



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: CHIEF AND COUNCIL

RE: STATEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

October 27, 2021 – On October 20, 2021, a small group of Beaver Lake Cree Nation (Nation) members and non-members coordinated a public protest. Furthermore, the circulation of a petition. The duly elected Nation Chief and Council acknowledge the protest and petition and wish to provide a statement regarding the actions and future commitments.

We (Chief and Council) wish to communicate that we are in a pandemic, we must conduct ourselves accordingly to ensure the continued safety of our Nation. Furthermore, that our silence from the onset of the above-mentioned protest was not intentional but that we remind everyone that during this, we lost another elder, this time to the Covid virus. Finally, that due to the election appeal that was before the courts, it was advised that the matter be resolved in the courts prior to conducting a General Band meeting. The court rendered its judgement on September 2, 2021 – posted to the Nation website. The Nation Administration is currently coordinating next steps on communication post this recent decision, while gently reminding everyone that there was a recent Covid outbreak in the Nation, preventing the Administration from continued planning.

We wish to take this time to state that we condemn violence and hate speech. Whenever they occur, we will send public messages that threats of violence and hate speech that appear to be motivated by public misconceptions and bias will not be tolerated. As the incidences of threats to violence and hate speech against the duly elected Council, we provide this statement to remind everyone that though we may feel grief, frustration, and a desire for change, that we cannot and should not engage in violence that is indicative of systemic racism and oppression of our peoples. However, this is not to say that we should not honour and nurture our feelings and experiences, but that we should do so in a way that honours our Natural laws and instructions on non-violence. Furthermore, we wish to acknowledge support for non-violent direct action and adhering to Nation elected processes for declaring grievances.

We wish to communicate the full impact of the continued hate speech and threats to violence on us as the elected leadership. The harm is not restricted to just the victims involved. Threats of violence convey a message of fear to all members and employees of the Nation and creates an environment of distrust and Nation fragmentation. This protest forced the Administration to close the doors of all Nation operated buildings and has resulted in the following:

1. The Health Services has also closed their doors resulting in a full stop to Medical Transportation, Community Wellness and Mental Health Services, Head Start and Daycare, and access to the Community Nurses, which restricts the ability to conduct Covid testing, administer vaccinations including Covid vaccines, and provide essential critical services that this department offers to the Nation; and

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2. Amisk Community School has closed their doors and moved to virtual classes, preventing our children from attending in-person instruction; and
3. Due to access restrictions of the Administration building, and staff safety concerns, financial services have been suspended. Subsequently, Income Support issuance, casual and bi-weekly payroll, and Post-Secondary living allowances are delayed until further notice.
4. Furthermore, there will be a bill payment delay of the Natural Gas and Electricity bills for Elders 60+, and Income Support clients.

It is these reasons and these reasons alone that we were forced to file an injunction with the court, on October 25, 2021, Honourable Mr. Justice K.S. Feth ordered and adjudged an Order in the Court of Queens Bench; please see attached.

Acknowledging our commitment to transparency, accountability and addressing the concerns of the Nation members, as the duly elected leadership of the Nation, we extend our hands in peace and friendship and commit to working collectively in the following ways:

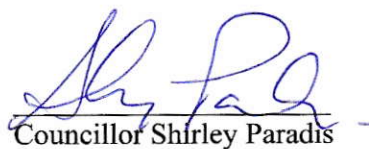
1. Coordination of a 2-day Nation member Band meeting, inclusive of a Financial Audit meeting, to be held in the third week of November 2021 – dates to be determined. At the duly convened Band meeting, updates on Top Gas Settlement, Agricultural Benefits Claim (Cows and Plows), new Nation developments and programs, and any matters arising will be provided. Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic and the current gathering restrictions, this meeting will be held virtually – instructions to follow; and
2. Commitment to monthly newsletters to be posted to the Nation website. To include updates from ALL Council, Administration, department managers; and
3. Establishing complaint procedures to encourage transparency and accountability.

In closing, we look forward with great enthusiasm to the commitments, upcoming Band meeting, and communicate processes moving forward in a manner that is in line with the Nations policies and procedures.

In Peace and Friendship,


Chief Germaine Anderson


Councillor Felix Lewis


Councillor Shirley Paradis


Councillor Charlene Cardinal