



March 26, 2020

A PLACE OF VISIONS AND DREAMS

COMMUNITY NOTICE
BY-LAW RESPECTING COVID-19 VIRUS (Attached)

Dear Band Members,

Please be advised that the **BY-LAW RESPECTING COVID-19 VIRUS** was passed by WRFN Council on the Tuesday March 24, 2020. Leadership is working hard to respond effectively to a very moving - emergent situation. We hope you can understand that, like other governments dealing with this, we have had to act quickly without community consultation at times.

You should receive a copy of the by-law sent along with this letter. However, if you don't receive a copy, you can get a copy on the WRFN website at: <http://www.whitefishriver.ca/membership-portal>.

This by-law gives us stronger tools to fight this virus, which we may soon need. The by-law:

- Declares a state of emergency on our reserve because of COVID-19.
- Puts our *Emergency Response Plan* into effect. This is a document we have had prepared for various types of emergencies. We have updated it for COVID-19. The Emergency Response Plan has things like contact lists and phone numbers for our administrators and essential workers.
- Attaches an Annex to the Emergency Response Plan called the *Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic Plan 2020*. This is a document we had started years ago about pandemics generally, but we have now updated it with specifically as it relates to COVID-19.
- Implements general measures to allow us to respond effectively, such as:
 - Allowing the Chief or designates to take such actions and make such orders as considered necessary to protect health, safety, welfare and property. The measures will be consistent with the Emergency Response Plan and other laws.
 - Giving the Band Manager the role of Incident Commander, to make operational decisions as required. The Chief can replace someone else in this role if the Band Manager cannot carry out these duties for whatever reason.

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- Specifying the order of who on Council would take on the role of Acting Chief if ever I cannot do so for a period of time.
- Allows “Officers” to enforce the Emergency Response Plan. This could include asking questions of people who are trying to enter or leave the Reserve, or other reasonable measures to ensure compliance with the measures in force at a given time. In this by-law, “officers” include police officers and constables, as well as anyone else the Chief or Band Manager appoints to help enforce this by-law. We may assign people to this role.

Please note, the *Emergency Response Plan* and *Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic Plan 2020* are also available on the Member’s Portal for your review.

The By-Law allows Council to update the Emergency Response Plan as needed (this includes updating the *Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic Plan 2020*). It also allows the Band Manager, as Incident Commander, to make urgent updates that go to Council for approval after the fact.

I know that the measures we may need to take for the safety of all will not be easy on our membership. It will bring challenges to individuals, families and households. However, I am hopeful that our community will exercise caution and compassion as we face this situation together. Our ancestors overcame many challenges. Our generation must act now with strength and unity to ensure that our elders, loved ones and neighbours are safe and well.

In closing, I would like to repeat the message that social distancing does not mean social isolation. I encourage everyone to maintain social connections by calling, texting, emailing or Facetiming. That quick call to ask, “How are you doing?” or “How can I help?” will go a long way in helping us all to face the challenges ahead. We will require everyone’s kindness, compassion, cooperation and understanding in the days, weeks and months to come.

Miigwech,


Chief Franklin Paibomsai



C.c. WRFN Council

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