

Big Grassy River First Nation

Elder's Advisory Council



Terms of reference

(established January 2011)

Adopted February 23, 2011

Elders in assembly

Big Grassy River Elders Advisory Council

Logo interpretation:

- The six center figures represent chief and council
- the Four Red figures standing behind Chief and Council

Providing advice and direction,

- Four parts of the circle represent the 4 directions and the 4 seasons
- red dots around the logo represent the band members

“Terms of Reference”

The Big Grassy River Elders Advisory Council is pleased to present the following “terms of reference” document for use by current and future Elders joining the Council. This document, at a minimum, describes the purpose, scope and authority of the Council . The purpose of the Council was a topic that was given much thought and discussion throughout our planning process. The Elders have agreed that you should not proceed to create an Advisory Council without a clearly defined purpose.

Organization Name

Big Grassy River Elders Advisory Council

Type

ADVISORY COUNCIL to the Leadership and Members of the Nation

Purpose

- Provide insight and advice to Leadership as required
- Provide guidance in areas of Governance, traditions, cultural undertakings, (Pow-Wows, traditional ceremonies, language instruction, etc.)
- Act as a judicial body in cases where restorative justice is the preferred avenue of resolution
- Assisting in areas of language arts
- Building a strong nation through empowerment of our members and a respect for the teachings of our ancient ones.

Scope:

- Act as the conscience of positive decision making for the nation.
- All community affairs of a governance, cultural, spiritual or traditional base.

Out of Scope:

- Any political partisanship or lobbying. Part of our approach is to rise above the political centers and give meaning to the subject of good governance.

Authority

The Big Grassy Elders Advisory Council is a recommendation and advisory body only. At times we will make internal decisions and approve of our own actions on a consensus building basis.

Membership

The Big Grassy Elders describe an Elder as “anyone who is sought after for their wisdom, knowledge and caring for humanity”. The senior elders of the Big Grassy First Nation honor and respect all members with special gifts and attributes of the traditional Elders (senior). We welcome their attendance at our regular meetings and participation in special events and ceremonies. For general purposes, however, the minimum age limit to sit as a presiding member of the Advisory Council has been set at 55 years of age.

The Elders have adopted a list of individuals who have accepted the title of “Elder”. From this list, Elders in assembly can appoint spokespersons to represent the views of the assembly of Elders.

Agreement to follow the lead of previous elders:

- there should be one spokesperson to speak to or for the community after the Elders have a discussion/talk about an issue/matter;
- and, when speaking to Chief and Council

- One spokesperson - to avoid confusion.

- Elders should be able to help if band employees have questions/concerns.

- Elders will decide how to organize the group.
- any Elder can advise/give direction if asked.

- Many elders remember when the old men used to gather to discuss/ talk about issues/matters. Now the women also have a voice and contribute their gifts to the Elders circle.

- Elders look forward to participating in community affairs for direction/advice on issues/matters concerning the Nation.

- Elders will give direction, not make decisions.
- Elders request full disclosure about certain issues/matters in order to give informed direction/advice.
- In keeping with the 7 Teachings, the Elders promote and encourage people to help each other instead of feeling jealousy.
- Elders appoint their own spokesperson(s) for the Elders Advisory Council.
- The Elders in assembly have appointed the following people as

Mr. Robert Archie (Anakanootamaage)

Ms. Geraldine Archie (Owiichitoo)

Mr. Stanley Jack (Owiichitoo)

Geraldine and Stanley agreed to stand as alternate spokespeople in the absence of the (Anakanootamaage).

ACCOUNTABILITY:

For the preservation and protection of the integrity of the Elders Council as a vital community body; we hold ourselves responsible for honoring and modeling the principles of the 7 Teachings. Within our core function, the Elders will take steps to ensure that the members of the Elders Council hold each other responsible in this undertaking.

Meeting arrangements:

Elders will meet once per month (ie: every second Tuesday of the Month) at the Esiniwabe Medical Center Boardroom until such time as the Roundhouse is relocated and re-furbished for occupancy.

Reporting/Communications

The Elders will maintain a continuing dialogue with Chief and Council of the Nation in a mutually respectful relationship. The Elders Council may from time to time convey their ideas and intents on paper, but we will maintain our “oral traditions” at our discretion.

Resources and budget

For all intents we will rely on physical resources of the Band to be provided for the Elder’s use. (Meeting rooms, audio visual equipment, technical helpers, etc.) Funds required from time to time will emanate from Band available finances and/or, the technical helpers will write for grants and subsidies to support the Elders. Funds raised by the Elders will be kept in a separate bank account for use by the Elders in furthering the objects of their assembly.

Deliverables (reactive and pro-active)

- Provide traditional/cultural procedural information/guidance to Chief/Council or Band members.
- Provide assistance to the Pow-Wow committee at their request
- Provide assistance with Community conflict resolution when all other avenues have been exhausted.
- Act as a judicial body for the Community in areas of mischief/misbehavior and as a vehicle in the Restorative Justice process for the Nation.
- Elders are agreeable to requests to sit on Community committees.
- Conduct language tables in the community and with the community members and youth. (pro-active)
- Organize and coordinate an annual Elder Gathering. (pro-active)
- Discussing and arriving at ways and means to making Big Grassy a model Nation.

Review

The Big Grassy Elders Advisory Council will “formally” review the terms of reference once per year and in certain cases “informally” as the need arises.

Addendum: Big Grassy Elders Membership List
 Big Grassy River Elders Advisory Protocol
 Elders Advisory Mission Statement
 The 7 Teachings

BIG GRASSY RIVER ELDERS ADVISORY COUNCIL
(as of January 25, 2011)

Robert Archie	276-4412
Albert Comegan	488-5642
Caroline Comegan	" "
Melvina Copenace	488-9920
Geraldine Archie	488-5323
Bessie Tom	488-1054
Marlene Indian	488-9902
Patsy Tuesday	488-9732
Bill Morrison	488-1157
Bella Andy	488-1157
Joe Andy	488-1145
Gary Tuesday	488-5553
Stella Tuesday	" "
Fred Jack	488-9946
Yvonne Jack	488-1168
Stanley Jack	488-9942
Leonard Morrison	488-9820
Alvin Copenace	276-4752
Jim Farmer	(passed away)
Victoria Gibbins	488-5593
Reggie Morrison	488-5670
Lila Andy	488-9935
Virginia Archie	488-9937
Lucy Copenace	488-5436
Martin Tuesday	488-9969 or 18077380436

Accepted by ratification on January 25, 2011 and agreed to by the following Elders Virginia Archie, Bill Morrison, Melvina Copenace, Bella Andy, Gary Tuesday, Joe Andy, Fred Jack, Leonard Morrison, Stanley Jack.

BIG GRASSY RIVER ELDERS ADVISORY COUNCIL

PROTOCOL

The Elders Advisory Council can be approached by any community member and is at the service of the Leadership to assist them whenever necessary. In certain cases, the Advisory Council may deliberate and assign one or more of their members to attend to requests.

The Elders Advisory Council may be contacted directly or through the Indian Registry Administrator: Daryl @ 488-5614

Type of Request	Process/Protocol
Of a personal, spiritual, cultural nature	Approach the Elder or Elders of your choice; from the published list of Elders – Band office bulletin board or Web site Elders link.
Opening ceremonies or special attendance at community or other functions:	Approach the Elder or Elders of your choice; from the published list of Elders – Band office bulletin board or Web site Elders link.
Community redress issues: (Complaints/grievances)	When all avenues of resolution have been exhausted, up to and including Leadership consideration; the Elders can then be provided with the history of the grievance/complaint and sought after for their consideration and deliberation.
Traditional Healing (sweat lodges, medicines, tobacco/gifts, feasts, ceremonies)	Individuals, groups to seek out the Elder(s) of their choice with the special gifts outlines in the “gifts and interests” inventory sheet posted in the Band office and under the Elders Web Link.
Naming Ceremonies	Individuals, groups to seek out the Elder(s) of their choice with the special gifts outlines in the “gifts and interests” inventory sheet posted in the Band office and under the Elders Web Link.
Regalia (bustles, roaches, jingle dresses, moccasins, pouches, Eagle Fans, grass dance regalia-traditional, Staffs, ribbon shirts, etc)	Individuals, groups to seek out the Elder(s) of their choice with the special gifts outlines in the “gifts and interests” inventory sheet posted in the Band office and under the Elders Web Link.

Customary respect when approaching Elder(s): Any individual or group approaches an Elder or Elders with an offering of tobacco before making any requests.

Any services that require “out of pocket” financial expense by Elders should be covered by a monetary gift, to off-set those expenses.

BIG GRASSY RIVER ELDERS ADVISORY COUNCIL

MISSION STATEMENT

“The Big Grassy River Elders Advisory Council is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the Ojibway culture, language and traditions through the 7 teachings, as passed down by our ancestors in honor of the creator”

We are also devoted to the notion of Self-Governance for our Nation to re-claim our independence and benefit future generations.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

We will accomplish our intentions in the following way;

- Sharing our gifts with Leaders and community members;
- Sharing our knowledge with those who seek the good life;
- Working in partnership with community programs and services, when requested;
- Acting as advisors to our Nation’s leaders in the decision making process;
- Working with Elders from other First Nations, when the opportunity arises;

The Seven teachings

Wisdom (Nib-waa-kaa-win)

Love (Gizhaawenidiwin) (Zaagi'idiwin)

Respect (Manazoonidiwin) (Minaandedamowin)
(Kitenjigewin)

Bravery (Zoongede'ewin)

Honesty (Gwekaadiziwin)

Humility (Debendindizowin)
(humbleness, modesty, meekness, equal to others but
not above)

Truth (Debwewin)