



WALK
"We Are Like Kin"

Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre

Board of Directors Roles

&

Responsibilities

Handbook

Introduction

This handbook was developed to give newly elected Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Elder Advisor, Youth Advisor, and Board Members an overview of their positions and duties.

This handbook includes tips for each position, skills, and knowledge required to be effective in the position and sources of advice and assistance.

Role of the Board of Directors

The Executive of the Board of Directors (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) is responsible for the leadership and administration at the direction of the entire Board of Directors as well as the operation of the day to day business of the the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre.

The “job” of all Board members is to advance the interests of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre and its community members. The best run boards are those that successfully advance the interest of their members within a culture of problem-solving.

The Board of Directors represent the members of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre at the local level by working with the OFIFC (Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres), the provincial level, to negotiate agreements, provide services and programs. The Board of Directors also represent the community members by ensuring that governments do not violate their constitutional rights or laws (health, harvesting, human rights, etc.) that affect the community members.

The Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre is an organization where the citizens work together to solve problems in the purpose of improving the quality of life for the First Nation, Inuit, and Metis, both Status and Non-Status people who reside in the urban environment of The District Municipality of Muskoka. The Executive's job is to coordinate these activities and ensure that the citizens have adequate information, advice, and funds to deal effectively with community problems and concerns.

The Board of Directors finds its terms of reference and mandate in the MIFC Bylaws and the OFIFC Code of Ethics and OFIFC membership agreement. As well, reference to the Mission Statement is advised.



Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre

Mission Statement

The Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre administers programs to the District Municipality of Muskoka region in areas such as health, family support, employment and training, education, children, and youth initiative as well as cultural awareness and activities.

The Friendship Centre is an organization whose values are built upon mutual respect, trust, open communication and teamwork between its employees, the organization, and the community.

The Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre is committed to improving the quality of life for Indigenous people living in an urban environment by supporting self determination and encouraging equal access to and participation in society.

Chair

Role of the Chair

- The Chair is the Board's leader and spokesperson. The Chair is responsible for identifying problems affecting the citizens and proposing strategies for dealing with these problems.
- To help the community members solve community problems, the Chair, **with the assistance of the Board of Directors**, develops and implements plans to build solidarity and innovation.
- To build innovation and solidarity, the Chair must ensure that the membership is informed about the activities of the Board of Directors, the programs and services available.
- The Chair is responsible for all of the activities undertaken by the Board of Directors. To ensure that the Chair is not doing all of the work, effective Chairs delegate as much work as possible. Chairs should encourage others to get involved, delegate tasks to those most likely to carry them out and see that each job is completed on time.

Thus, a significant role of the Chair is to motivate the Board and the membership.

Duties of the Chair

The Chair shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors; may be one of the signing authorities on contracts, cheques, etc, as authorized and ordered by the Board of Directors, transact other business as may pertain to the office of the Chair and which may be necessary for the proper functioning of the Board.

General Meetings of the Membership (aka AGM)

- When present, presides at all meetings of the membership
- Reports on their activities
- Sees that activities accepted by the membership have been carried out
- Promotes attendance at meetings

Board and Executive Meetings

- When present, presides at all meetings of the Board of Directors
- Leads discussion on future plans for council activities
- Leads discussion on executive recommendations for activities to be taken to the general meetings for ratification
- Helps prepare the report of executive board activities
- Sees that all committee and executive board reports are ready for the general meeting (AGM)
- Assigns people to carry out tasks voted on by the community membership and sets deadlines for their completion.

Committees

- Serves as spokesperson for the Board

General Administration

- Has the responsibility of the general management and supervision of the affairs and operation of the MIFC.
- Exercises general supervision over the affairs of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Enforces the Bylaws of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Allocates work to other members of the Executive, to committees and citizens and sees that the assignments are carried out within the deadlines set by the Executive.
- Sees that the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre carries out the policies and programs of the OFIFC.
- Acts as the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre's spokesperson at press conferences, newspaper interviews, etc.
- Assists in recruiting interested citizens for vacant Board positions.
- With the Secretary, or other officers appointed by the Board of Directors, shall sign all by-laws and membership certificates.
- The Chair shall perform all duties incidental to the office and shall have such other powers and duties as may from time to time be assigned by the Board of Directors.

End of Term of Office

At the end of their term of office, the Chair shall turn over to their successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones, and any other equipment belonging to the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Vice-Chair

Role of the Vice-Chair:

- The Vice-Chair is the Chair's Assistant.
- Vice-Chairs perform the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair. For example, the Vice-Chair chairs all council meetings and usually chairs all committee meetings.
- In addition, Vice-Chairs usually chair Executive Board Meetings so that the Chair has more opportunities to take part in the meetings.

In addition to these standard duties, many Boards have given Vice-Chairs responsibility for other essential tasks, for example, membership communications, board and membership education, community outreach, equality issues, representing specific groups of the membership, etc.

Duties of the Vice-Chair:

- The Vice-Chair shall perform the Chair's duties in the absence of that officer, and, in case that the resignation or death of the Chair, shall perform the duties of the Chair until such vacancy is filled as provided in the MIFC By-laws and election procedures.
- The Vice-Chair shall also preside when called upon by the Chair and at times when the Chair may be temporarily unable to discharge the duties of that office.

General Membership Meetings:

- Sets Agenda and Chairs meetings
- Decides on questions of law and parliamentary procedures subject to appeal by the membership
- Casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie
- Spokesperson in the absence of the Chair.

Board and Executive Meetings:

- Chairs the meeting

Committees:

- Sits as an ex-officio member of all committees
- Act on assigned committees

MIFC Administration:

- Completes duties delegated by the Chair
- Assumes Chair's duties when the Chair is absent

Tips for Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Chairing Meetings:

- If you have never chaired meetings before, or if you are uncertain about parliamentary procedure, a publication, “Tips for the Chairperson”, is a good resource for those unfamiliar with the rules of order
- Request from the Board of Directors to be able to participate in Non-Profit Governance Training workshop.
- Along with the Secretary, post or distribute an agenda before the meeting. Ensure that all committees are ready to report. Make sure that reports are short and to the point.
- Don't get too involved in what is being discussed. It's hard to chair and take part in the discussion at the same time. If you think that essential points are being missed, hand the gavel to the Chair and “leave the chair” before you speak. Remember, the Chair should not usually have an opinion or weigh in on a particular subject; the Chair simply “chairs” the meeting.

Board Administration:

- At each Board / Executive meeting, go through each item that was voted on during the regular Board or Membership meeting and make sure that someone is assigned to carry out the motion and that a deadline is agreed to.
- Ensure that the Executive, membership, and committee members reflect the diverse groups within the Board of Directors.

Communication:

- To lead effectively, the Chair and Vice-Chair must know what is going on in all parts of the community and what is happening with other OFIFC members in the province. This means ensuring regular meetings with regional reps and that the Board of Directors establishes a positive relationship with the OFIFC.
- Information must be passed on to the membership regularly at meetings and through notices. Regular communication with the citizenship and an open attitude encouraging citizens' involvement in community activities are the keys to a successful MIFC Board of Directors.

Some Skills and Knowledge Required:

To be an effective Chair or Vice-Chair it is your responsibility to learn more about:

- OFIFC Code of Ethics
- OFIFC Membership agreement
- OFIFC By-laws
- MIFC By-laws
- Labour Laws

- Board Governance good practices
- Public speaking skills
- Negotiating skills
- Leadership skills (how to get community membership involved, how to motivate people, etc.)

Sources of Advice and Assistance:

- Former Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- Chairs in other OFIFC communities (meet them at OFIFC gatherings)
- Experienced members of your Board of Directors / Executive
- Your OFIFC regional representative
- Community Workshops
- Community Relations Branch Staff at OFIFC
- Non-Profit Governance Training Workshops
- any other required OFIFC training/workshops

End of Term:

At the end of their term of office, the Chair and/or Vice-Chair shall turn over to their successor(s) all properties and assets, including funds, books, and records, computers, phones, and any other equipment belonging to the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Secretary

Role of the Secretary

The Secretary's job is vital in promoting the Board of Directors goals of innovation and solidarity.

- The Secretary is responsible for record-keeping and written communications.
- It is the Secretary's job to keep the citizens informed about what activities the Board of Directors is doing. Keeping the membership informed is the key to building interest and involvement of citizens in council activities.
- Keeping and maintaining records of decisions taken by the Board of Directors and information such as letters to and from the Board and with other organizations are vital to the smooth and efficient running of the Board of Directors and the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Duties of the Secretary

- The Secretary shall keep a correct, complete, and impartial record of each Board of Directors and the Executive's meetings and meetings of the general membership.
- Each record of proceedings shall include a copy of the financial report presented by the Treasurer.
- In addition, the Secretary shall perform such other duties as the Board of Directors or by-laws may direct.

Record-keeping

- Takes minutes at all Board and Community meetings
- Maintains the files of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre

Internal Communications

- Prepares meeting notices and agendas for Executive/Board, and community membership meetings
- Circulates minutes of Executive/Board meetings
- Receives, logs, & distributes all incoming mail
- Develops and distributes a list of all correspondence received
- Reports on all important correspondence and leads the discussion on business arising from correspondence at Executive/Board and community membership meetings
- Maintains the communication directives of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Works with the OFIFC Liaison branch on all platforms relating to communication

External Communications

- Receive all communication from outside the Board of Directors
- Respond to all correspondence
- Order all office supplies and equipment

Tips for Secretaries

Taking Minutes

- The purpose of Minutes is to record the decisions made. There is usually no need to take word for word notes on the debate that leads to the final decision. But the final decision must be clearly stated so that others reading the minutes later can understand the actions required.
- It is helpful to note who will be responsible for carrying out each motion passed and when the task will be carried out.

Secretary Reports

- To save time, do not read each piece of correspondence but circulate a list of all correspondence and go over only those items that require a decision or those of interest to the membership (such as details of an important settlement)

Meeting Notices and Agenda

- Post Meeting Notices and Agenda on MIFC website, Facebook, bulletin board at least a week before the meeting date.

Bulletin Board Pamphlets

- Many members do not attend membership meetings regularly. To keep non-attending members informed, you might consider posting one-page summaries of important activities such as health, committee meetings, Board meetings, etc, on MIFC website, through a newsletter, email newsletter, or other social media platforms.

Letter Writing

- Start by listing the reasons you are writing the letter, then list the points you want to make. Next, turn each point into one or two short sentences.

Filing

- Only file things that someone will need to refer to in the future and which will not be readily available somewhere else.
- Don't change an existing filing system unless people have trouble finding things.
- If you decide to change the system, consider filing things by subject by year. For example, sometimes moving the top file drawers down the cabinet at the end of each year and moving the bottom drawer to the top after removing all but the most critical files (meeting minutes, important court decisions, settlements, invoices, etc.) are stored elsewhere.

Skills and Knowledge required being an effective recording secretary

- Knowledge of how Board of Directors operate and what makes these Boards effective
- Ability to compose letters, bulletins, etc.
- Ability to take minutes at meetings
- Ability to organize files
- Ability to make verbal reports to the community membership and the Executive/Board of Directors.

Sources of Advice and Assistance

- Former Secretaries
- Secretaries in other OFIFC Friendship Centres
- Your OFIFC Liaison connection
- Governance Training and Development Workshops

End of Term

At the end of the term of office, the Secretary shall turn over to their successor all properties and assets, including funds, books, and records, computers, phones, and any other equipment belonging to the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Treasurer

Role of Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the money of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre. This means that they are responsible for maintaining and reporting on income and spending activities needed to advance the memberships' interests. They are also responsible for seeing that spending priorities reflect the Mission Statement of the Muskoka Indigenous Friendship Centre and ongoing goals. And that money is spent in accordance with the desires of the membership.

Treasurers must keep the membership informed about the financial health of the MIFC and how their money has been spent. Remember it is the money of the membership. Members need to have confidence that their money is being spent according to their wishes, and self-determined interests. Otherwise, support for the Board of Directors will dwindle.

Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping all financial accounts of the MIFC and shall be responsible for maintaining correct and proper accounts of all its programs and services. Maintenance of the financial accounts of the MIFC shall require that the Treasurer, throughout their term, and on behalf of the Board of Directors/Executive, be responsible for maintaining, organizing, safeguarding, and keeping on file all supporting documents, authorizations, invoices, and/or vouchers for every disbursement made, as well as records and supporting documents for all income received by the MIFC.

The Treasurer shall regularly make financial reports to meetings of the Board of Directors / Executive and each regular AGM of the membership. Detailing all income and expenditures for the period.

Income and Deposits

- Receives and deposits all monies
- Write receipts for all cash received
- Records all income transactions

Expenses

- Makes all money disbursements
- Receives a receipt or expense voucher for all disbursements
- Ensures that 2 signing officers sign all cheques, that all cheque stubs are completed, and that cheques are numbered
- Records all transactions

Financial Records

- Records all transactions
- Presents a monthly written Financial Report to the Board of Directors / Executive
- Presents an annual Financial Report to the membership at the AGM.

- Completes monthly bank reconciliation
- Completes a statement of Income & Expenses form annually
- Maintains a receipt book for all cash transactions, record all payments on cheque stubs, and keep copies of all vouchers received from the Executive / Board Directors, membership, and staff.
- Keeps a copy of all minutes of Board / Executive meetings where financial payments were authorized.
- Files all expense vouchers, invoices, and receipts.

Tips for Treasurers

Reports

- Distribute a copy of the monthly Treasurers Report to the Board of Directors/Executive
- Make a short verbal report on the financial health of the MIFC, noting significant expenditures and the bank balance at the beginning and the end of the month. Be prepared to answer questions on all expenditures.

Budgets

- Treasurers should prepare a yearly budget. The discussion about the budget should center on what the MIFC will need to do to be more effective. These plans for new activities should then be costed along with estimates of the costs of ongoing activities. Finally, the resulting budget should be presented to the membership for approval. The budgeting process allows the Board of Directors / Executive to assess the work they have been doing to start planning for the future rather than react to events and crises as they happen.

Skills and Knowledge Required to be an Effective Treasurer

- MIFC Bylaws
- Bookkeeping Skills
- Financial Procedures
- Ability to make verbal and written reports to the membership

Sources of Advice and Assistance

- Former Treasurers
- Treasurers in other OFIFC chapters
- Experienced members of your Executive/Board
- Your OFIFC Liaison Department

End of Term

At the end of their term of office, the Treasurer shall turn over to their successor all properties and assets, including funds, books and records, computers, phones, and any other equipment belonging to the MIFC.

Board Member

Board Member

The Board Member is responsible for serving the Board of Directors as a voting member and regularly attends all Board of Directors meetings. A Board Member should be aware and involved in developing policies, procedures, regulations, and assist in managing the day-to-day activities for the MIFC. In addition, the Board Member needs to monitor finances, programs and the overall performance of the MIFC itself.

Duties

- Attend all Board meetings
- Participate in development and operation of the MIFC
- Keep well informed on council issues and business
- Show commitment to MIFC through regular active participation in MIFC events
- Contribute skills, knowledge and experience to the Board of Directors and the MIFC
- Participate in Board of Directors decision making during Board meetings
- Assume leadership roles in Board and MIFC activities
- Educate themselves about the needs of the community

Elder Advisor

The Role of the Elder Advisor

The Elder Advisor is the spiritual guide. An Elder Advisor passes along knowledge of traditional concepts and beliefs, spirituality, ceremonies, and other practices. Conducts traditional spiritual traditions and provides advice and guidance. The following is a proposed role for an Elder Advisor:

- Open and Close all meetings with a Prayer
- Provide counsel and support to all membership persons
- Peacemakers
- Unbiased and respectful
- Be a positive role model
- Be kind and honest
- Provide traditional teachings
- Maintain confidentiality
- Respect other cultures and traditions
- Contribute to the vision of our children and grandchildren
- Promote unity and nation-building
- Create a positive relationship with other Elders
- Encourage people to be kind and respectful to one another
- Storyteller

Youth Advisor

Role of the Youth Advisor

The MIFC is strongly committed to ensuring that urban Indigenous Youth are meaningfully engaged in the MIFC structure. This consists of the ongoing ability of MIFC youth who are at least 16 years of age to be recognized and encouraged to participate in the MIFC self-determined governmental structures at the local level.

The Youth Advisor on the Board of Directors is a role that enables youth to play a significant role in the operation and function of the Council. The Youth Advisor will act as an ambassador for youth in the community and ensure that their voices are heard.

A Youth Advisor is not a Board Member in the traditional sense, does not hold any of the rights, powers, duties or liabilities of a Board Member, and is not entitled to exercise a binding vote on any matter before the Board of Directors or any of its sub-committees.

Duties of the Youth Advisor

- The Youth Advisor will discuss and bring forward all issues pertaining to the youth
- The Youth Advisor will provide guidance and direction for local youth
- Organization of and implementation of youth activities will be a priority for the Youth Advisor.
- The Youth Advisor will act as a liaison and provide information concerning youth-related activities and issues.
- The Youth Advisor will ensure that the Board of Directors is well informed and updated on youth issues as required

The Youth Advisor will also act as and carry out the same duties and responsibilities as a Board Member on the Board of Directors.

Membership

A Member of the MIFC is a vital part of the organization. We are a self-determined and directed community and that means knowing what the Members need and desire to achieve the mandate of improving the quality of life for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, both Status and Non-Status who reside in urban environment of The District Municipality of Muskoka.

Members are a vital part of the Board of Directors. The MIFC exists to meet the needs of its' membership, and the Board of Directors help the MIFC accomplish those goals.

Membership is responsible for electing the leadership. As well, the member has a responsibility to attend meetings and provides general direction. Members can get more from the experience by volunteering for committees, and fundraising activities. Members also help with growing the membership, support the Board of Directors, and other members, and work towards the spirit of our motto: WALK – We Are Like Kin.