

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF KAHNAWÀ:KE
GOVERNANCE PROJECT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Prepared for the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke
By Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, Ph.D.
Assisted by Ms. Jessica Lazare

December 1, 2020

CONTENTS

1. Overview of the MCK Governance Project.....	2
2. Community Engagement Process.....	4
Community Advisory Group.....	6
Personal Perspective of the Research Assistant.....	7
3. Findings of the Community Engagement Process.....	8
Views on the Accountability of Chief and Council.....	9
Views on the Professional Conduct of Chief and Council	11
Views on the Roles & Responsibilities of Council Chiefs	11
Views on the System for Selecting Leaders	12
Findings of the Open Forums.....	13
4. Recommendations	17
Recommendation #1	18
Recommendation #2	18
Recommendation #3	18
Recommendation #4	18
Recommendation #5	19
Recommendation #6	19
Recommendation #7	19
Recommendation #8	20

1. Overview of the MCK Governance Project

The MCK Governance Project is a multi-phased initiative to review the structure and workings of the MCK Council of Chiefs' governance framework with the objective of improving the chiefs' working relationships and enhancing their internal and external accountability and effectiveness.

The project builds on work that was carried out by Rheena Diabo of Organizational Development Services, who was contracted by the MCK in 2001-02 to conduct consultations on governance focusing on the MCK's accountability framework. Ms. Diabo's work, structured and conducted as a systems assessment of the MCK as a whole organization, had a different focus and purpose than the present project. Nonetheless, there was overlap between the two projects, and Ms. Diabo's earlier conclusions were taken into consideration.

Her 2001 system assessment report flagged five problematic issues affecting the Council of Chiefs' internal workings, four of which are still relevant and correlated to the mandate of the MCK Governance Project:

- Orientation and integration of new Council members
- Council chiefs' accountability to each other
- Workload distribution among Council chiefs
- The working relationship and conduct issues at the Council table

There has been much work done by the MCK internally to address the issues flagged in the 2001-02 report. Part of the work of the current project has been to continue the effort of analyzing and facilitating internal changes to assure the continued positive development of the working relationship and the environment in which Council chiefs operate. The current MCK Governance Project is guiding and supporting the chiefs in their ongoing effort to strengthen the framework of rules and policies governing their roles as leaders in the community, as well as in forming new capacities of good governance and leadership for the Council of Chiefs.

This project empowers the community to provide their input on the role of the MCK chiefs and supports the chiefs in carrying out their leadership responsibilities. The tools developed through this project will ensure the effectiveness and accountability of the Council of Chiefs within the community of Kahnawà:ke. The project has created a process for achieving these goals that involves conducting a review of all existing policies governing the MCK Council of Chiefs and engaging community members on key issues of governance in order to generate a revised policy framework for the Council. This revised framework will enable the chiefs to implement new and strengthened modes of leadership in an Indigenous governance context, including the capacities to:

- Act with a set of shared values and behaviours consistent with those values
- Be accountable, fair, and inclusive
- Understand and effectively carry out responsibilities
- Inspire unified action and motivating people to work together
- Be able to self-evaluate and recognize their own weaknesses and strengths
- Understand the parameters (especially limitations) of their roles and authorities
- Know when and how to seek help in carrying out their responsibilities
- Understand how their work helps the community and nation achieve broader goals

The MCK Governance Project was initiated in February 2019 and began its work by addressing urgent policy questions relating to the review of all applicable laws and policies affecting the position and work of the Council of Chiefs, which is now regarded as the project's first phase. Flowing from this work, a comprehensive governance manual that consolidates all applicable laws and policies in a single document is being developed and is scheduled to be delivered to the Council of Chiefs by March 2021. This manual will serve as a guidebook for chiefs in the conduct of their job responsibilities and as a user's guide to Kahnawà:ke governance for community members.

The work of the first phase laid the foundation for the project's second phase, in which the community was invited to provide input and direction to the Council of Chiefs through an engagement process conducted by the researchers at arms-length from the Council and

centering on four major themes that are core to good governance. The results of the engagement process are supporting the development of a community driven accountability framework for the Council of Chiefs, of which this report is a key component. The third phase of the project will be another process of community engagement involving broad public education on the history of Kahnawà:ke, information sharing on the evolution of the institutions of governance in Kahnawà:ke, and community visioning on strategies to achieve the restoration of traditional government.

2. Community Engagement Process

The participatory process of the second phase in the MCK Governance Project consisted of a multi-faceted engagement with the community through a “Kitchen Table Consultation” approach. The perspective of key individuals with experience working in the MCK, other systems and in the political life of the community was sought out, and an open call for work and family-based groups of community members to share their views was made. These listening and learning sessions were the core of the work of Phase Two and the approach used ensured that the engagement process gained the perspective of the community through direct, person-to-person dialogues in informal, comfortable and respectful spaces. Sessions took place in people’s homes and workplaces with food provided when participants wanted to have a meal.

This method of engagement allowed for discussions on political matters and governance related issues to take place in an environment that was a safe space for dialogue, with respect and confidentiality at the centre of the experience for community members. Guaranteeing the anonymity of those who participated in the engagement process and obtaining all information in full confidentiality was an important aspect of the work. Ensuring that community members felt comfortable and safe sharing their perspectives and opinions during the conversations was of paramount importance to the researchers. For all engagement sessions, formal consent and confidentiality statements were communicated and agreed to by all participants, and the researchers took extraordinary measures to store digitized recordings and other information in a confidential and secure manner which is accessible only to them as individuals for the purposes of their work on this project.

The research team developed questions and guiding themes and designed the discussion format to be open-ended, allowing community members to determine the specific matters discussed and the flow of the conversations. The information was gathered by the researchers through active listening, respectful observation, and careful notetaking in discussions that centered on the themes of accountability and transparency of the Council of Chiefs, standards and expectations for professional conduct by Council chiefs, roles and responsibilities of Council chiefs, and the leadership selection process and qualification criteria for Council chiefs. The following questions framed the discussions:

- What is your opinion on the openness and transparency of the Council of Chiefs?
- What are your thoughts on the Council of Chiefs' answerability to the community?
- What are the most important things to have in a Code of Conduct for Council chiefs?
- Are there issues of unprofessional conduct by chiefs that need to be addressed?
- What are the appropriate roles and set of responsibilities of an MCK Council chief?
- What boundaries or limitations should be set on Council chiefs' roles and authorities?
- What are your thoughts on the *Kahnawake Election Law* and the selection of chiefs?
- What do you feel are criteria and minimum or necessary qualifications for Council chief?

There were 200 community members who participated in structured interviews, group dialogues, and focused conversations on the themes of the project. These include five workplace sessions involving forty people, six family group sessions involving seventy people, four individual structured consultations and twenty focused informal conversations, two open forums involving thirty people, and another approximately forty people who engaged in shorter and more casual conversations on the project's themes at three public information sessions held at the Community Services Complex, the Kahnawake Survival School and at Tóta Ma's Café. Aside from these, the researchers also appeared three times on CKRK Radio's talk show to discuss the project and utilized the emergency community meeting on the Solidarity Blockades in February 2020 as a participant observer event to gain insight on the conduct of meetings and perceptions of the MCK in the overall governance of the community.

Community Advisory Group

A volunteer Community Advisory Group was formed in December 2019 as an accountability structure for the researchers. The role of the group was to provide advice and guidance to the researchers in their work on the project, and with reference to the community engagement process, these functions:

- Provide feedback on the design and conduct of the public engagement process
- Counsel the Project Manager on issue-specific matters that arose from time to time
- Participate in the process at their own discretion to ensure accountability and integrity
- Provide advice on the interpretation of input from the community
- Review and critique this report as it was being drafted

The members of the group were initially people with experience in governance matters who were invited to join the group by the Project Manager, although membership in the group was open to any community member with interest in these issues. Several members sought membership and were integrated into the work of the group as the process went along. Membership was fluid and there were some members who participated for a time and then left the group. At the time of the submission of this report, the members of the Community Advisory Group are:

- Peggy Mayo
- Tonia Williams
- Linda Delormier
- Thawennontie Thomas
- Melanie Gilbert
- Veronica Leborgne
- Iohahio Delisle
- Louis Delisle
- Alan John Rice

Personal Perspective of the Research Assistant

The methodology of the community engagement process was chosen for its core values in collective empowerment. We've utilized the "Kitchen Table Consultation" after being inspired by research sharing circles that have been accepted as a method in academic and applied research for gathering information from a group. The aim was to initiate action-based participation by initiating a talking circle, in an environment comfortable for participating members. The conversations were guided by questions developed to initiate thoughts in the direction of the governance, and to help facilitate information sharing.

Stories are an Indigenous way of passing knowledge, and a researcher can learn quite a bit using open-ended structures as such. Natural flow of information makes the exchange more receivable, and it can also allow the participants to be more in control of the research that is being done. These methodologies allow for respect and a relationship to be built, which in turn can encourage the participant to be less apprehensive about sharing knowledge. Throughout the discourse in all sessions, there was a "phenomenon" that surprised us as facilitators, as many different groups had voiced very similar points and perspectives. We understood that the course of the conversations may not have directly given answers to our questions, however we believed that storytelling was essential to the nature of the work. During the course of the engagement process, it was an incredible experience to see families coming together to share their opinions and feel comfortable asking questions. It was remarked that this method of qualitative research was refreshing and demonstrated that community contribution was being placed at a higher value. Additionally, we worked within a realm of confidentiality, creating a much more accessible environment, which was well received and appreciated by those who participated.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to get to know some of the community members and to have enjoyed a meal with them. We could not have expected a better outcome for the amount of shared knowledge from the community members who reached out to share their ideas and perspectives. And so, I want to acknowledge the effort that was put into gathering friends, family and coworkers to participate in our project, and thank everyone for their time.

3. Findings of the Community Engagement Process

This section presents the findings of the community engagement process. It begins with an overall summary of the perspectives and inputs received from community members, highlighting key opinions that were expressed during the various engagement sessions, including two open forums that were organized and held in cooperation with Kahnawà:ke's Collective Impact working group. It then focuses on inputs related to the questions in the four themes that framed this phase of the project.

Overall, there were three issues that formed consistent points of focus for community members who participated in the engagement sessions. These points were: 1) MCK chiefs' answerability to the people, or the accountability process; 2) expectations and standards of professional behaviour and ethics for MCK chiefs, or Code of Conduct issues; and 3) the minimal qualification for MCK chiefs' positions, or the criteria for eligibility to run for office.

In nearly every session, there was strong interest in questions of Kahnawà:ke governance at the level beyond the scope of the current framing of the issues focusing on just the MCK chiefs.

These discussions most often turned to the following broader issues:

- Political reunification of the community
- The need for a good working relationship between various political groups
- Restoring *Onkwehonwe* culture and ways of being on personal and collective levels
- Re-envisioning the meaning of traditional government and leadership in today's reality

The engagement sessions consistently drew attention to the fact that there is a communication gap between the MCK chiefs and many community members, with community members feeling that there is either insufficient or ineffective information sharing by the MCK, and that this gap is the cause of misunderstanding and contributes to a sense of mistrust of the MCK among many people in the community.

As well, it was clear that there is little awareness by or involvement of young people in the community in the affairs of the MCK or politics in general. This disconnection from the political

sphere is at the root of much skepticism and distrust of political institutions and leaders among Kahnawà:ke youth.

The discussions revealed that there are greatly varying levels of knowledge about the history of Kahnawà:ke among community members, notably relating to politics and government. It was observed by participants that misunderstandings of the history and structure of governance and law in the community contribute significantly to Kahnawà:ke's political culture being characterized by division, irreconcilable views and conflict.

It was also consistently noted that the types of spaces created, and methods used to conduct this process of community engagement – the personal conversations, Kitchen Table Consultations and the Open Forums – was itself a manifestation of a move towards implementing traditional cultural principles and methods. It was felt as a restoration of trust and community values, particularly because people were engaged in their own homes and workplaces and that a safe and trusting environment was consciously fostered, along with the fact that the discussions were done in an informal style, with food provided.

Views on the Accountability of Chief and Council

The engagement sessions made clear that people in Kahnawà:ke see accountability in very practical terms and mainly as a straightforward question of the MCK chiefs' answerability to the people of Kahnawà:ke. There were no major criticisms of existing policies and procedures, as participants did not focus so much on rules. Rather, there was more of an inclination towards having accessibility and answerability from the MCK chiefs, with much more openness on their daily business and activities. There were some general and a few specific criticisms of the present situation as it related to chiefs' whereabouts, meetings, the substance of discussions with outside authorities, etc. Overall, accountability in Kahnawà:ke is viewed in terms of personal accountability and in the daily relationship between community members and MCK chiefs on both professional and human levels.

In discussions on the concepts of trust, openness and transparency, these were seen as practical principles that are the guideposts for the exercise of the authority the MCK Council of Chiefs is vested with, and which create support and legitimacy for the chiefs as representatives of the community. The specific feedback from the community on the theme of accountability reflects this sense of things. The desire for accessible information on MCK chiefs' schedules and their work and progress toward meeting goals and tasks assigned to them in their portfolio mandates was present throughout the sessions. This was consistent with the desire to have the chiefs much more active in informing the community directly on the work they are doing. As well, the idea of instituting a system of regular performance evaluations for chiefs was mentioned many times.

The conversations with the community during the engagement sessions did not include much discussion on financial issues, and based on this, it does not seem that many community members are concerned about the specifics of financial transactions from government funding, as there was no serious criticism of the MCK in this sense brought forward. However, there is quite a bit of concern for the nature and implementation of regulation around the involvement of individual MCK chiefs in private businesses and how this may affect their decision-making, as well as the transparency of the MCK's housing initiatives and their effect on the construction industry and land allotments.

There was much discussion on the need for a mechanism for the community to bring questions, issues, complaints, and conflicts involving the MCK chiefs forward in an objective and regulated environment. Aside from widespread suggestions for an ombudsperson role, community meetings were referred to as one of the prime means of accountability in the present system. It was expressed, nearly unanimously, that seasonal meetings are not sufficient and should take place more frequently. As well, there was a strong sense that the present structure of community meetings is not conducive to respectful engagement and that this hinders accountability, especially regarding these three points:

- The agenda is set by the MCK chiefs with no input from community members
- There is no way for the community to hold MCK chiefs to account on follow-through
- The open discussion part of meetings most often turns conflictual and unproductive

Views on the Professional Conduct of Chief and Council

The general view is that MCK chiefs are representatives of the community and that they should embody the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in their public and private lives. Community members' opinions on this basic principle varied in terms of focus and there were many specific incidents and examples – both positive and negative – brought forward to illustrate people's views on this during the discussions. Overall, the idea is that MCK chiefs are role models in a personal sense and, despite people's views on the legitimacy of the MCK system as a whole, that they carry the responsibilities of leaders of the community. This has led people to point – most often – to the Kaianerekó:wa as the framework for their expectations of MCK chiefs, not only on their political roles but on their behaviour, even in terms of the way chiefs dress, speak, and carry themselves at work and in public.

There was an open acknowledgement of the effects of historic and ongoing colonial traumas on families and people in Kahnawà:ke, and remarkable sensitivity displayed in the discussions to the fact that everyone, including MCK chiefs, carries this burden. There was very little personalized criticism of individual chiefs, there was empathy and understanding shown as to the difficulty of the work MCK chiefs do, and the discussions tended to focus on the ethics of leadership and the need to recreate the identity of what a chief should be in both the abstract sense and in relation to the MCK system today.

Views on the Roles & Responsibilities of Council Chiefs

People who participated in the engagement sessions, especially those who were employees within the MCK system, were unanimously critical of MCK chiefs' involvement in the operational details and workings of their portfolio mandates. There is the strong view that MCK

chiefs should focus on their political roles and responsibilities and not involve themselves at the management level or in daily business matters in their portfolio areas.

The discussions also highlighted the desire for MCK chiefs to be more aware and responsive to the contemporary colonial nature of the relationship between our nation and Canadian laws, and of the differences and inherent conflicts that continue to exist between the best interests of Kahnawà:ke and the dictates of Canadian law. As well, it was clear that people believe that MCK chiefs should strive to represent the ethics and principles and laws of Mohawk nationhood first and foremost, even when it brings the MCK and community into conflict with outside laws and authorities.

The question of the name of the chiefs' position came up several times in discussions. It was felt that the term "chief" provokes criticism and distrust because of the purpose people perceive, that of assuming a role and authority properly vested in our Indigenous culture and government system. However, it was acknowledged that it is a systemic issue and not the result of individual MCK chiefs' actions or intentions.

On operational matters, there was a general criticism of vacation time, particularly the idea of a summer hiatus. There was a strong opinion generally that the work of the Council of Chiefs should continue uninterrupted throughout the year, along with the rest of the organization.

Views on the System for Selecting Leaders

The question of criteria for eligibility for office was a major point of discussion in all the public engagement sessions. It should be noted that there were many different ideas expressed, especially regarding one key point: educational background. People in Kahnawà:ke hold a range of opinions on whether a person needs to be educated in a formal academic sense to be eligible to be an MCK chief, and the opinions expressed were all well-grounded culturally and supported by positive examples historically and contemporarily. Yet, despite the varying opinions, a large majority of people who participated in the engagement sessions felt that a high school level education was a minimal criterion. The rationale for this being that the role of

an MCK chief today demands this minimal level of education due to the demands of the role in terms of literacy and technological capacity.

There was also general agreement in the sessions that the rules concerning eligibility should be changed to bar candidates who have had previous dismissals from office for ethical breaches. There was also a minority opinion expressed that the 50% Blood Quantum requirement should be omitted and eligibility for office criteria on that issue be brought in line with the Election Law's rule on voting, which allows for participation of anyone on the Kahnawà:ke Kanien'kehá:ka Registry. On the question of the composition of the Council of Chiefs, some community members expressed the opinion that the number of MCK chiefs should be reduced to nine.

Overall, there were strong and very constructive views expressed on the need to restructure the leadership selection process in the following ways:

- People who intend to run for office should have access to a guidebook or manual to familiarize themselves with the nature and expectations of the position
- The selection process should allow for community members to question candidates on their knowledge of Kahnawà:ke laws and the rules and procedures of MCK system
- The timeframe and process for leadership selection should be changed to allow for a more in-depth engagement between candidates and community members

Findings of the Open Forums

Two open forums were held as part of the public engagement process, both of which were structured as safe spaces for dialogue and as collaborations between the MCK Governance Project and Kahnawà:ke's Collective Impact working group. Both forums were held, in accordance with COVID-Task Force guidelines, outdoors in the green space next to the Golden Age Club with tents and chairs rented from KD rentals and lunch provided by Messy Kitchen Catering. The discussions were hosted and facilitated by Gerald Taiaiake Alfred, Linda Delormier and Jessica Lazare.

The objective of the initial forum was to develop a dialogue relating to the events that had taken place in the early months of 2020 concerning the Solidarity Blockade for the Wet'suwet'en Nation. It was noted by Dr. Alfred that this was a time of great unity and cooperation among the leadership of different political groups in the community, as they had come together to provide support and solidarity to the Wet'suwet'en. Thus, the envisioned purpose of this initial dialogue was to create a space for people to share their opinions and experiences about the events around the Solidarity Blockade which could inform ways to envision unified collective action in Kahnawà:ke. The anticipated attendance of the first open forum was no more than thirty persons, and actual turnout was twenty-one, with representation from all segments of the community's differing political and social groups, age brackets, and a few individuals holding leadership positions in the community.

The group of community members were asked, "What can we learn moving forward?" and they responded with great sensitivity and passion. The forum generated a rich three-hour discussion that focused on one prevalent theme: the desire and need for unity in Kahnawà:ke. Based on the experiences that individuals had during the time of crisis, it was clear that the unity of leadership and cooperation among the political groups in the community to protect the territory and people was universally appreciated. The group presented several ideas on concepts that reflected the positive experience with the blockade situation that supported the central theme of movement on restoring traditional governance in Kahnawà:ke, including the following:

- The idea of reciprocal accountability, and the need to respect and be answerable to each other all around, from leadership to the community, and each other
- Forming safe spaces for better public communication and dialogue that minimize and manage contradiction and conflictual behaviours
- Upholding our social and cultural responsibilities as Onkwéhonwe
- Overcoming the divisions in the community caused by labels and fostering relationships to transcend colonially imposed divisions between groups and families

- Recognizing the impacts of colonial traumas and continuing the process of healing on an individual, family and collective levels

The conversations highlighted the progress of leadership capacity during the Solidarity Blockade of 2020. The discussions also emphasized admiration for the leaders holding space for dialogue and listening to each other with respect. It was noted that the meetings that took place at the time to discuss actions related to the blockade were well attended, including leaders from different political groups who typically do not work together. The belief that the community does very well in a crisis was reflected, as well as the need for unity in “non-crisis” conditions. As the discussion moved along, a number of historic moments for Kahnawà:ke were mentioned and used as examples of the occasions where the community had to come together and figured out a solution to a problem or face a threat in a unified way. The development of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the revitalization of the longhouse ceremonies, and resistance against the abusive actions of the Sûreté du Québec, and most infamously, the 1990 Crisis, were all brought up.

During the discussions, the negative effects of labelling people based on their political or religious backgrounds and situation in family and social structures was a prominent theme, particularly in the way this comes out in the scope of communication and cooperation among leaders in the community. It was remarked that the construct of labels is limiting and damaging to the community’s progress toward restoring unity and strength and health. Some people suggested that there is a crucial need for people in the community to begin to appreciate each other’s inherent value as Onkwehonwe and acknowledge that, as Kanien’kehá:ka, we can be different but still respect each other and work together. People’s concerns about being able to come together in spite of differing opinions and using our collective knowledge to grow and solidify as a community were also addressed. The importance of constructive dialogue as was experienced in the forum was noted; it was generally agreed that the community must find a way past differences of opinion as dividing lines and appreciate the diversity of views and different forms of knowledge and experience within the community so that we can move away from the view that differences inevitably lead to contradiction and conflict.

The opinion that there is now a need for a stronger community effort to come to one mind was shared among the group. However, there was a lingering doubt as to whether individuals would be able to break free from the constructs of labels and political or social backgrounds. This part of the discussion led to the emergence of the general view that there is a need for more safe spaces and structured opportunities for community members and leaders to talk about issues.

Social anxiety was also noted by some participants to be a factor in people not feeling safe to express and explore personal viewpoints, and it was indicated in the conversations that followed that this may be due to shame and lateral violence caused by intergenerational trauma. The discussions of trauma brought forward the concept of healing as important in contextualizing the concept and goal of unity. The idea of healing focused on during the discussions was one that carried the idea of social responsibility and cultivating better relationships so that, as a community, we will be better able to help one another.

Along with the idea of social responsibility, traditional cultural teachings were also prevalent in people's minds when discussing the needs for unity, particularly in relation to the Seven Generations principle and using the clan system to restore a consensus based decision-making process in the community. And education was noted as a key aspect of investing in the community's youth. Throughout the whole of the discussion, it was abundantly clear to the researchers that people's thoughts on these issues encompassed a deep awareness of traumas, history, and traditional values.

The second open forum was a direct result of the success and attendance of the initial event, as it was requested then that there be more opportunities for healthy dialogue. The second forum was a smaller event, with ten people participating – though almost every participant was in a leadership role or had at some point served in a leadership capacity within the MCK or longhouse systems or in a community organization. The goal of this second forum was to focus on governance in the community, though, reflecting the nature of open dialogue, other concepts were also explored.

The first matter that was brought forward in the second discussion was trauma. These discussions were based on the experiences that community members had had, collectively and individually, and which continue to impact their lives in both the political and personal spheres. Throughout the session, the group discussion centered around one key concept: division within the community. The concept of division was articulated in reference to the relationships we have with one another personally and politically and was reinforced with insights from the discourse of decolonization and trust and trauma. The group explored the idea of forming safe spaces for better communication, without judgment, and building better relationships that embody Indigenous values, especially respect and honesty.

When talking about healing, members of the group focused on the relevance of acknowledging family and community histories, colonialism, and the reasons for trauma and the importance of healing both individually and collectively. Our Kanien'kehá:ka traditional culture and teachings were also discussed when referring to trauma and healing within the community. The relational component of the culture was highlighted to be a significant source of healing, and critical in overcoming the struggles we face as a community. Finally, there were ideas and sentiments shared about beginning the healing in our homes.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations below flow from the direct inputs on the themes of the project offered by people who participated in the community engagement sessions and a distillation of insights gained by and discussed by the researchers in the course of their work in this phase of the project. They are offered with the intention of laying out the key elements of an Accountability Statement that will be designed and put forward by the MCK Council of Chiefs and also a list of concrete actions and policy changes to be taken by the chiefs in response to this report.

It is anticipated that the internal and public discussion of this report's findings and recommendations will build on the work done so far in the engagement process and be the start of an ongoing dialogue of reciprocal accountability between the community and the

chiefs. This transparent, reciprocal, dialogue-based approach to communicating and engaging will constructively promote responsibility, respect, and healthy working relationships and the development of a stronger relationship of trust between the MCK Council of Chiefs and the community. The Council of Chiefs' recommitment to accountability, encapsulated in the Accountability Statement, will serve as a tangible resource to base trust and honour, and it will serve as a means for the community to hold their elected officials accountable, as well as for the chiefs to hold each other accountable.

Recommendation #1

Adopt a Code of Conduct for chiefs that clearly outlines expectations for professional conduct, behaviour in the workplace environment, rules around political and financial conflicts of interest, and procedures for lodging complaints about chiefs' conduct, as well as the disciplinary and remedial actions MCK chiefs may face in the event of a breach of the Code.

Recommendation #2

Review and publicly report on the job performance of each MCK chief on an annual basis consistent with a performance management system based on a set of objective criteria referencing their portfolio mandates.

Recommendation #3

Require candidates for the offices of Grand Chief and Council Chief to have at least a high school level education and administrative or organizational board experience.

Recommendation #4

Restructure public meetings in the following ways:

- Restore meetings to a monthly schedule
- Implement an in-the-round format for the physical space of the meeting

- Record, broadcast on television and online, and archive meetings
- Allow community members to submit items to be discussed during meetings
- Ensure that an expert facilitator is available to support the Grand Chief at meetings

Recommendation #5

Change the English name for an MCK “Chief” to a title that better reflects the role and authority of that position within the MCK governance structure and that of the meaning of the *Kanien’keha* word currently in use within the system, *ie/Ratsénhaienhs*.

Recommendation #6

Establish an Office of the Ombudsperson that is politically independent and legally empowered to investigate complaints from members of the community about the professional conduct of chiefs and the administration of MCK programs and services, and to investigate allegations of wrongdoing brought forward by MCK employees, structured to serve these functions:

- Listening, assessing and responding to enquiries and complaints from the community
- Educating community members and organizations about professional ethics and fairness
- Conducting thorough, impartial and independent investigations of complaints
- Resolving complaints and recommending on policies, procedures and practices
- Reporting publicly to bring attention to issues of governance impacting Kahnawà:ke
- Engaging the community on political issues and the functions of the MCK

Recommendation #7

Engage and educate the community, especially youth, about the history of colonization and inter-generational traumas, to better inform the community about the role and functions of the MCK as a political body and organization, and in cooperation with the Comprehensive Community Plan process, design a clear strategic vision and concrete plan with the community and in respect to the mandate to return to traditional government.

Recommendation #8

Implement the following actions with respect to existing MCK policies and Kahnawà:ke law:

- Remove Section 4.1 of the *MCK Disciplinary Measure Regulations* and allow any person, including employees and chiefs, to lodge complaints about the conduct of MCK chiefs
- Revise Section 10.2 of the *Administration Guidelines for the Council of Chiefs* to clarify that Council business is conducted on a continual basis throughout the year and that chiefs' leaves and vacations are granted conditionally on quorum being maintained
- Revise Section 5.10 of the *Regulations for the Operations of the Council of Chiefs* to specify how chiefs' schedules will be made available as public information
- Revise Section 12.1 of the *Kahnawà:ke Election Law* to include high school education and administrative or organization board experience as criteria for eligibility for office
- Revise to reflect the content of this report, and approve, the draft *Code of Conduct for the Council of Chiefs* and *Terms of Reference for the Council of Chiefs* policies