Tribal Chairperson
"Representing All Members Everywhere"

Wow! I cannot tell you how humbled and pleased I am to be able to address you once again as your Tribal Chairperson. I have to admit that I am a bit surprised at the outpouring of support demonstrated in the vote outcome! I cannot thank you enough for your confidence in affording me another opportunity to represent you. Chi McGwitch, Negee. With nearly a 1,000 vote margin (12%) it sure seems like a mandate for moving forward in a positive direction. I will do my best and work to remain upbeat, positive and forward thinking.

Let me also begin by congratulating all of the candidates who were recently elected; thank you to those who served; but also to all the candidates who took the time to get involved and run for office to try to improve our Tribe and ensure a better future.

During the Tribal Board and Chairperson swearing in ceremony, I urged the Tribal Board to join me in moving in a positive direction in our governance. Though some in the Tribal Board unit reports have expressed that we have had complete cooperation for the last four years, the truth is that we have been under a very divided government with two distinct camps.

The time has come to abandon this divisive approach and truly come together. I pledge to do this and pled with the Board to do the same including appointing officers who

would be complimentary to my leadership. Again, it seems with the support and votes I just received, that we have a mandate for a new approach and cooperation. I reminded the Board that those on our Board who opposed me during the election, would not be my choice for appointment of officers. In fact, with one exception, those incumbents who opposed me, lost their seats.

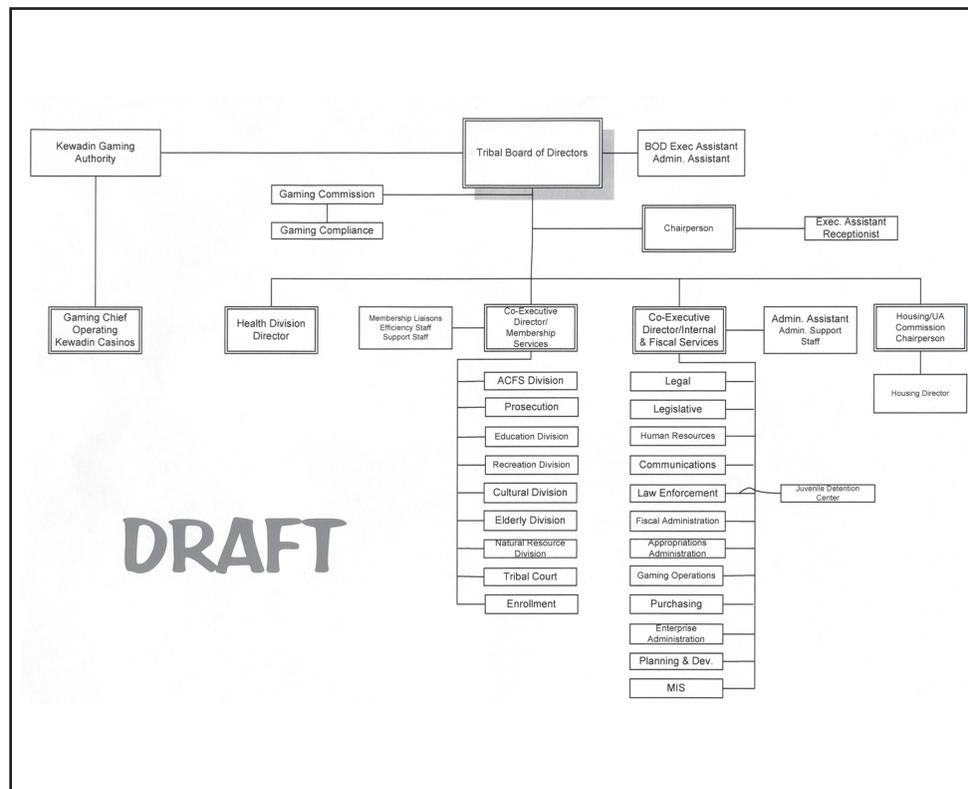
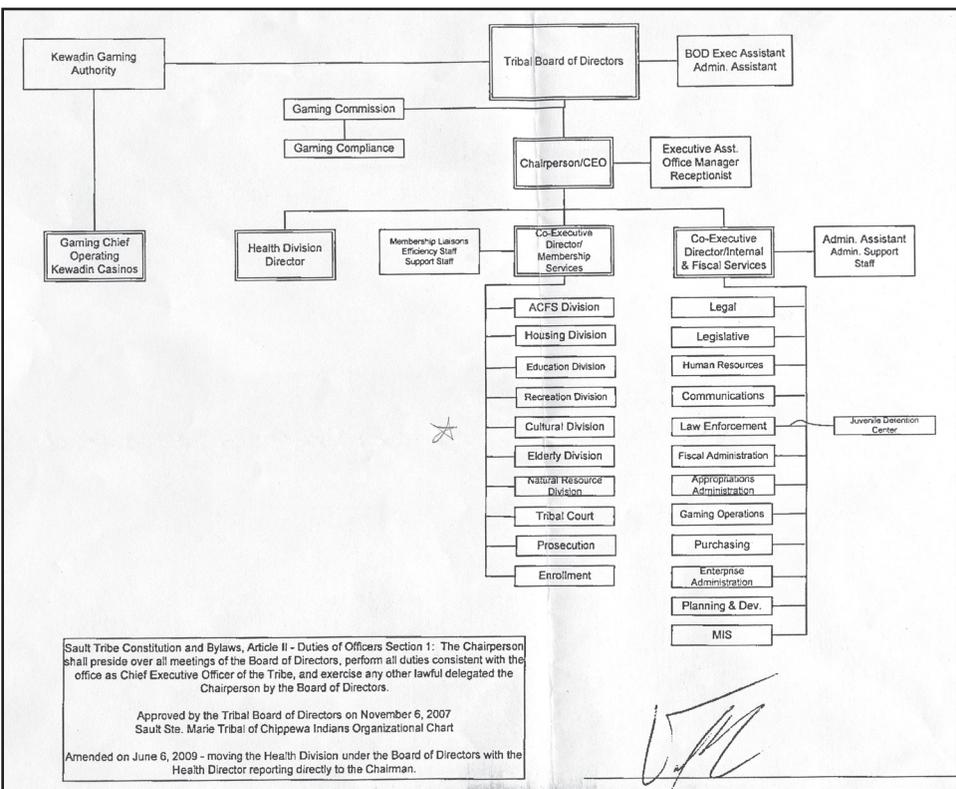
An election is scheduled two years from now. I urge those Board members who remain to work with me to find common ground so we can truly move forward. I offer an olive branch and pledge to find the good in all Board members. This new found expectation for cooperation will undoubtedly be a challenge for some. This is exemplified in the attempt by a few Board members to sneak a resolution onto the July 3rd Tribal Board Meeting agenda to dismantle the authority of the Chairper-

son by taking this position entirely out of the organizational chart [see previous chart and draft chart below]. Fortunately, a majority of the Board of Directors refused this subversive and seditious effort and rejected this idea.

By way of an explanation, Diagram 1 below, shows the current Sault Tribe organizational chart promulgated by the Tribal Board first in November 2007, as amended in June 2009. Diagram 2 represents what a few Board Members try to sneak onto the agenda before the new Board took office. The current organizational structure is very different from the one I first introduced and operated under in that it concentrates powers into two lines of authority and creates a level of dependency on two individuals in operations. Concentrating power in this way is an organization tactic to create an authoritarian and rigid organizational struc-

ture that stifles cooperation, establishes bottle necks for approval and facilitates mini-fiefdoms of power. It is a command structure. This may be sufficient for private business corporations, but hardly appropriate for a Tribe.

The other thing I have observed is that some functions have been taken from select individuals in the organizational chart to deal with conflicts of interest or with personality conflicts. This was done without re-factoring said position and adjusting pay downward. I plan to have a much different approach. I understand a few folks threatened to resign if I were elected and even emptied their offices. While I am a cooperative person and will reach out and extend an olive branch to work though things, if someone has such consternation with just the idea of working with me, I wonder if such a working relationship is even possible.



Moving forward, I have scheduled an orientation session and retreat to assist in acclimating the new Tribal Board and myself to our awesome responsibility. The goals of the orientation/retreat include:

- To facilitate Tribal Board and Chair communication;
- Find common ground on issues;
- Begin discussion on development of a new Tribal Master Strategic plan;

- Orient the Board to the organization of the Tribe;
- Discuss how to more effectively communicate with and represent Tribal citizens;
- Conduct of effective and orderly Tribal meetings;
- Make committee assignments for all Board members and Chair;
- Consider developing a job description for the Board and Chair;
- Discuss appropriate compliance with the Tribal Constitutional Amendment separating

- the Chair and CEO functions;
- Promulgate delegation of authority to the Chairperson position;
- Strategize our current and future economic development projects;
- Dialogue on operational savings in order to restore programs and services that have diminished;
- Establish a positive working relationship among the Board and Chairperson;
- Cooperatively draft an organizational chart that

insulates the operations of the Tribe from politics and stabilizes the services and governmental operations of the Tribe.

- Identify additional areas for future training and discussions.

I am optimistic about our future. We have struggled for years though some tough situations, economic hard times and significant mis-steps, and conflict. As I mature in age (I will be 47 this summer) I recognize the finite nature of our physical life. As I contemplate what

kind of legacy I would like to leave our future generations, I think about evolving myself personally to focus on what is important and to lead us on our positive Tribal path forward. I invite others to join me in doing the same.

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