Chief and Council Meeting
October 14, 2026 | Council Chambers, Band Office

Call to order: 12:25 p.m.
Conclusion: approximately 3:30 p.m., followed by closing prayer.

Attendance
Chief: Sakom Allan Polchies Jr.
Councillors: Barb Paul, Mandy Meuse, Shelley Polchies, Erica Paul, Percy Sacobie (late), Frank Paul, Candice Paul, Paige Matheson, Dennis Paul, Leonard Brooks, Nicole Carty and Mike Bear.

Administration: Allison Brooks, Chief Operating Officer; Shasta M. Paul-Hitchcock, Director of Operations; Sarah Rose, Council Manager; Mary Paul, Executive Assistant to Chief and Council.

Attendance at the four recorded votes: 11 councilors present; one absent. Percy Sacobie arrived later in the meeting at 2 p.m.

Call to order
The meeting was called to order at 12:25 p.m.

Moment of reflection and welcome
Sakom Allan Polchies Jr. offered an opening prayer and welcomed returning and newly elected Council members to the 2026–2030 term. He spoke about collective responsibility, respectful deliberation, community priorities, and the opportunities presented by the four-year term. A further moment of silence was observed following notice of a community bereavement.

Approval of agenda

Motion 2026-10-14-001

Moved by: Dennis Paul Seconded by: Leonard Brooks
THAT the agenda be accepted as presented.
Vote: 11 in favour; 0 opposed; 1 absent.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY among Council present and voting.

Conflict of interest declarations
No conflicts of interest were declared when this item was called.

Business arising from the agenda
Chief's updates and structural changes
The Chief outlined organizational growth, economic development, and service delivery pressures. He announced Allison Brooks as Chief Operating Officer and introduced a 100-day organizational planning process to support Council's priorities, strengthen accountability and improve coordination across departments.

The Chief advised that the inauguration celebration would be rescheduled out of respect for community bereavement. A replacement date was not settled during the recorded discussion.

In-camera session
Council entered an in-camera session to discuss the new position. The recording was paused and staff were asked to leave. No decisions were reported. The recorded Council meeting subsequently resumed.

Council information and orientation
Council was advised that audits, digital motion records from 2021 onward and administrative updates were available to them. Organizational structure information and digital copies of supporting materials would be made available. Further orientation and review of the governance manual were discussed.

Financial documents and appointments
Banking signature cards and three sets of Band Council Resolutions (BCR) were circulated for signature. Council were advised to use consistent signatures, and that identification would be required to add new signatories. Each BCR had four copies for signature.

Motion 2026-10-14-002
Moved by: Mike Bear Seconded by: Dennis Paul
THAT the Council members be approved for the 2026–2030 term.
Vote: 11 in favour; 0 opposed; 1 absent.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY among Council present and voting.

Motion 2026-10-14-003
Moved by: Mike Bear Seconded by: Erica Paul
THAT the Board of Directors for Retail Sales be approved for the 2026–2030 term.
Vote: 11 in favour; 0 opposed; 1 absent.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY among Council present and voting.

During consideration of Motion 2026-10-14-003, a member requested a future review of the Board's composition. It was explained that approval supported the current appointments and banking arrangements and that changes to the structure could be considered subsequently. No amendment to the motion was recorded.

Motion 2026-10-14-004
Moved by: Erica Paul Seconded by: Shelley Polchies
THAT the Board of Directors for SMEDC be approved for the 2026–2030 term.
Vote: 11 in favour; 0 opposed; 1 absent.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY among Council present and voting.

SMEDC was identified in discussion as St. Mary's Economic Development Corporation.

Election results summary and communications
Council received a comparison of recent elections and discussed turnout, mail-in voting, ballot-request requirements, member contact information and outreach to members living off reserve. Questions were raised about distinguishing ballots received through the postal system from mail-in ballots delivered by hand. Further review of the underlying records with Sarah Rose was suggested.

Council identified the need for updated membership contact information, appropriate consent to share information, improved communication about election requirements and education for first-time voters. The COO proposed developing an election communication strategy in advance of the next election.

Communication with members
Council emphasized timely, accessible communication about decisions and services. A 48-hour target for community updates was discussed, including publication of approved minutes and the option of circulating a summary of motions and meeting highlights before the formal minutes were approved. An initial Council review period for such summaries was proposed.

Discussion also addressed communications staffing, newsletter timeliness and readability, website updates and communication with members on and off reserve. A short recess was called before the COO presentation, after which the meeting resumed.

100 day plan and needs assessment

Allison Brooks led a discussion of priorities raised by Council members and presented the proposed 100-day planning process. Administration would develop options based on Council priorities, work with department leaders and staff, identify resource requirements, and return to Council with recommendations.

Priorities identified for further planning

- Communication and access to services: clear program information, eligibility criteria, referrals, interdepartmental coordination and meaningful engagement with members on and off reserve.
- Community safety and wellness: mental health and addictions, youth support, a community wellness assessment, policing and community watch, security training, vehicle and ATV safety, and review of speed bumps.
- Housing and assets: maintenance of homes, buildings and equipment; the operating costs of additional housing; long-term sustainability; and opportunities for members to finance their own homes.
- Education and social supports: case management, support for people with disabilities, transitions into education and employment, early learning, recreation, and support for students studying outside Canada.
- Seniors and community connection: senior and special-care accommodation, respite, aging at home, youth and elder activities, and opportunities for community gatherings.
- Governance and organizational capacity: policies and procedures, Council portfolios, conflicts involving employee–Council roles, confidentiality, leadership support, recruitment, employee concerns and follow-through on decisions.
- Financial planning and community development: accessible financial reporting, own-source revenue and service costs, funding applications and reporting capacity, retail leadership, community name change, a community cemetery and membership concerns.

100 day plan and needs assessment continued

Proposed work phases

Days 1–30: Meet with Chief and Council, the Director of Operations, department leaders and staff; establish priorities and reporting expectations; and assess services, resources, funding and organizational needs.

Days 31–60: Develop the senior leadership team, align departmental work, identify shared outcomes and bring priorities back to Council for consideration.

Days 61–90: Test proposed approaches with departments, identify implementation barriers and refine the plan.

By day 100: Present a plan for the following year based on Council's priorities. Progress reports were proposed at approximately days 30, 60 and 90.

Council emphasized using prior strategic planning work, setting achievable priorities, supporting limited departmental capacity, and ensuring implementation. Urgent youth and mental health needs were identified for attention without waiting for completion of the 100-day process. No separate motion approving the 100-day plan was recorded.

Core funding and motion voting
Disclosure of individual votes on Council motions
Council discussed whether future motion records should identify how individual Council voted, rather than publish only aggregate totals. Council raised transparency, privacy, confidential business and safety considerations.
The matter was left for further consideration at the next meeting.

Agenda preparation and supporting information
Council emphasized the importance of receiving complete supporting information in advance, including relevant perspectives on matters requiring a decision. An existing requirement to distribute materials one week before meetings was referenced. Discussion addressed triaging requests, referring operational matters to staff, assisting members with briefing notes and improving the accessibility of submission forms.
Administration undertook to circulate role descriptions and a written outline of the proposed agenda process for Council's comments. Council also raised timely implementation of Council motions and the importance of confidentiality.

Council remuneration and payment arrangements
Council discussed annual core remuneration totaling $42,200, consisting of $25,000 from the Band, a combined $12,000 from SMEDC and Retail Sales, a $4,000 Christmas bonus, ($2,000 from each corporation), and a $1,200 annual phone allocation ($100 per month). Discussion addressed payment arrangements for the four-year term, including annual advances, instalments, cash-flow impacts, attendance and portfolio responsibilities. Different views were expressed on maintaining existing arrangements and linking payments to attendance.

No changes were approved, and the matter was left for further discussion at the next meeting.

Next meeting and future schedule
The next Council meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 28, 2026, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.

November 16 and 17, 2026 were proposed for Council orientation; availability concerns remained. Council discussed meeting frequency, daytime and evening availability, preparation time, implementation capacity and separate Board meetings. A proposed annual calendar, including quarterly Board meetings and arrangements for rescheduling cancelled meetings, was to be brought forward. No recurring meeting schedule was adopted.
A question was raised about the meeting, having initially been described as orientation. The meeting was confirmed as a Council meeting.

Adjournment
The meeting concluded at approximately 3:30 p.m., followed by a closing prayer offered by Sakom Allan Polchies Jr.