

Meeting Report

Meeting: Taxpayer Communication Policy Workshop

Place: Georgina Island Community Centre

Date: September 21, 2018

Attended by: 32 taxpayers, including representatives from the Georgina Island Cottagers Association, Snake Island Cottagers Association and Fox Island; Robert Beaudry FNTC (facilitator); Stephanie BigCanoe and Kate McCue.

Materials: Materials included a draft taxpayer communication policy, which had been previously distributed at the assessment open houses, and a few slides from Robert about annual rates and expenditure laws.

Overview: After a short presentation about annual rates and expenditure laws, participants were divided into 3 work groups and each workgroup was assigned a component of the draft policy to discuss. The groups discussed their topics for about ½ hour and then got back together and presented their results.

Discussion:

Group 1 – Ongoing Communications

There are basic principles for Ongoing Communications

- Every taxpayer needs to be informed
- Communication must be timely and accessible
- There must be transparency

Notifications: Must be provided to each taxpayer directly in the manner selected by them. The default is through Canada Post to the identified mailing address associated with the taxpayer. The taxpayer may choose to obtain communications via email by requesting so through the GIFN Tax Administrator.

Accessibility: All documentation should be available through the GIFN website.

Group 2 – Annual Local Revenue Budgets, Annual Rates Laws and Annual Expenditure Laws

- Acknowledgement of appreciation of being invited to participate in the process.
- Generally felt that the subsections within this area of the policy were well developed.
- Definition and clarity of the specific timelines associated with the development, review and finalization of budgets is required.

Group 3 – Coordination of Taxpayer Interests

The following suggestions were made

- 2 Tax Advisory Bodies (TABs) be established to support the difference in budgets and issues of the Georgina Island tax district and Snake & Fox Island tax district.
- Fox Island be provided 2 members on the TAB
- Georgina Island have representation from the South and West sides of the island in addition to the North and East sides
- Determine at the conclusion of each TAB meeting if and when a follow up meeting is necessary, and that the meetings are not necessarily limited to 2 meetings per year.
- There is appreciation that GIFN does not relinquish nor delegate any of its statutory authorities to the TAB (per #3.8 of the 'draft policy'); however, we believe it is important that the taxpayers' input is heard and acted upon, and that we are not paying taxes for services that the taxpayers do not feel are required.

Follow-up Required

- 2 TABs will be set up, 1 for each of the 2 tax districts
- The results of the meeting will be summarized and distributed
- The Draft Taxpayer Representation Policy will be updated with input from the meeting
- The Taxpayer Advisory Bodies will meet during the week of October 15