

**Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission  
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 23, 2023**

**The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission acknowledges this meeting was held on  
the Traditional Territory of the Syilx/Okanagan Peoples.**

✓ = Attended    X= Absent    \* Not required    A= Alternate Attended

**Advisory Council Executive:**

✓	Calissi, James, Chair
✓	Larson, Janice, Vice-Chair
X	Checkley, Mike, Past Chair

X	Hughes-Geekie, Sharon
X	Nagy, Angela
X	Quinn, Paula

**Advisory Council:**

X	Alexander, Andrea
X	Barker, Phil
X	Benson, Gavin
X	Blitz, Maurice
X	Bruns, Myles
X	Buchanan, Brad
✓	Carroll, Mandi
X	Cannan, Ron
X	Collins, Dave
✓	Csek, Nikki
✓	Dawn, Jeremy
X	Douglas, Laurel
X	Evans, Bob

✓	Friesen, Jason
X	Gipps, Paul
X	Harper, Shauna
✓	Ireland, Blair
X	Labrecque, Cory
X	Lewis, Chris
✓	Malcolm, Ryan
X	Mitchell, Kray
X	North, Steve
X	Preston, Adriana
X	Price, Dan
X	Heather Robinson
X	Quinn, Paula

✓	Ritchie, Geoff
X	Rogers, Dan
X	Shaffer, Carollyn
✓	Stack, Luke
X	Stewart, Tony
X	Sulentich, Ruth
X	Threlfall, Rich
✓	Thurnheer, Laura
X	Udzenija, Nicole
✓	Wentworth, Noel
X	White, Jill
X	Widmer, Larry

**Staff and Consultants:**

✓	Braun, Tory
✓	Lesack, Sascha

X	Mallory, Krista
✓	Stark Leader, Myrna

X	Allin, Paige
✓	Weston, Eva

**Guests:**

Chief Robert Louie
Sally Ginter

Chair Loyal Woolridge
Corie Griffiths

Jodie Foster

## **1. Opening Remarks**

Regional Board Chair Loyal Woolridge provided opening remarks.

## **2. Welcoming Remarks**

Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer of the Regional District of Central Okanagan, provided welcoming remarks.

## **3. Call to Order**

Advisory Committee Chair James Calissi called the meeting to order at 7:36 am.

## **4. Adoption of Minutes**

Minutes of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023, unanimously approved.

## **5. Westbank First Nation and Indigenous Economic Development Presentation & Discussion**

Chief Robert Louie, Westbank First Nation (WFN) provided a presentation on WFN's history and focus on economic development. The presentation highlighted the impact of indigenous communities, like WFN, in Canada and discussed the developmental trends in diverse sectors.

WFN has faced challenges in the forestry sector, resulting in the loss of thousands of hectares of land. They have a focus on land acquisition, with five reserves totaling 5,340 acres. The population of WFN is approximately 900, with a significant number of non-natives living on their lands compared to other reserves in Canada.

WFN has over 600 registered businesses on their lands, with close to 100 being member-owned. The community is motivated by economic development and business growth. Statistics were provided on WFN's growth and economic impact, as well as the overall economic impact of indigenous peoples in Canada.

Provincial and regional indigenous economic development trends have expanded beyond local opportunities to include sectors such as casinos, tourism, fishing, forestry, and real estate. WFN's tourism sector focuses on culture and language, such as the Sncewips Heritage Museum. They also have a presence in the viticulture industry. However, the industry is facing challenges due to environmental changes.

Resource development on indigenous land requires reconciliation and the involvement of indigenous people to ensure economic benefits flow to local communities. WFN had the opportunity to collaborate with the EOC and emergency staff during the recent fire, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in emergency situations. Long-term efforts are needed to make the forest more resilient to wildfires, including legislative and policy changes.

As a result of their involvement in recent fires, WFN aims to establish an emergency training and coordination center for indigenous peoples. They continue to engage in regular burns as part of their traditional culture to clean up the forest. The development of indigenous peoples in the economy is complex and multi-faceted, requiring self-governance and decision-making authority to expedite community progress toward self-sufficiency and sustainability.

Close collaboration, policy changes, and partnerships were identified as essential factors for achieving the goals of indigenous economic development.

## **6. *New Business***

- No new business

### ***Adjournment:***

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 am.

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