



November 25, 2020

To: All Community Members

Re: December 7, 2020 Scheduled Elections for Chief & Council Cancellation & Reschedule

We are writing you today to formally notify you that, due to public health concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are cancelling our regularly scheduled election for this coming December 7, 2020 and to reschedule it to March 21, 2021.

This may not come as a surprise to all of you as many have reached out and requested we consider this. We would like to thank all of our Members, Provincial and Federal Health Authority Representatives, ISC Representatives and our legal advisors for helping to guide us through this decision. Your combined guidance and support in facilitating this difficult but rightful decision to cancel the election has ensured the safety of our membership during these very trying times.

Like all regions of the world, COVID- 19 has affected us in ways we have never experienced before. Daily challenges are presenting themselves and we need to work together to rapidly respond to these challenges while continuing to keep the best interests of our community and its members as our top priority.

After receiving numerous pleas from Community Members, Government Officials and Health Professionals we felt it necessary to take action to try to best ensure the continued safety of our people. We cannot facilitate an election in a manner consistent with the current Provincially Mandated protocols, and we cannot justifiably take any chance of further exposure or potential spread through our community. Activities such as public nominations and acceptance, electoral campaigning and in-person voting practices would not only disregard public safety but would also be illegal under current Provincial Health Restrictions. It is for this reason that the Government of Manitoba implemented the *First Nations Election Cancellation and Postponement Regulations (Prevention of Disease)* in April 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in Canada to

empower First Nations to cancel or postpone their elections to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in First Nations communities and ensure continuance of governance during this outbreak.

In making this decision, CCN retained two law firms to provide independent analysis of our current circumstances. Both firms concluded that proceeding with the election created unsafe conditions and was contrary to current health mandates. Both firms recommend cancelling the election pursuant to the new Federal Regulation.

Upon seeking advice from our ISC representatives and our legal advisors, we have arrived at the following solution for cancelling our current election and rescheduling a new election:

- All Electoral Candidates' nominations have been cancelled.
- All mail-in ballots will be void and confidentially destroyed by the Electoral Officer, Ms. Stephanie Connors, selected for our December 7, 2020 Election
- Ms. Connors is hereby, without penalty, removed of her duty as Electoral Officer to full-fill her contract to ensure the completion of our initially scheduled election of December 7, 2020.
- The process for selecting and contracting a new Electoral Officer for the newly scheduled election shall be completed in due course;
- The nomination process will begin again in due course, as outlined below;

New Election Dates:

- **Nomination Date: February 8, 2021**
- **Election Date: March 22, 2021**

Although these dates are set, we are aware that the circumstances that necessitated the initial cancellation may still prevail by the new election date on March 22, 2021 and conducting an election at that time may still pose a serious risk of the spread of COVID-19 within our community. Accordingly, the Chief and Councillors will re-evaluate on February 5, 2021 as to whether an election may safely take place on March 22, 2021.

In the event that, upon re-evaluation by Chief and Council on February 5, 2021, the Chief and Council confirm that the election scheduled for March 22, 2021 *may safely take place without a serious risk of the spread of COVID-19 within the community*, notice shall be given on February 5, 2021 that the March 22, 2021 election shall take place and nominations shall take place in-person on February 8, 2021 in keeping with the custom of CCN.

In the event that, upon re-evaluation by Chief and Council on February 5, 2021, the Chief and Council determine that the election scheduled for March 22, 2021 *cannot safely take place without a serious risk of the spread of COVID-19 within the community* (most likely until a vaccine is available and can be administered within the community), a subsequent extension shall be granted and a subsequent fixed date in mid-summer shall be scheduled for the election at that time (**tentatively July 18, 2021 with a Nomination Date of June 6, 2021**);

We have selected this second date in mid-summer to ensure that, should COVID-19 still pose a significant threat to our community at that time, we can still accommodate an election by utilizing outdoor facilities to host public nominations & acceptances, provide protocols for public campaigning that do not compromise members' safety and host outdoor electoral stations that allow for full public access and scrutiny.

We will keep everyone informed as we approach the above dates as to how we will navigate through this new process. In the meantime, please stay safe and ensure all Public Health Orders are strictly adhered to at all times for the safety of our community.

Sincerely,



Chief Clarence Easter



Councillor Bill Hengemuehl



Councillor Russell Chartier



Councillor Elvis George



Councillor Derek Packo



Councillor Alpheus Brass

- c.c. Ms. Stephanie Connors - Electoral Officer Select for December 7, 2020 CCN Election
- Mr. Stephen Traynor – Regional Director General, ISC
- Ms. Sheila Templeman - Director, Governance & Community Development, ISC
- Ms. Pamela Smith – Regional Director, Health Canada, FNIHB
- Dr. Brent Roussin – Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, Manitoba Health
- Ms. Francis Podder - Nurse in Charge, CCN Nursing Station, MB Health
- Mr. John Reimer-Epp – CCN Corporate Legal Council, Deeley Fabbri Sellen
- Mr. Jamie Kagan – CCN Litigation Council, Thompson Dorfman Sweatman
- Grand Chief Arlan Dumas – AMC
- Grand Chief Garrison Settee - MKO