



TL'AZT'EN NATION

PO Box 670, Fort St. James, B.C. V0J 1P0
Phone 250-648-3212 • Fax 250-648-3250



February 5, 2024

Executive Director Report

Hadih Tl'azt'enne, I am writing to update the community on many items and activities that are taking place regarding the administration of the Nation. Many items may have been verbally updated on, but I feel having a written report to review would provide more concrete information to review at your leisure.

Executive Director position update

First, I would like to give a formal update on the Executive Director Position. The Previous Executive Director's contract was not renewed, and his last day was on December 15, 2023. I, Darren Haskell, agreed to fill the role on an interim basis. I am doing my best to keep the administration flowing smoothly and address concerns as best as I can. I have working on many files while in the position and will continue to do so until a new Executive Director is found. Please rest assured that I am the only one in this position and not being directed by any outside influences.

The Executive Director position has been posted since December and a number of candidates have been reviewed. We are planning to conduct interviews in the very near future. We will make an announcement once the new E.D is hired.

Petition

I am only speaking to these items from an administration standpoint as many of the items in the petition are directly related to administrative functions.

First Nations Financial Transparency Act:

- First Nations Financial Transparency Act requires that First Nations to whom the Act applies, make their audited consolidated financial statements and the Schedule of Remuneration and Expenses available to their members, as well as post and publish the documents on a website.

Under The First Nations Transparency Act(FNTA), Tl'azt'en Nation is required to submit all audited statements to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and in turn, ISC is required to post the financials on the website. Our Financial Controller has met with ISC and asked the direct question on why the financials have not been updated. ISC has notified us they are backlogged on the posting of the public information on website and are currently finalizing the fiscal year of



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2020-21. Tl'azt'en has kept up to date with ISC requirements for submitting audited statements.

Regarding the minutes of the previous Band Members meetings, they are currently being finalized and will be distributed to members once they have been completed. This is an area that we are working hard on being consistent and improving communication with members.

We will be “revamping” the format for the next Band Members meeting and will provide a more structured platform for discussions. This will include hiring a facilitator that can document and clearly identify action items and motions from the meeting. We will go through previous meeting action items and provide updates and will also have a communications expert provide the Zoom support. Managers will be required to attend these sessions, as they have the direct knowledge for some of the questions being raised by members, and it isn't fair to the band member or the councillor if a question is being addressed without all of the information at hand. Members deserve to be heard and put on the record in a professional format, and we wish to make this the standard for meetings moving forward.

[Tanizul Timber](#)

Tanizul Timber and Tl'azt'en Nation Natural Resources have signed a service agreement that clearly states how the two departments will be working together and how Tanizul employees will work together. The service agreement will allow for the Natural Resources Department and Tanizul Timber work towards developing a Forest Stewardship Strategy and Implementation plan.

Tanizul is also providing support in implementing the 'Alghoh 'Utsut'en Agreement (AUA), which formalizes the way Tl'azt'en and Licensee's work with each other and is an important piece of the Nation's ability to have control over the timber extraction in the traditional territory. The AUA will provide the ability to ensure Tl'azt'en Nation asserts control over decision making, relative to forest licensee operations, amount of volume extracted from the territory and receive costs associated with this work with licensees.

In my view this is an excellent example of how the relationship between Tanizul and Tl'azt'en Nation is improving for the better. We hope to make significant strides in monitoring and managing the forest within Tl'azt'en Nation Territory.

[Election Code](#)

The Election Code Request for Proposals has been sent out and we are awaiting proposals to better decide who can run the referendum. The code itself has been finalized and is being disbursed to the members in hard copy and via e-mail. A referendum date of March 8, 2024,



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has been identified for the referendum itself. This work has been a long time coming and will completely revitalize our election process and make things clear. Keep in mind, that once the election code is ratified via-referendum, a full election for Chief and councillors will need to be called, so future leaders can abide by the guidelines set out in the new election code.

[Economic Development Committee](#)

The Economic Development Committee Terms of Reference have been finalized and a applications (in the form of a resume) have been collected and are currently being reviewed. As this is an important committee for the nations, self dependence the committee members will need to have some background in economics and business development. An update is being prepared for Chief and Council, where next steps will be outlined with the Economic Development officer.

[Councillors concerns in Administration.](#)

Councillors have portfolios assigned to them (e.g Housing, Admin, Health etc..) so a councillor can receive regular updates from that department manager. This is to improve communication between program managers and elected officials. The portfolio system is an information sharing system only, it is not intended to give a specific councillor authority over any department. If there are any council concerns with a department, they are to be directed to the Executive Director, who then, will address those concerns.

Minutes of the previous council meetings, along with AGA/Band Members Meeting Minutes are being finalized and will be available for viewing. We will advise membership when this information is available, and please be advised that this information has been made a top priority and needs to get out to the members. Capacity issues have delayed the completion of this task, and we are looking at solutions to address this more specifically as these are the records that will be referred to when looking back at conversations, motions and BCR's.

[Community Funds distribution \(Christmas bonus, inflation, dividends etc...\)](#)

We are aware of the shortcomings of, specifically, the off-reserve Christmas bonus distribution. Many people were unaware if they had been approved or not, many were waiting longer periods of time for their payment. This fund was approved by council from monies that do not have any specific guidelines attached to them and was distributed to help off-reserve members get through the holidays. As for hampers and inflation payments, these are specific to on-reserve as they are usually paid for by a program designated for on-reserve members. Unfortunately, this is the dynamic that we are working with as a nation and try to be as fair as possible when making decisions.



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Some improvements in distribution of funds that we will implement moving forward are as follows:

- Set up a tracking system, to track all applications and payments issued with a database of current addresses.
- Set up a specific e-mail to send applications to and provide a response when the application is received and status updates on payments.
- Identify Specific target dates for Cheque issuances, with a hard deadline for applications.
- A report will be completed at the end of each cycle of cheque issuance in order to identify gaps or problems with the distribution of funds.

A total of 527 Christmas bonus cheques were distributed as many applications were lost in emails (spam folder etc..), This was no easy task and I want to acknowledge our accounting/admin staff that put the time to get these payments issued. We are taking this as a lesson learned and will use this experience to improve distribution and information as we move forward.

[Finance Department Transition](#)

We want to update on the transition of the finance department. Currently, a service agreement is in place between MNP financial services and Tl'azt'en Nation for external Finance Controller services. This was put in place so our finance department can continue to move forward, with a lack of a finance director. We have now increased the staff of our finance department and are working with MNP on a transition plan to minimize MNP involvement. This is an important step in providing our own financial services, while growing capacity within our own staff. At this time, it is not prudent to dismiss MNP as they have been able to keep our accounting system updated and operating in the absence of a full time Finance Director. With the support of the staff in finance, the finance department will be moving ahead in growing a strong team that can keep up to date with financials and present information required to members.

The accounting software that is being used by the nation has not been updated in years and has many flaws in the way it affects our day-to-day operations. We are currently in the process of updating the accounting system to be more real-time and up to date with information as needed. We have already completed a server update and are moving ahead with further system improvements.



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Financial Planning

We are planning financial workshops on a couple of different items, one is personal financial planning, for saving money and basics of banking. Another, workshop being organized, is for the financial planning/updates on the different funds associated with the Pathway Forward/G2G funds. We will be requesting a representative from CSFN's to come and present information on all the different pots of funds and how was utilize these funds as a community. There will be ample opportunity to get involved in these workshops and will provide notices in as many places as we can but will start with the usual Website/Facebook post.

HR Update

Human Resources is always an undertaking itself. Over the years, Human Resources (HR) Management has fallen to the managers, taking valuable time from running their programs. We have long identified the need to hire a specific HR manager to tackle this issue. Working in a small community, it is very hard for any manager, to keep a neutral unbiased approach because of the relationship(s) that we have built with one another. Many of us have worked together for years, many of us are related, many of us feel the strain of dealing with HR matters, so with a dedicated HR Manager, it will take the strain off of managers to handle items, such as complaints, disciplinary action, recruitment/retention, etc... This is important as we move ahead with a new HR policy and holding staff accountable for actions that violate the HR policy. We recognize the need to be more accountable to the members and the HR manager position will help us achieve that goal.

Management Meetings

We have reinstated regularly planned management meetings to immediately follow Chief and Council meetings. We can address any concerns that arise from Chief and Council Meeting right away, while the item is fresh in our memory. We have already seen some benefit from these sessions, as it has increased regular communication between departments and will increase collaboration between departments as well. At our next management meeting we will be getting a head start on budgets/workplans and have those ready for the new fiscal year on April 1, 2024.

Communication has been the issue that has been brought up many times. Band members just don't know what is going on with administration and the programs that are happening. By providing this report I hope to shed some light on specific areas within administration that are of concern to members. I am committed to providing this report on a quarterly basis at a minimum and will ensure to provide this direction to future Executive Director. I will continue to serve the community within my capacity until a full time Executive Director has been appointed.



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Tube Cho Mussi,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Darren Haskell".

Darren Haskell

Interim Executive Director