Council of Elders and Youth

Record of Discussion # 23

APM-REP-00676-0216 **April 2019**

Rebekah Wilson

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NWMO

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Revision Summary		
Revision Number	**Date**	**Description of Changes/Improvements**
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Report Template Notes (remove in report):

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- *Inclusion of a revision summary necessary if a revision is being made, along with the R000 notation with Report number*

Record of Discussion
NWMO Council of Elders and Youth
Casino Rama, Orillia ON
April 16-18, 2019

Attendees:
NWMO Council of Elders and Youth
Chair: Donna Augustine, Madison Levi, Norman Stagg
Members: Angus Gardiner, Bob Goulais, Diane Longboat, Grace Manitowabi, Dorothy Parenteau, Billie Schibler, Roland St. Germain, Debbie Plain, Theresa Hall, Verna Porter-Brunelle, Paul Robitaille
Advisors: Joanne Barnaby, Fred Kelly, Melanie Hadley
NWMO: Ben Belfadhel, Charlene Easton, Jo Ann Facella, Joe Gaboury, Joanne Jacyk, Melissa Mayhew, Arthur Moore, Jessica Perritt, Greg Plain, Laurie Swami, James Wagar, Bob Watts
Guests: Ron Jamieson, Alan Majer, Paul Jones, Paul Nadjiwon, Dean Jacobs, Charlene Seward

Tuesday April 16, 2019

Indigenous Relations Report

Bob Watts and Jessica Perritt reported back to the Council on the work being done on initiatives such as the Reconciliation Policy, Cultural Awareness Training for staff and the introduction of training being developed in partnership with Reconciliation Canada. Bob and Jessica also formally introduced Rebekah Wilson in her new role as Indigenous Relations Associate. Bob provided an update on his ongoing role with NWMO in addition to his work with Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Queen's University.
The Council met in camera for the remainder of the day.

Wednesday April 17, 2019

Opening Ceremony and Welcoming Remarks

Elder Fred Kelly conducted a ceremony to begin the meeting which included a Pipe ceremony and a female Elder spoke to the water. A food offering of blueberries was passed around following the smudge. A guest sang a drum song for the group and thanked Elder Kelly for his opening and thanked the Council for allowing him to join the meeting as a guest.

Chair Donna Augustine and co-chair Norman Stagg proceeded with the day's meeting. The Chair called on NWMO President & CEO Laurie Swami to make remarks and she started by recognizing the traditional lands of the Indigenous peoples who had occupied this area in which the meeting was taking place. Laurie thanked the Elders who had opened the meeting and welcomed the guests joining the meeting and the two new members of the Council. She expressed her pride of and appreciation for Bob Watts and his continued role at NWMO while also undertaking important work with AFN and Queen's University. She spoke of a previous NWMO all staff meeting that focused on two key themes: resilience and partnership.

She noted that as the organization gets closer to site selection, the internal staff team and communities need to be resilient and build together as they co-create a strong foundation for partnership. She spoke of the importance of the real change occurring in terms of how other parts of the sector and industry behave when forming partnerships with communities and how NWMO strives to lead the way by doing this in a real genuine way. She believes that all staff must understand the partnership model (taking

communities needs and wants into consideration as part of the process and decision making moving forward) in order to be a good partner. She spoke of key activities underway specifically focused in the north on the drilling program. She shared that consultations and borehole drilling continued to take place in the various communities. As part of the process, she has been very active in communities and plans to take part in a Women's Sweat Lodge ceremony in Wabigoon Lake in May.

Laurie also shared that she and Bob Watts met with the standing committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs on NWMO's work on building capacity working with communities through consultation and engagement. This work includes engagement with youth, offering funding capacity in communities to build understanding and make informed decisions. NWMO also feels strongly about investing in well-being in communities and is committed to making the process community driven.

Jessica Perritt shared about the Reconciliation Canada training program that will provide staff with a follow up to the already robust cultural awareness training. NWMO has partnered with Reconciliation Canada in order to understand themselves better and move forward on the reconciliation program within the organization, as well as for field staff and external contractors.

Jessica also shared the introduction of a number of lunch and learn opportunities for staff to build on the cultural awareness training to include teachings and information about Metis communities. It is hoped that this will eventually be included in the cultural awareness training sessions facilitated by Lyndon Linklater. The next Cultural Awareness training is scheduled to be held on May 31st.

Bob Watts acknowledged and thanked Paul Nadjiwon for his drum song. He expressed thanks to the Council for their guidance in helping the NWMO to fulfill their corporate commitments to reconciliation and to support getting the reconciliation policy in place. He would like to develop an assessment lens for reconciliation to determine what is needed from a reconciliation policy perspective to amend existing organizational policies. He expressed that it is difficult to translate and capture reconciliation through words including things such as ceremony and each person's unique journey. He thanked the new members for their contributions. Bob also recognized Jessica for her hard work and dedication to allow him to continue to do his work with AFN and noted her dedication to ensuring the Council of Elders and Youth and other Indigenous Relations activities are taken care of in the best way possible. Bob presented the guesy with a gift for his song; an Ojibwe drum song meaning 'The sun spirit is coming out to watch over us'.

Indigenous Engagement Team Update

The Indigenous Engagement team shared an overview of the work they have been doing in the field with First Nation and Metis communities involved in the site selection process. Sean Ross recently joined the Engagement Team and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to sit with the Council.

The Engagement Team is hopeful to begin working on a Land Access Strategy in May. A formal decision hasn't been made but they will continue to update communities. This will be the first of many steps before a decision is made. Despite trying to acquire land, this doesn't mean that will be the selected territory.

One of the Elder members asked about what was being done to education Municipalities about Indigenous history. NWMO responded that work was being done through regional meetings to conduct cultural awareness training for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, noting this was a request from the communities as they recognize there is a gap and are interested in gaining this knowledge.

Blockchain Technology and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge

Alan Majer, Founder and CEO of Good Robot, made a presentation on Blockchain Technology and interweaving Indigenous Traditional Knowledge. He acknowledged there is a deep mistrust in science by Indigenous communities. He suggested that Traditional Knowledge Funding provided by NWMO to communities to record interviews with Elders would be a good example of something that can be stored by a Blockchain computer. It is a way of storing information in a critical system in a way that it can be kept and understood forever.

Review of Environmental Responsibility Statement

Melissa Mayhew and Charlene Easton presented the draft Environmental Responsibility Statement to the Council as was previously reviewed at the last meeting but there was not enough time to begin a discussion. The presentation included an overview of the Principles and Discussion Questions to lead a dialogue on the draft statement.

Melissa noted that the Council of Elders and Youth were the first to see the statement outside of the working group and will be the last to see it before finalization. Comments on the draft statement included:

- One of the Elder members would like to see the testing of the opening of several rivers to see if contaminants have seeped in through ground water
- The statement should be framed in a more positive sense
- The statement should use more explicit language including broadening the definition of biodiversity to include plants, land, water, air, animals, medicines, etc
- Indigenous Knowledge should appear first before Western Science
- It should define original identities of Indigenous Nations
- The statement should frame the ownership of land differently based on a deeper understanding of the Indigenous relationship with the land
- Sometimes Traditional Knowledge and Western Science cannot be interweaved; one is taught and able to be learned (Western Science). The other is inherent and you were born into it (Traditional Knowledge).
- The statement should include language around the emotional connection to the land, the collective consciousness

Joanne Jacyk shared about the environmental work she has been doing in communities as well as about her first experience participating in a Sweat Lodge Ceremony in Wabigoon Lake. She expressed that a lot of sharing goes on in the field and that it is important for the communities to build environmental capacity.

An Elder member asked about the sites where studies are happening that are outside and adjacent to the reserve and the roads that are built to access the site. Joanne assured the Council that the communities (First Nation and Municipality) agreed with the location where the borehole will be drilled. They walked the land for cultural verification first. NWMO takes everyone's thoughts into consideration prior to building new roads or infrastructure. This is also the reason why NWMO enters into Learn More agreements.

Another Elder member asked about how NWMO sets a baseline in order to see patterns and trends using Traditional Knowledge. NWMO is not sure exactly how to do this but is looking for suggestions/examples of how this was done well in other projects.

Reconciliation Policy Review

Bob Watts brought the Council's attention to the Reconciliation Policy Draft included in their binders and also circulated for review in advance of the meeting. The Council provided feedback from their in-camera session the previous day and continued to discuss and provide feedback to the organization on their ongoing reconciliation activities and initiatives.

Recommendations from Council of Elders & Youth – April 16, 2019

- Truth (Background) needs to fully state, and acknowledge the truth/historical narrative. It can't be sanitized.
- The Path to Reconciliation is a spectrum that should span the APM activities;
  Example:
    - Level 1: Understanding (Outcome: Truth), education outcomes. Timeframe: Year 1-2 (example);
    - Level 2: Movement & Decolonization, action outcomes; Timeframe: Year 3-4 (example);
    - Level 3: Full implementation/systems transformation, reconciliation outcomes; Timesframe: Year 5+
- Policy items could be organized into categories:
  Example:

    - Education and Training;
    - Relationships;
    - Indigenous Knowledge implementation;
    - Language and Culture supports;
    - Legal, etc.

- These need to be action, not reiterating commitments from other policy areas.
- Municipalities need to be fully committed to Reconciliation and be prepared to move forward in partnership with Indigenous peoples;
- Rights need to be acknowledged over and above all others; NWMO needs to defend and support this;

- Implementation work plans need to involve and bind all NWMO
- Needs to be reported and committed to Indigenous communities.
- When you are involved in Reconciliation, you need to be reconciling with a partner. This doesn't reflect that partnership, Treaty, treaty lands, etc.

Insights/Reflections on Reconciliation Policy:

- Is there a better way to capture reconciliation through work of the Council with NWMO? Ceremony, journey, joy, sadness. How do you translate all of that energy into words? What we are doing is reflective of what we want to accomplish in terms of reconciliation
- N
  eed for equity over equality, understanding what privilege is
- C
  oncerns about depth of reconciliation training, NWMO is committed to training all staff
- E
  lder members are concerned the reconciliation training not be a one off
- S
  eries of trainings that dig deep into some of the issues that we all have together
- B
  ias, privilege and racism as part of our training. Self-reflect and self-examine. Change, modify and transform attitudes towards one another. Not just surface topics like history, etc. Dig deeper to attitudes and behaviour that affect our decision making
- N
  WMO recognizes journey of reconciliation includes a path of healing and that NWMO is respectful of this journey as it establishes relationships and partnerships with the Indigenous peoples it works with
- 3 sessions by Reconciliation Canada, first one will be June 3rd, custom made for NWMO for staff. If council members are interested, it may be possible for them to participate and provide feedback
- Reconciliation is a spectrum – 3 phases
- Phase 1: Understanding – outcome, truth, education outcomes
- Phase 2: Movement, decolonization, action outcomes
- Phase 3: Full implementation, systems transformation, reconciliation outcomes
- Truth – we are the guardians of the truth as First People of this land
- Truth and Reconciliation, it is not truth, it is a report
- Reporting on Behavioural and Systems Change – outcomemapping.ca – progress markers, phased approach. Is it going to serve your purposes? Decision making change over time. Staff attitudes. Helps to manage that in a complex system
- Evaluation of the ongoing development of Evaluation within the organization and outside of it
- Implementation piece will really tell our story
- Short description of what has been accomplished already (history since 2013 specifically)
- How will NWMO be accountable?
- (History) Use tree diagram as appendix and bullet points

- How to establish baselines including history in order to measure effects of reconciliation/Indigenous awareness work
- Other models of assessment/tracking change and behaviour
- Conceptual view of how everything has spiritual value
- There 40 TRCs throughout the world, they have done significant work that we should look at and reference wise practices to refer to in our work. Spend some time looking at what other countries can do to inspire us
- Take time to do the best work that we can
- Reconciliation will happen when new comers to Canada love the land as much as Indigenous peoples do
- Youth member: what would you point to as an example of somebody who is doing things right? Feels NWMO is doing it well. So much happening within NWMO, you have the foundation of knowledge of relationships between Indigenous nations and Canada, coming to a place of respect. Perception that Metis rights aren't reflected because of treaty relationship. Acknowledge that Metis people are equally recognized in Section 35
- Reference to: Tom Isaac Report in 2015, road map to articulate the road map to inclusion of Metis specific reconciliation
- Work together and have respect for each other.
- Council of Elders and youth give its own perspective of what it's like working with this organization
- NWMO takes Traditional Knowledge very seriously – moreso than many First Nations organizations
- We don't know if that deep sense of respect will continue throughout the years. It may be a risk for the Elders but it is important to be role models especially for private sector and governments to support their work with Indigenous communities. Help Canadians pay attention and understand what the benchmarks should be. What the quality work should be when it comes to reconciliation and establishing partnerships with our people
- James Wagar: reconciliation statement has been empowering from a personal perspective. Need to take forward step to bring reconciliation to the forefront in Toronto and globally. It is special to be a part of.
- Next steps: Notes from discussion. Develop another version of the Reconciliation Policy and bring to the council for continued discussion and work. Goal is to have the policy published this year. Feel free to send feedback to NWMO staff.
- Policy doesn't speak to the relationship between Indigenous people and Canada, treaty relationships. Obligations to seven teachings. How treaties fit into this needs to be articulated.

Thursday April 18, 2019

Chair Donna Augustine and Co-Chair Norman Stagg introduced the day. The day opened with an induction ceremony for Bob Goulais and Paul Robitaille. Elder Longboat read the Declaration of the

Keepers of the Land, Elder Kelly invited youth and Elders members of the council into the circle to lift the new members up and sang a song to welcome them. The new members were welcomed into the Council by members and staff.

Ethical and Social Framework

Jo-Ann Facella made a presentation on NWMO's Ethical and Social Framework.

Council members made the following comments:

- NWMO to include "is it good for the children?" There needs to be a respect of future generations of human beings and other beings. Every decision that we make on a daily basis should consider this. This could be possibly included under ethical questions.
- Include respect for spirituality and ceremonies under ethical principles
- Encourage NWMO to look at voice of opposition in a different way. Issues management. Listen to opposition voices. Are the right people included in decision making? In this ethical approach, new ways to engage people who are opposed to this? They feel heard, are contributing in a constructive way.
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Closing Remarks

Bob Watts spoke of the breakout sessions the day before and that they had provided a wealth of information that would help the Indigenous Relations team as they move forward on the issue of reconciliation. He indicated that much of what came out of those sessions help to shape NWMO's Reconciliation Strategy moving forward and the Council's deliberations in the coming year. Jessica Perritt advised that the staff facilitators enjoyed the sessions a lot as it improved their facilitation skills but also gave them an opportunity to work with the Council members.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting will be July 10-12, 2019 at the Kingbridge Conference Centre
- Angela will be in touch to book travel
- The following meeting in October will also be held at the Kingbridge Conference Centre. This meeting will be a joint meeting with the Board of Directors. It is at this meeting that NWMO hopes to finalize the Reconciliation Policy along with the Board.

Closing Ceremony

Elder Fred Kelly conducted the closing Ceremony and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the members of the Council of Elders and Youth. Council Members were gifted with the Canadian Geographic Indigenous Peoples' Atlas while Elder Kelly sang and the group joined in dance.

Date notes taken: April 16-18, 2019

This note was prepared by staff and has not been approved and/or reviewed for accuracy by other meeting participants.