

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting:	MNGA Governance Committee		
Date of Meeting:	January 25-26, 2025	Time:	9:00 AM
Minutes Prepared By:	Judit Nagy	Location:	Headquarters and Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES

Participating Members:

Dave Allard, Region 3 Representative, Chairperson
 Caitlin Bird, Region 1 Representative
 Travis Jobin, Region 4 Representative
 Patrick Harriott, Board Representative
 Jamie-Lee Keith, MYBC Representative
 Dawn McConnell, Region 6 Representative
 Peggy Olanski, Region 7 (*via Microsoft Teams*)
 Marlene Swears, Region 5 Representative
 Pixie Wells, Region 2 Representative
 Mia Yule, MWBC Representative

Guests:

Samantha Furlonger, UVIC Graduate Student

Staff:

Nicole Ludwig, Governance Manager, Staff Lead
 Judit Nagy, Governance Community Coordinator

1. Welcome and Good Words

Dave Allard, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and welcomed everyone. Jamie-Lee Keith, MYBC Representative, provided an opening Good Words.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

MOTION:

MOVED: Dawn McConnell

SECONDED: Travis Jobin

RESOLVED:

THAT the MNGA Governance Committee approve meeting agenda of Saturday, January 25, 2025 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED BY CONSENT

3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes

MOTION:

MOVED: Travis Jobin

SECONDED: Marlene Swears

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the MNGA Governance Committee meeting of Thursday, November 28, 2024 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED BY CONSENT

4. Presentation

Samantha Furlonger, UVIC Graduate Student, presented an overview of her master's Thesis that she worked on in partnership with MNBC.

- The project intends to incorporate Métis values into the current hierarchal governance structure. These values include humility, resilience, respect, integrity, kindness and teamwork.
- The recommended pillars of Métis governance include developing operational process, ensuring structures and reporting is in place, clarifying decision-making powers, ensuring clear communication comes from the Nation, and that MNBC better incorporates cultural values.
- Three (3) reports were generated with recommendations. For the first report, the Amelina Douglas Institute was recommended to improve succession planning, develop a communication plan, and to become a good guest on the First Nation Territory the organization operates on. For the second report, for Point Ellice House, the recommendations are implemented by improving operational practices, improving branding, and providing more cultural-based training for staff. The third report for the Chartered Community Agreement included the continuation of Nation building with the Chartered Communities and clarifying bilateral and collective accountabilities.
- Future research recommendations are to see how to create consensus-based decision-making and better conflict resolution avenues.

5. Chartered Community Agreement

Patrick Harriott, Board Representative, introduced the idea of a Chartered Community Act, which would be overseen by the MNGA and Communities, not solely by MNBC. The legislation would be a concise document outlining the shared values and commitments between MNBC and Chartered Communities, while the agreements would be more tailored to individual communities' needs.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Conflict resolution is under MNBC currently, and it may be better addressed by a volunteer community group.
- Presidents might not want to engage in a community conflict resolution process as they are volunteers, and there is a power imbalance compared to paid MNBC employees. However, members raised that when being on community boards, there is an expectation to collaborate and uphold the responsibilities of the collective.
- Nation building needs to include the two different realities – the employees and the volunteers.
- Needs clarification on membership and citizenship, as not all members are citizens.
- The Act would ensure that there are checks and balances in place, so MNBC does not hold most of the accountability and responsibility.
- With the Métis Justice Strategy being passed, MNBC is exploring what restorative justice looks like. A restorative process is also needed within the communities specifically as well.
- Consideration of autonomy is needed, especially for communities that have been long established and connected with community partners, such as school boards or justice panels.

- Recommendation that MNBC sends those who are working on the Act to meet with communities to see how they operate.
- SOSMA ran a survey for Community leaders, receiving responses, of which 78% do not feel supported by MNBC, and over 80% of community leaders take on more responsibility to protect other board members.
- There is an opportunity to learn what communities need, and how MNBC can assist with handing collective responsibilities.
- To mitigate concerns over power imbalances and the loss of autonomy, it is important to consult citizens before any major decision is made that will impact them.
- Creating a new Act might not help with conflict resolution procedures. The organization needs to ensure that due process is followed.
- Mediators are often viewed as political when they are asked to go into communities, especially when the mediator is an MNBC Board Member
- The Act would entail the necessary and fundamental understandings between MNBC and Communities; the Agreement could be set up as à-la-carte, with a menu of options for support. This agreement could also be reviewed every few years to adjust to a Community's needs.
- Dispute resolution through a neutral party is seen as colonial. It might be better to pick an Elder that knows those who are involved in the dispute to help reach a resolution.

The participants explored the following ideas when thinking about accountability:

- Reporting requirements need to be transparent and clearly explained – the why and when.
- Reporting the wages is not needed if Communities do not have staff.
- Reporting funding acquired by the Community, external to MNBC should not be required.
- Communities need to know when MNBC is reaching out to community members. The information sharing agreement will play a role in that.
- Transparency over information and creating a better information flow from MNBC to communities.
- Clarification on citizenship and membership and what roles MNBC and Communities provide.
- Part of autonomy for Chartered communities is being able to determine their own community citizenship.
- Local citizenship should be discerned from Section 35 rights citizenship.
- Accepting citizens from one community to another might negate the purpose of community boundaries.
- Ensure there are checks and balances on the Community Boards when it comes to recommendations from Community to MNBC – i.e., STEPS funding.
- Reducing bureaucracy in MNBC to ensure that Community Presidents and Boards can access resources and assistance for their community members more efficiently.
- Respecting and understanding unique needs, interests, and priorities of individual Chartered Communities.
- Providing scaffolding for communities with resources and structure. This progressive framework would allow communities to learn skills and receive support from MNBC, and work towards independence.

The Committee reviewed the bilateral and collective accountability chart. Adjustments were made to reflect a reciprocal relationship between MNBC and the communities. These changes included:

- Including a timeline in which a privacy policy needs to be implemented by Chartered Communities. MNBC is available to assist with creating the policies upon request.
- Aligning community bylaws with the MNBC constitution and adding a grace-period of a year if MNBC amends its constitution for communities mirror the change.

- Oath of Office for Chartered Communities is being worked on, and a sample was provided to Rocky Mountain for their November election. Governance can assist upon request from the Communities.
- Consensus to better clarify what kind of reporting is necessary, and what can be assumed by MNBC administration to reduce strain on volunteer boards.

The committee agreed to create a workplan to present to the MNGA to confirm that the committee's focus will be landing the Chartered Community Act.

Governance is to follow up with external finance to clarify what kind of insurance MNBC offers for communities, pertaining to events, Directors, and property damage.

Day 1 of the MNGA Governance Committee recessed at 3:25 PM, on January 25, 2025

Day 2 of the MNGA Governance Committee meeting resumed at 9:10 AM, on January 26, 2025

The MNBC Governance Committee revisited the Chartered Community Agreement chart with the implemented changes from the previous session, and made the following recommendations:

- Discussion pertaining how to best maintain and cultivate a good relationship with the Local First Nations for Chartered Communities. Governance to connect with Aaron Pete regarding this matter.
- The Act might develop a “founding principles” section to have an established values that both MNBC and the Chartered Communities agree on.
- Fleshing out what it means to keep a Society in good standing and providing best practices guides.
- The role of the Regional Directors needs to be clarified when it comes to interacting with Communities, and their AGMs. Especially as to why the Regional Director is meant to communicate AGM notices to MNBC. The recommendation is to change that to MNBC's Governance Department.
- Dispute Resolution and the Survival of the Agreement will be left to Legal Counsel and then brought back to the committee.
- For Community Agreements, it is recommended that the agreements are reviewed on an annual basis by Governance staff.
- Governance to investigate Métis Dispute Resolution methods to bring to the next in-person meeting. General guiding principles should be in legislation, but procedure itself should be in policy. The policy should be under the MNGA, and amendable by the MNGA to avoid the lag from the Annual Legislative Cycle.
- Recommendation to review as to how disputes arise, that way proactive steps can be taken before the dispute resolution process is administered.
- Clarity is needed on the division of powers in the MNBC regarding the Justice, Legislative, and Executive branches of the government. The lanes need to be defined to ensure the future growth of the Nation. Government to research other colonial governments to see what can be adopted into the Nation's way.
- Suspension of funding should have very specific parameters since Communities need to maintain operations, such as paying rent. On the other hand, fiscal responsibility must be upheld as it might negatively impact Citizens in the Community, and it might impact third-party donor's perception of Chartered Communities.
- Transparency from MNBC is key to ensure that reciprocity is maintained. A process needs to be developed for due process and the right to access MNBC files.
- The committee is to explore different types of disputes and groups in which disputes can exist to appropriate mechanisms can be created.

6. Committee Workload Planning

- February 20 meeting is the next meeting and will be held virtually.
- March 15-16 meeting will be held in-person, in Kelowna. Meeting links will be provided for those who cannot make it to the meeting.
- The June meeting might be held in-person, in Victoria.
- The MNGA report will have all the resolutions that were referred to the committee, clarifying the priorities.

7. Information Sharing Agreement

Nicole Ludwig, Governance Manager, advised that the Chief Operating Officer could not attend due to seasonal illness. Ms. Ludwig introduced the Information Sharing Agreement and asked for feedback, the following points were raised:

- More information is requested pertaining to what classification of information MNBC is sending Chartered Communities, and what falls under it.
- What are the consequences of having the agreement terminated given that it is mentioned in the Chartered Agreement, and potentially the Act.
- The consequences should be listed as to what might happen if personal data is mishandled from complaints, to fines, and other potential legal actions.
- During elections, candidates receive names, mailing addresses, and phone numbers of Citizens for campaigning purposes as per the Electoral Act. The Agreement puts more responsibility on Community Boards than the Candidates that are seeking to join the MNBC Board.
- The agreement limits access to information to the President and additional people approved by MNBC.
- The agreement should be humanized and centered around duty of care.
- Safeguards are needed to avoid a privacy breach, rather than relying more explicitly on a list of don't-dos.
- Schedule A poses an issue since even public information is considered as private information seemingly.
- The language needs to be clearer, and the procedure must be more practical as to how the Chartered Community's operate. Practice and unitality should advise the agreement. The agreement should provide a way to implement these practices by providing Standard Operating Procedures.
- Concern that third-party research and grants will be impacted by the agreement, as it discouraged data collection from Community membership.

Governance will invite the Chief Operating Officer to the March meeting to give more context to the agreement and make revisions as per the feedback provided by the committee.

8. Senate Review

Jamie-Lee Keith, MYBC Representative, introduced the topic of a Senate Review. She highlighted that there is a lack of clarity on what the jurisdiction of Senate is, and how it operates in the MNBC Governance system.

In discussion, participants raised the following points:

- The matter should be presented to the MNGA and see whether it could be referred to the MNGA Governance Committee for the review.
- There is a need to learn more about the Senate procedures as most of the operations are unclear.
- Suggestion to bring in the Justice Council to review the matter from a restorative justice angle.

- In the occurrence that different dispute resolution procedures are put in place, many of the Senate cases could be handled prior.

Governance will contact the Senate Clerk and discuss the Senate Polices to learn more about how the Senate operates.

President Mineault will be invited to the February meeting, for a short 15-minute meet-and-greet to learn more about the committee's work.

9. Adjournment

MOTION:

MOVED: Patrick Harriott

SECONDED: Dawn McConnell

RESOLVED:

THAT the meeting be adjourned at 2:47 PM.

CARRIED BY CONSENT

10. Next Meeting: Thursday, February 20, 2025 – Confirmed