October 29, 2026 Community Deputation – Question & Answer Recap

1. Organizational Review and Succession Planning

Question: Why has the organizational review motion not been implemented, and why has funding not been secured as a priority? When will planning, training from within and succession planning begin, rather than hiring outside the organization?

Summary of Response: Chief and Council acknowledged that a previous Council passed Motion 14 on April 7, 2025, calling for an external evaluation of programs, public engagement and the sharing of review findings publicly where appropriate. The motion had not been implemented, and earlier attempts to secure external funding were unsuccessful.

Council agreed that an organizational review is overdue and said a Request for Proposals (RFP) is being prepared to engage an external firm. Regarding succession planning, Council noted that the Personnel Policy provides for internal placements and appointments when positions become available. Council and administration are working to make better use of those provisions for current employees.

Follow-Up Questions and Council Responses

Follow-up question: Why has funding for the review not been treated as a greater priority, and will the review independently assess program effectiveness and communication?

Council's response: Council agreed that an objective review could help improve services and coordination between departments. The Chief also discussed an ongoing, separate policy review involving consultation with Council, staff and community members. Council indicated that Own-Source Revenue may be an option to support the organizational review, but no funding allocation or start date was confirmed.

2. Transparency, Closed Meetings and Election Eligibility

Question: Why are councillors being silenced when they are elected to represent members? Why is Chief and Council not being transparent, and are councillors being banned from running again?

Summary of Response: Council did not agree with the allegations that councillors are being silenced or barred from seeking re-election and said that no substantiated evidence had been presented to support those claims. Council reiterated its commitment to transparency, while noting that some matters must remain confidential under the Band Meeting Rules.

Council explained that closed sessions may be appropriate for legal, personnel, child welfare, health and other sensitive matters, particularly where the privacy of members or minors must be protected.

Follow-Up Questions and Council Responses

Follow-up question: Does a statement about transparency from one councillor represent the whole Council?

Council's response: Council explained that members of Chief and Council discuss the submitted questions together and agree on the responses presented to the community, using the information available to them.

Follow-up question: What happens to records when a member chooses a closed Council session, and should members be told the implications before deciding?

Council's response: Council explained that a Band Council Resolution (BCR) is still created for decisions made in closed session, but what is discussed does not appear in public meeting minutes. The Chief acknowledged concerns about the absence of closed-session minutes and expressed support for reviewing confidential recordkeeping as part of the policy review. Council also recognized that members should receive clearer information about the open- and closed-session process.

Follow-up question: Can a member receive a copy of a BCR resulting from their closed-session request?

Council's response: Council confirmed that the BCR remains a record even if the session is closed and indicated that the member can be provided with the resolution. Members emphasized the importance of being told how to obtain the record, retaining the BCR number and understanding the next steps after their request. Council acknowledged that this guidance could be improved.

3. Ball Diamond Improvements and Recreation Planning

Question: Why is the community ball diamond not being used or maintained to a usable standard? Could it be rented for softball and baseball games in Bruce County, given that there is a certified umpire in the community?

Summary of Response: Council acknowledged that the ball diamond had fallen into disrepair and that deteriorated fencing and other conditions had created safety concerns. Council advised that funds had recently become available specifically for ball diamond improvements and that work was being considered to restore the facility to a safe, usable condition.

Council also discussed its plans to establish dedicated recreation management. A Recreation Manager is expected to help coordinate facilities, programming and ongoing use of recreational spaces, including the ball diamond.

Follow-Up Questions and Council Responses

Follow-up question: With money previously spent on the bleachers, how will Council prevent the ball diamond from deteriorating again after improvements are made?

Council's response: Council discussed the need for renewed fencing, site improvements and greater ongoing use by people of different ages. Council also pointed to dedicated recreation management as a way to coordinate upkeep and programming. A detailed maintenance plan was not presented.

Follow-up question: Will the existing concession stand be removed or retained?

Council's response: Council discussed possible changes to the ball diamond layout, including movement of the backstop, which could affect the concession stand. A member emphasized the value of keeping a canteen available during games. Council agreed that refreshments would be useful, but did not confirm whether the concession stand would be removed, relocated or retained.

Follow-up question: Can the ball diamond be used for informal games as well as organized programs, and is there a community recreation strategy?

Council's response: Council said recreation planning and a work plan are in development, with job descriptions and a budget having been worked on. The Chief acknowledged that the plan needs further refinement and suggested making it available for members to review. Council expressed its intention to support greater use of community facilities and more coordinated recreation opportunities.

4. Publishing the Annual Administration Budget

Question: Will Chief and Council commit to publishing an annual budget that outlines allocations and planned spending for community programs and services beginning in 2027?

Summary of Response: Council confirmed that it is willing to begin sharing the annual administration budget for 2027 through the members-only area of the Nawash app, with printed copies available to members who do not have digital access.

Council said that the Finance Policy is under review and that it would like to establish a regular schedule for budget preparation, approval before the next fiscal year, and publication. Further discussion through the Finance and Audit Committee was encouraged.

Follow-Up Questions and Council Responses

Follow-up question: Can the Finance and Audit Committee help develop the 2027 budget process and encourage program-level input?

Council's response: Council welcomed the involvement of the Finance and Audit Committee. A member suggested beginning preparations promptly and seeking input from departments about anticipated needs. Council agreed this was an appropriate area for further committee discussion; no detailed consultation schedule was announced.

Follow-up question: Can the outstanding financial audits be completed more quickly?

Council's response: Council acknowledged that the audits remained approximately three years behind and described efforts to complete them on a staggered schedule. Staffing shortages were identified as a constraint. Council discussed a tentative goal of catching up around February or March 2027, depending on staffing and progress; this was not presented as a guaranteed deadline.

Follow-up question: Are Chief and Council expenses and disbursements identified in the audits, and will members receive a clearer breakdown?

Council's response: Council explained that these expenditures form part of the audit reporting and discussed work to separate some expenses previously grouped in broader categories, including miscellaneous expenditures, for clearer review. The discussion did not establish a separate publication date or reporting method for those details.

Follow-up question: Is the Nation still planning to replace its accounting software, given training and staffing challenges with the current system?

Council's response: Council confirmed that payroll systems had already been changed and that work was underway toward a new accounting system. Council also acknowledged broader challenges with aging software and IT equipment.

5. Sandy Beach Road Flooding and Drainage

Question: Following significant flooding on Sandy Beach Road in April, what is being done to minimize or eliminate the risk of future flooding there and in other areas of the community?

Summary of Response: Council acknowledged the flooding concerns and explained that Sandy Beach Road is a low-lying area where the sandy ground, previous road construction and waterline work have contributed to drainage challenges. Council discussed potential engineering work involving road grades, roadside ditches, culverts and, where necessary, easements from affected property holders.

Council stated that Public Works is looking at the problem. During the meeting, the Operations Manager shared that Public Works is working on a roads feasibility study to assess Nation-owned road assets and support future repair planning. No finalized engineering solution or completion date was announced.

Follow-Up Questions and Council Responses

Follow-up question: Why did earlier culvert work stop partway along Sandy Beach Road, and what is being done about a culvert removed during waterline construction?

Council's response: Council explained that appropriate drainage may require engineering assessments, changes to road grades, roadside and cross-road culverts, and potentially access agreements with neighbouring property holders. Council also noted that a culvert removed during waterline work had not been replaced and said this issue would be examined. No final design or replacement schedule was provided.

Follow-up question: Can First Nations emergency management or infrastructure funding be pursued to help address recurring flooding?

Council's response: A member raised the possibility of federal funding. Council indicated that funding opportunities and engineering support should be explored through the Public Works process, but did not confirm that a funding application had been made for Sandy Beach Road.

Follow-up question: Why is water standing in newly dug ditches on Farm Road instead of draining away?

Council's response: Council acknowledged that roadside ditches are intended to move water and said the matter could be looked into. A cause or corrective measure was not established during the meeting.

Follow-up question: What is being done about other homes affected by repeated spring runoff and basement or crawl-space flooding?

Council's response: This concern was raised during the later open discussion. The Chief indicated that she had not been aware of the specific situation described and said she would look into it. No project plan or timeline was provided.

Additional Discussion and Open Conversation

Post-Secondary Education Funding and Fairness

An individual submission about post-secondary education funding was responded to privately because it involved personal circumstances and the Board of Education administers education matters at arm's length from Council. The general issue was subsequently raised during the open discussion.

Follow-up question: How will Council ensure consistent treatment of members on the post-secondary waitlist after an exceptional funding decision for someone who was not a registered Band member?

Council's response: Council acknowledged the education funding waitlist and noted that Own-Source Revenue is sometimes used to supplement available education funding. The Chief explained that a previous exceptional decision reflected compassion for the circumstances of a family in the community. A participant clarified that the concern was about fairness and the precedent for future requests, not the family itself. Council acknowledged the need to develop a clearer policy for such requests and to work with the Board of Education on the broader waitlist issue. No new eligibility rules were announced.

Program Responsiveness and Telephone Service

Follow-up question: Why are calls and messages to some programs not being returned, requiring members to raise operational issues directly with Chief and Council?

Council's response: Council acknowledged members' frustration about unreturned calls and messages. The Chief described problems with outdated telephone equipment and noted that decisions about replacing equipment must also account for a proposed future administrative building. Council agreed that the telephone and response issues need to be addressed, but did not provide a specific timetable.

Staffing Vacancies, Career Development and Succession Planning

Follow-up question: How will the Nation fill management vacancies and encourage qualified members and graduates to work in community programs?

Council's response: Council acknowledged recruitment and capacity challenges. In response to concerns about the vacant Housing Manager position, the Chief explained that a selected candidate had declined an offer and that the position would need to be reposted. Council and participants discussed career fairs, earlier exposure to career opportunities and stronger pathways into community employment.

Follow-up question: How can employees receive succession training and take on higher-level responsibilities without doing additional work without compensation?

Council's response: A member explained that some employees are already receiving on-the-job succession training but that program budgets do not necessarily provide compensation when they assume additional responsibilities. Council agreed that succession planning requires further work and suggested that supervisors should discuss these issues as part of their regular planning. No compensation framework or funding commitment was confirmed.