



May 29, 2024

Chief Wilbert Marshall, Chair

A meeting of the AFNWA Board will be held on Wednesday May 29, 2024, at 9:30 AM via Zoom.

AGENDA

In Camera Reports

1C Approval of Minutes of the In-Camera Meeting held on March 27, 2024.

2C Business Arising from Minutes

3C Vendor Review

Motion: That the AFNWA Board approve the recommendation as outlined in the confidential report dated May 24, 2024.

4C Tender and Construction Phase Services for Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation Water System Upgrades Project

Motion: That the AFNWA Board approve the recommendation as outlined in the confidential report dated May 24, 2024

5C CEO Goals and Objectives

Motion: That the AFNWA Board approve the recommendation as outlined in the confidential report dated May 24, 2024

Information Reports

1-IC MTSA Update

2-IC Executive Staff Recruitment

Regular Reports

1. a) Ratification of In-Camera Motions
b) Approval of the Order of Business and Approval of Additions and Deletions

2. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on March 27, 2024.

3. Business Arising from Minutes of the Meeting.

4. Q4 Financials

Motion: That the AFNWA Board AFNWA Board approve the fourth quarter financial results in their substantive form attached



5. **Balanced Scorecard**

Motion: That the AFNWA Board approve the Corporate Balance Score Card in its substantive form attached.

6. **Dispute Resolution Framework**

Motion: That the AFNWA Board approve the Dispute Resolution Framework in its substantive form attached.

Information Reports

1-I Elders Advisory Lodge Update

Original signed by _____

James MacKinnon
Board Secretary



**Atlantic First Nations Water Authority
MINUTES
3 April 2024**

PRESENT:

Chief Wilbert Marshall
Chief Terry Paul
Chief Leroy Denny
Chief Arren Sock
Chief Ross Perley
Todd Hoskin
Tuma Young
Regional Chief Joanna Bernard
Regional Chief Andrea Paul

Chief Darlene Bernard
Dr. Shelley Denny

STAFF:

Susheel Arora, CEO
James MacKinnon, Director of Engagement and
Government Relations / Board Secretary
Chantal LeBlanc, Director of Corporate Services/ CFO
John Lam, Director of Engineering
Adam Gould, Manager of Communications and Outreach

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CALL TO ORDER

James MacKinnon, upon direction from the Chair, called the regular meeting to order.

1. RATIFICATION OF IN-CAMERA MOTIONS

MOVED BY Chief Terry Paul, SECONDED by Chief Leroy Denny that the AFNWA Board ratify the In-Camera motion 7C.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – 31 January 2024

MOVED BY Todd Hoskins, SECONDED BY Tuma Young that the AFNWA Board approve the Regular Minutes from the March 27, 2024, Board Meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

N/A

4. PROCUREMENT POLICY AMENDMENT

The existing limits, as described in the chart below, were developed with the objective of including the Corporate Services Department in a very wide range of procurement activities. This objective was intentional so that all staff would become familiar with the policy, procedures, and proper documentation for all procurement activities.

CATEGORY	INVITATIONAL COMPETITION		OPEN COMPETITION
	Min. 3 quotes invited by department	Min. 3 quotes invited by Corporate Services	Advertised throughout all available networks
Goods	\$2,500-\$10,000	\$10,000-\$25,000	\$25,000+
Services	\$2,500-\$10,000	\$10,000-\$50,000	\$50,000+
Construction	\$2,500-\$10,000	\$10,000-\$50,000	\$50,000+
Procurement Planning Tool Required	No	Yes	Yes

In the past 2 years, AFNWA Staff have been very engaged in procurement activities, a full time Procurement Officer has been hired, and an integrated software solution (Procurify) has been implemented to assist with the enforcement and oversight of the Procurement Policy. AFNWA Management recommends a change in the limits, as seen below, to reduce the involvement of Corporate Services in Departmental Purchases given that all AFNWA staff are more comfortable with the Procurement Procedures, and the integrated software is capable of enforcing internal controls as they pertain to purchasing.

For clarification, for items under \$2,500, the 3 quotes are obtained from the relevant department, and the process is signed off by the Director. In some cases, there are less than 3 quotes obtained, however, the Directors are responsible for noting where obtaining 3 quotes is either not possible, or not reasonable (IE: small tool purchases).

AFNWA Staff is also recommending the removal of the requirement for Procurement Planning Tool, as this process is now embedded in the new integrated software solution, Procurify.

CATEGORY	INVITATIONAL COMPETITION		OPEN COMPETITION
	Min. 3 quotes invited by department	Min. 3 quotes invited by Corporate Services	Advertised throughout all available networks
Goods	\$2,500-\$25,000		\$25,000+
Services	\$2,500-\$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$50,000+
Construction	\$2,500-\$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$50,000+

MOVED BY Chief Aaron Sock, SECONDED BY Chief Wilbert Marshall that the AFNWA Board Approve the Procurement Policy Amendment.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

5 FINANCIAL POLICY AMENDMENT

AFNWA existing travel allowances have not been considered for increase since October 2021 for meal per diems, and for kilometric reimbursement since July 2022. In recognition of the dramatic inflation rates experienced over the past 2 years, AFNWA staff polled a group of First Nations Organizations and Band Council Offices to identify whether our reimbursement rates were in line with our Peers.

A chart below compares the existing AFNWA rates with the average of our peer organizations, and the amount as escalated in accordance with CPI which is in line with our budget. Note: The budget was prepared in 2021 dollars, CPI for 2021-2023 was

3.4%, 6.8% and 3.9% respectively, which is what our current O&M budgets are being escalated to.

Item	Existing Rate	CPI Escalation	Peer Average	AFNWA Staff Recommendation
Breakfast	\$17.23	\$19.77	\$22.64	\$20
Lunch	\$17.04	\$19.55	\$23.29	\$20
Supper	\$42.92	\$49.25	\$54.66	\$50
Incidental	\$17.30	\$19.85	\$17.09	\$17.30
Kilometric allowance	\$0.50/km <i>(Per budget)</i>	\$0.574/km	\$0.57/km	\$0.57/km
Hotel Room Maximum	\$200	\$229.48	N/A	\$230

MOVED BY Chief Leroy Denny, SECONDED by Todd Hoskins that the AFNWA Board approve the proposed amendments to the Financial Policy, effective April 1, 2024, in their substantive form attached.

At this time, Chief Leroy Denny asked who the lead for testing water for the new long term care facility is.

Jon Lam replies FNIHB would be the contact.

Elder Methilda provides closing prayer

Meeting adjourned at 10:43am.



Item #1-I
AFNWA Board
May 29, 2024

TO: Chief Wilbert Marshall, Chair and Members of the AFNWA Board

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by
Methilda Knockwood-Snache, Chair, Elders Advisory Lodge

DATE: **May 24, 2024**

SUBJECT: **Elders Advisory Lodge Update**

ORIGIN

Approval of the Governance Manual at Board meeting of November 6, 2020. Board meeting held on March 31, 2021. Appointment of members to the Elders Advisory Lodge at Board meeting of March 31, 2021.

BACKGROUND

The concept of an Elders Advisory Committee was born through engagement with Chiefs, Elders and First Nations community representatives during the completion of the Corporate Structure Report by Halifax Water/Accelerator Inc. in 2017. Throughout these engagements, it was evident that significant value is attached to environmental stewardship, the spiritual aspects of water and Two-Eyed Seeing.

Elders play a crucial role in First Nation communities, and it is critical the AFNWA incorporate First Nations traditional knowledge and culture. To ensure the AFNWA is and remains aligned with First Nations values, culture and knowledge, Section 3.10 of the AFNWA Corporate Governance Manual sets out the creation of an ex officio advisory committee through which community Elders will provide advice to the Board.

DISCUSSION

At the EAL meeting on May 14, 2024, the elders reviewed and discussed their work plan (attached). Key priorities for the 2024-2025 fiscal year are as follows:

- **Complete Dispute Resolution Framework.**
 - The Final Draft of the Framework has been completed and endorsed for board approval. Additional detail is provided in a separate report.
- **AFNWA Policy Review**
 - Provide on-going review and support of AFNWA's policy development process to ensure all AFNWA policies are culturally relevant. The begin, the EAL has started to review AFNWA's fit for duty policy.
 - At the May 14 meeting, the EAL discussed that elements of the Code of Conduct policy aligned with the Fit for Duty policy as well.
- **Youth Engagement Strategy Input**
 - As part of the AFNWA's partnership with Dalhousie under the NSERC Alliance Grant, a formal Strategy for Youth Engagement will be required in partnership with the Ulnooweg Education Centre. The EAL will guide the development of this strategy.
 - In years 2 and 4 of the NSERC Grant a Youth Water Summit will be held to bring together First Nations youth to highlight the importance of caring for the water. Students who worked in-community to support this project will share their stories and training and workshops will be provided for any youth interested in learning about water. Elder's support will be required to plan this event.
 - The Elders began their work on the youth engagement strategy by speaking of the importance of sharing their stories. Each elder discussed the pros/cons of recording stories for the purposes of sharing.
- **NSERC Alliance Grant**
 - The EAL will meet regularly to review research progress, establish priorities and goals, and make decisions concerning future directions of the research program. A mandate of this work will be to ensure Etuaptmunk and Indigenous Knowledge guides the work and how it is completed.
 - Guide the development of a Introduction to Wabanaki Worldview course that will be delivered for all trainees to build a foundational knowledge of the spiritual importance of water to First Nations and to understand ceremony as a way of establishing a relationship with water.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All activities associated with the Elders Advisory Lodge are contained in AFNWA 10-Year operating budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft EAL Workplan

Report Prepared By

Original Signed By

James MacKinnon, MPA, Director of Engagement and
Government Relations, (902)-401-3092

Elders Advisory Lodge Workplan – 2024/2025

Elders play a crucial role in First Nation communities, as First Nation communities have both formal and informal leadership. To ensure the AFNWA is and remains aligned with First Nations values, culture and knowledge, the Elders will provide advice to the Board through an ex officio advisory committee, named the Elders Advisory Lodge. Over the remainder of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Elders Advisory Lodge will work to complete the following tasks:

Project	Details	Timeline	Expected Outcomes
Complete Dispute Resolution Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Final Review of culturally relevant Dispute Resolution Process Endorse the final framework for AFNWA Board Approval 	May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process approved by the AFNWA Board and ready for use by AFNWA Staff
Policy Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide on-going review and support of AFNWA's policy development process to ensure all AFNWA policies are culturally relevant 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure culturally relevant policies are in place for AFNWA staff
Youth Engagement Strategy Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the AFNWA's partnership with Dalhousie under the NSERC Alliance Grant, a formal Strategy for Youth Engagement will be required in partnership with the Ulnooweg Education Centre. The EAL will guide the development of this strategy. The EAL will meet with youth group representatives in the course of the development of the strategy. In years 2 and 4 of the NSERC Grant a Youth Water Summit will be held to bring together First Nations youth to highlight the importance of caring for the water. Students who worked in-community to support this project will share their stories and training and workshops will be provided for any youth interested in learning about water. Elder's support will be required to plan this event. 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EAL will hold meeting with youth, possibly the AFNWA youth council, in the development of the strategy. A comprehensive youth engagement strategy will be developed The EAL will provide advice and direction for the bi-annual youth summit.
NSERC Alliance Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EAL will meet regularly to review research progress, establish priorities and goals, and make decisions concerning future directions of the research program. A mandate of this work will be to ensure Etuaptmumk and Indigenous Knowledge guides the work and how it is completed. Guide the development of a Introduction to Wabanaki Worldview course that will be delivered for all trainees to build a foundational knowledge of the spiritual importance of water to First Nations and to understand ceremony as a way of establishing a relationship with water. 	On-Going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet regularly with Dr. Megan Fuller and research team at Dalhousie University to provide advice and guidance on Dalhousie Initiatives, inclusive of research and course development.



**Item #4
AFNWA Board
May 29, 2024**

TO: Chief Wilbert Marshall, Chair and Members of the AFNWA Board of Directors

SUBMITTED BY: **Original Signed by**

Chantal LeBlanc, Director of Corporate Services & CFO

APPROVED: **Original Signed by**

Susheel Arora, CEO

DATE: **May 24, 2024**

SUBJECT: **Fourth Quarter Financial Results**

ORIGIN

Governance Manual approved November 6, 2020. Approval of the 2023-2024 AFNWA Budget on January 20, 2023.

BACKGROUND

The Governance Manual specifies that the Board must receive quarterly financial results, as recommended by the Audit and Finance Committee, for acceptance.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the AFNWA Board approve the fourth quarter financial results, in their substantive form attached.

DISCUSSION

AFNWA fourth quarter financial results were 5.7% underbudget. We note that this is subject to adjustments in completing fiscal year end procedures.

Table 1: Fourth Quarter Expense Summary

AFNWA Fourth Quarter Expenses

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

		Budget	\$ Over Budget
Personel Costs	4,432,609	4,596,627	-164,018
Professional Development	333,375	451,680	-118,305
Travel	205,075	394,682	-189,608
Contract Services	3,094,074	3,800,429	-706,354
Services & Office Supplies	1,288,642	862,080	426,562
Professional Services	812,608	586,214	226,394
Public Relations	106,915	125,753	-18,838
Board Compensation	67,250	248,470	-181,220
Fleet Costs	296,184	273,503	22,682
Computer Equipment	152,699	84,063	68,636
Chemicals	127,018	135,683	-8,665
Other Expenses	255,303.91	294,122.52	-38,819
	11,171,753	11,853,306	-681,553

Budget items were discussed in detail with the Audit and Finance Committee on May 23, 2024. The large contributions to overbudget amounts are primarily driven by non-recurring items however, a mild winter led to a decrease in overall Operations and Maintenance expenditures.

Capital Projects Summary

A summary report was provided to the Audit & Finance Committee which detailed capital project investments for Fiscal 2023-2024. A total of \$5.6 million has been invested in capital projects.

Cash Position & Investment Income

As at March 31, 2024, AFNWA recorded total cash and investments of \$20.2M with \$3.6M in accounts receivable (received April 2024). All investments have matured. Total investment income for F23-24 was \$930k on GICs plus \$675k on Deposit Accounts. At this time, AFNWA does not hold any GICs.

Procurement Activities

In F24, AFNWA had a total cash outflow of approximately \$12.2 million (not included payroll expenses). Of this \$12 million, 3.5% was procured from Indigenous owned organizations. Furthermore, approximately 60% of cash was spent in Nova Scotia, 8% in New Brunswick, and 6% in Prince Edward Island.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All Budget and Financial Implications are discussed above.

ALTERNATIVES

None to be discussed.

ATTACHMENTS

None

Report Prepared By Original Signed By
Chantal LeBlanc, Manager of Corporate Services & CFO,
(902) 877-3813

Financial Reviewed By: Original Signed By
Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., CEO, (782) 414-6628



ITEM #5
AFNWA Board
May 29, 2024

TO: Chief Wilbert Marshall, Chair, and Members of the
AFNWA Board

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by
Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc., P.Eng, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 24th, 2024

SUBJECT: **BALANCED SCORECARD**

ORIGIN

Compensation Policy approved by Board at meeting of July 29, 2020. Ten Year Business Plan approved by AFNWA Board at meeting of February 10, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the Balanced Scorecard to measure organizational performance in the substantive form attached.

BACKGROUND

The utilization of a balanced scorecard [BSC] to measure organizational performance is considered a best practice. It was introduced to organizations in the early 90's in recognition that the sustainability of organizations required balance across a wide spectrum of social, economic, and environmental outcomes. As part of the compensation policy approved by the Board on July 29, 2023 it was recognized that incentives tied to the outcomes of a BS would ensure that employees are focused on strategic goals and the success of AFNWA. Operational budgets contained in the Ten-Year Business Plan approved on July 10, 2023 included a financial incentive of up to \$1,000 for each employee tied to BSC outcomes. The utilization of a BSC is founded on two main principles; measure what is important to the mission and incent employees to achieve excellence.

DISCUSSION

A water and wastewater utility is ideally suited to embrace the themes of a balanced scorecard [BSC] as its success is closely aligned with social, economic and environmental outcomes. In an effort to educate and inform employees of its merit, several presentations and workshops were held to ensure understanding and solicit ideas to develop Critical Success Factors [CSFs] and Key Performance Indicators [KPIs] that are the foundation of a BSC. An employee engagement regard the BCS was held in February 2024 by Carl Yates at an Operator Workshop. During the workshop, critical success factors that support the mission of AFNWA were developed and are presented in the attachment

It is recognized that it will take 1 to 2 years to capture data for the KPIs before targets and final indicators can be established. As evident from the attached table, data collection commenced from 2023/2024. For some financial KPIs, data will be available after May 2024; some operational indicators shall require extended period to time to establish a baseline. Examples where we can get information in one year would be compliance with drinking water and wastewater regulations, and lost time accidents.

Once we have established data for a majority of KPIs, staff will develop an incentive program for the Board's endorsement. It is the objective that targets will be developed in the 2024/25 fiscal year for most of KPIs. Target identification will happen in 2025/26 fiscal year with an employee incentive program tied to outcomes.

With the framework established, staff are requesting approval to develop KPIs for the Balanced Scorecard during the 2024/25 fiscal year such that targets can be developed for 2025/26.

FINANCIAL and BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Balanced Scorecard and future incentive program are supported by capital and operational budgets in the Ten-Year Business Plan

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

ATTACHEMENTS

CBS Scorecard Table

Report Prepared by: _____
original signed by
Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc.,P.Eng,CEO, 782-414-6628

Financial Reviewed by: _____
original signed by
Chantal Leblanc, CPA, CMA, MBA, CFO, 902-877-3813



Item #6
AFNWA Board
May 29, 2024

TO: Chief Wilbert Marshall, Chair and Members of the AFNWA Board

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by
Methilda Knockwood-Snache, Chair-Elders Advisory Lodge

APPROVED: Original Signed by
Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., Chief Executive Officer

DATE: May 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Draft Dispute Resolution Framework

ORIGIN

Information report presented at the board meeting of November 29, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the AFNWA Board approve the Draft Dispute Resolution Framework in the substantive form attached.

BACKGROUND

AFNWA By-Laws allow the creation of a culturally relevant, dispute resolution framework. With that in mind, The Elders Advisory Lodge has guided AFNWA management on its development.

DISCUSSION

The AFNWA Elders Advisory Lodge has developed a dispute resolution framework that can be used to settle disputes that may arise concerning the AFNWA and its staff. The process was designed to have a facilitator present to guide the discussion, however a modified version of the process can be used for less serious, day-to-day issues or differences that would not include a facilitator.

The Facilitator for AFNWA talking circles will be an elder who is a respected and knowledgeable individual within the Wabanaki territory who possesses a deep understanding of Mi'kmaq or Wolastoqiyik traditions, culture, and values. As well,

the facilitator must have undergone specific training or have accumulated extensive experience in facilitating talking circles for resolving conflicts, making decisions, and fostering healing.

In the event that a facilitator cannot be found that meets the qualifications described above, a combination of a trained facilitator and a member of the Elders Advisory Lodge will be used.

The Circles are conducted with a set of guiding values. They are:

- **Gepmiteetmg (Confidentiality):** Participants are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others by not disclosing any details or insights from the circle discussions to individuals outside the group without explicit consent. This confidentiality fosters an environment of trust, safety, and openness, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns without fear of judgment or repercussion.
- **Nestaweltetasing (Consensus):** Reaching the collective agreement or shared understanding reached among participants regarding the resolution of a conflict or dispute.
- **Tetpolting (Equality):** All participants within the circle are equal.
- **Apsitating (Forgiveness and Healing):** Facilitator/Elder will create space for participants to express forgiveness, apologize, and seek reconciliation. As well, they will ensure acts of healing and restoration are agreed upon. Facilitator/Elder will emphasize the importance of letting go of past grievances and focusing on building positive relationships moving forward. Moreover, Participants acknowledge and accept the harm or wrongdoing that occurred, but choose to release negative emotions. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean condoning or forgetting the offense, but rather it entails a willingness to move forward and release the emotional burden associated with the conflict.
- **Wetapegsolting:** Acknowledging that we may be unaware of the life experiences of those who enter the circle. We must be empathic and patient to understand where individuals are coming from.

The circles will be completed in 4 rounds, as described below:

1. **Oplamating:** Identifying what the dispute is about and expressing feelings associated with the dispute.

2. Ptgamating: Trying to calm the situation to a level where it can be productively discussed.
3. Eilamating: Trying to bring all involved to a common understanding of the issue
4. Apisitating: Everyone forgives each other, a consensus is reached, and acts of healing and restoration are agreed upon.

After each round, the facilitator will:

1. Engage in a reflective dialogue where others can respond to the comments in the round. This will be done to help find common ground.
2. Encourage dialogue and brainstorming to generate potential solutions that address the needs and concerns of all parties involved.

Once the circles are complete, ANFWA commits to provide ongoing support and follow-up to ensure that agreements are honored, and relationships continue to be nurtured. If necessary, AFNWA will also offer resources for conflict resolution skills-building.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Draft AFNWA Dispute Resolution Framework

Report Prepared By

Original Signed By

James MacKinnon, MPA, Director of Engagement and Government Relations, (902)-401-3092

Financial Reviewed By:

Original Signed By

Susheel Arora, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., CEO, (782) 414-6628



DRAFT: AFNWA Dispute Resolution Framework

Preamble regarding formality:

The circles described below are a formal process to conflict resolution. A modified version of the process below can be used for less serious, day-to-day issues or differences that would not include a facilitator.

1. Circle Formation:

- Gather all involved parties in a circle, symbolizing equality and interconnectedness. Ensure that each participant has a chance to sit in the circle, regardless of their position or status.

2. Opening Ceremony:

- Begin with an opening prayer and smudge to acknowledge why we are gathered.

3. Guiding Values:

- **Gepmíteetmg (Confidentiality):** Participants are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others by not disclosing any details or insights from the circle discussions to individuals outside the group without explicit consent. This confidentiality fosters an environment of trust, safety, and openness, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns without fear of judgment or repercussion.
- **Nestaweltetasing (Consensus):** Reaching the collective agreement or shared understanding reached among participants regarding the resolution of a conflict or dispute.
- **Tetpolting (Equality):** All participants within the circle are equal.
- **Apisitating (Forgiveness and Healing):** Facilitator/Elder will create space for participants to express forgiveness, apologize, and seek reconciliation. As well, they will ensure acts of healing and restoration are agreed upon. Facilitator/Elder will emphasize the importance of letting go of past grievances and focusing on building positive relationships moving forward. Moreover, participants acknowledge and accept the harm or wrongdoing that occurred, but choose to release negative emotions. Forgiveness does not necessarily mean condoning or forgetting the offense, but rather it entails a willingness to move forward and release the emotional burden associated with the conflict.
- **Wetapegsoltimg:** Acknowledging that we may be unaware of the life experiences of those who enter the circle. We must be empathic and patient to understand where individuals are coming from.

4. Talking Circles:

- Facilitated rounds of sharing where each participant has the opportunity to speak uninterrupted while holding a talking piece. Only the person holding the talking piece has the right to speak, promoting respectful communication and active listening.

- Encourage participants to share their perspectives, feelings, and needs related to the dispute, fostering empathy and understanding.
- When involving AFNWA Staff, AFNWA Human Resources Manager and relevant decision makers will be present for all discussions.
- The circles will be completed in 4 rounds, as described below:
 1. Oplamating: Identifying what the dispute is about and expressing feelings associated with the dispute.
 2. Ptgamating: Trying to calm the situation to a level where it can be productively discussed.
 3. Eilamating: Trying to bring all involved to a common understanding of the issue
 4. Apsitating: Everyone forgives each other, a consensus is reached, and acts of healing and restoration are agreed upon.
- After each round, the facilitator will:
 1. Engage in a reflective dialogue where others can respond to the comments in the round. This will be done to help find common ground.
 2. Encourage dialogue and brainstorming to generate potential solutions that address the needs and concerns of all parties involved.

5. Closing Ceremony:

- Conclude with a ceremonial closing that affirming everyone agrees with the outcomes and there is a restoration of balance.

6. Follow-Up and Support:

- AFNWA also commits to provide ongoing support and follow-up to ensure that agreements are honored, and relationships continue to be nurtured.
- AFNWA will also offer resources for conflict resolution skills-building if needed.

7. Appeal Process

- The appeal process will be invoked if resolution is not reached or if the talking circle involves individuals who are not present during the circle.
- Depending on the issue discussed, appeals can also be made to the relevant court. (First Nations, Provincial, or Federal)

Role of the facilitator:

The Facilitator for AFNWA talking circles will be an elder who is a respected and knowledgeable individual within the Wabanaki territory who possesses a deep understanding of Mi'kmaq or Wolastoqiyik traditions, culture, and values. As well, the facilitator must have undergone specific training or have accumulated extensive experience in facilitating talking circles for resolving conflicts, making decisions, and fostering healing.

In the event that a facilitator cannot be found that meets the qualifications described above, a combination of a trained facilitator and a member of the Elders Advisory Lodge will be used.

Confidentiality

AFNWA Staff, as a condition of their employment, are subject to the AFNWA Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy. In addition, each employee must sign an Oath of Confidentiality. Breach of this policy can lead to discipline up to and including dismissal. It is acknowledged, that there may be times that individuals who participate in this process are not employed by the AFNWA and are therefore not subject to its policies. Those individuals will be asked to sign the Oath of Confidentiality ahead of entering the talking circle.