

**PSPP Boreal Home Building Training Program
Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes**

In Attendance:

Ernie Harper – Wasagamack First Nation
Elsie Monias – Garden Hill First Nation
Felix Beardy – Garden Hill First Nation
Laurel Gardner – IDSS
Shirley Thompson – University of Manitoba
Rezwanul Hoque – University of Manitoba
Jay Cowan – Anokiiwin Training Institute
Nedra Andersen – Anokiiwin Training Institute

1. Opening Prayer
2. Review of Meeting Purpose and Agenda; Agenda approved by the group.
3. Jay explained how the PSPP funding is flowing through Anokiiwin and emphasized the strong need for extensive reporting for planning and decision making as well as reporting to funders, partners and for the annual audit.
4. Ernie suggested a discussion on registering workers with Apprenticeship (is reaching out to trainees without Grade 12 who will require academic upgrading) He noted that they have a lot of carpenters in the community who are registered as apprentices, but their hours are not being recorded and they need to look at getting those workers documenting their hours. **Action: Need to confirm arrangements with the Apprenticeship Branch for identifying Journeypersons and Designated Trainers who can document apprentices' hours in both communities – IDSS Lead.**
5. It was noted that both Garden Hill First Nation and Wasagamack First Nation both have Mature Student Grade 12 programs to help trainees get their Grade 12.
6. Laurel expressed a concern with “Job Guarantees” wording in the Project Overview and noted that the Project can't guarantee jobs in the communities and would like to see the wording changed to “Job Priorities”. **Action: Change the wording on the Project Overview – Anokiiwin Lead.**
7. Elsie noted that ongoing communication between all the partners is a major issue and suggested that the group review what is happening and how to improve upon communications. **Action: Need to develop and implement effective communications protocols for all partners – Anokiiwin Lead.**
8. Laurel reviewed IDSS' responsibilities on the flow chart Jay provided. She added that IDSS' financial management includes ensuring that the First Nations are providing their contributions. She also commented on how providing support for local instructors is challenging. She agreed with the need for improving ongoing communication between all partners. **Action: Need to identify specific issues regarding support for local instructors and develop required supports – First Nations and IDSS Lead.**

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

9. Shirley indicated she felt a missing piece to project implementation at this time is a gap analysis and someone to ensure appropriate responses to those gaps are developed and implemented. She noted that it needs someone (similar to a principal) who can identify the gaps and implement solutions.
10. Shirley noted that University funding only covers trainees enrolled in a post-secondary institution and that without the PSPP available in future years through INAC (and so she could not apply again) it may be very difficult to work on community-based training with Garden Hill and Wasagamack. In addition the selling of ATI adds more difficulties unless it is bought by a First Nation community organization such as Brokenhead Development Corporation or Wasagamack Education Authority or another Mino Bimaadiziwin partner.
11. Shirley explained how she started the development of the PSPP proposal and brought in IDSS and UCN (which didn't work out and is now why Anokiiwin is a partner). When UCN backed out of the proposal she said that she turned over the final proposal and budget development to IDSS. She confirmed that Anokiiwin was reluctant to being a partner unless its role was limited (because of project commitments it had at that time and into the future). She explained that Laurel and Brian finished off the proposal and budget, removed UCN as the post-secondary partner and added Anokiiwin (all within 24 hours of the proposal deadline). She confirmed that Anokiiwin did not have the opportunity to work on the proposal nor were they involved in the final review.
12. Jay explained how Anokiiwin got involved (24 hours before the proposal was due) He noted that Ray Starr (owner) originally approved Anokiiwin's participation in the project. However, Ray passed shortly thereafter and the future of Anokiiwin was up in the air. Anokiiwin said it would stay on as a partner and sign the Funding Agreement between it and ISC; however, given the uncertainty about Anokiiwin's future after Ray passed, it needed some confirmation that IDSS was prepared to buy Anokiiwin in order to carry the project forward. He noted that despite initial agreements in principle from Laurel that IDSS would purchase Anokiiwin, IDSS was unwilling to do so in the end and the issue on how to move forward without IDSS' commitment has become a major concern for Anokiiwin.
13. Jay discussed what was intended by Anokiiwin's role in Project Planning, Project Management and Project Coordination and its responsibilities under the Project's MOU.
14. Ernie asked for Anokiiwin to explain how Anokiiwin certification would work.
15. Jay explained the process Anokiiwin Training Institute will use to give Certificates for the Project to successful trainees. He noted that once the project curriculum and training activities were fully confirmed, Anokiiwin would develop the criteria for successful completion of the certificate with IDSS. Trainees would then be formally enrolled with Anokiiwin for the program. IDSS would then report on each trainee's participation in project workshops and training activities and Anokiiwin would then determine, in collaboration with IDSS, who would receive Certificates of Completion.

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

16. Laurel noted that IDSS is providing micro-certification to trainees for specific training courses from the various trainers and workshops.
17. Jay explained the difference between certificates and diplomas from Anokiiwin's perspective as a registered private vocational institute. He noted that Anokiiwin can give certificates for any training and workshops they do just like any other trainer can; however, **diplomas are only issued for educational and training courses that are registered and approved course by the Private Vocational Institute Branch of Manitoba Education and Training.** He added that Anokiiwin can give certificates of participation and certificates of completion – depending on the circumstances (attendance and participation being the determining factors).
18. Laurel asked if Anokiiwin can do certificates at the end that includes all of the partners' logos. Jay said he thinks Anokiiwin should be able to do this and will look into the option. **Action: Partners to review and agree upon type of program Certificate – Anokiiwin Lead.**
19. Jay confirmed that Anokiiwin will need lists of registered trainees for each course, their attendance records and documentation/assessment of trainees' participation and skill enhancement for each of the courses in order to certify a trainee's successful completion of the program, Laurel confirmed that IDSS will provide this documentation. **Action: Anokiiwin and IDSS will prepare required reporting templates – Anokiiwin Lead.**
20. Shirley noted that she would like to see some policies developed to ensure the safety of trainees and others involved in delivering program activities (attendance, behaviour, alcohol, etc.).
21. Jay suggested that the First Nations and instructors should have policies that can be modified and the First Nations' policies should take precedence except in cases where certain industry standards are required.
22. Laurel shared that Anokiiwin had provided IDSS with a general Trainee Agreement form that Anokiiwin uses; however, the **First Nations' ASETS programs** should also have forms that they use.
23. Elsie indicated that their trainees are signing off on Garden Hill's initial sponsorship guidelines which includes some the areas that Shirley mentioned. She explained that community by-laws supersede any external partners' policies. She added that these by-laws are enforced and that trainees and First Nation employees are subject to this enforcement.
24. There was a discussion on the level of enforcement of community by-laws and policies. Elsie noted that Garden Hill enforces its own **by-laws**. Jay commented that First Nation by-laws are laws and the level of enforcement is up to the First Nations.

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

25. Ernie indicated that he is missing the Trainee Agreement piece. **Action: Review existing Trainee Agreement forms and customize for Boreal Home Building Project and share with all the Partners for comment and use as applicable. IDSS Lead.**
26. Ernie noted that Wasagamack First Nation only has younger people in the program because of an original age restriction (18-35). It was noted that ASETS eligibility for youth is under 30.
27. Laurel confirmed that the proposal says youth and women are the target population for this training.
28. Laurel indicated there should be a mechanism in place to help with project implementation activities (each community has a person).
29. Shirley indicated she would like to see a person from the community hired to be in the classrooms and involved in program training activities with the trainees (in addition to the instructor) on a regular basis to provide them with general support and working on career plans and mentorship. **Action: Review options for providing in general mentoring and support to trainees through project and partner funding – IDSS Lead.**
30. Ernie indicated that he has given that responsibility to someone from the community but it is not working out all that well right now and that he needs help with the matter. He said he would like to have a job description for this position (Laurel mentioned that one had been sent). He also said he would need funding for this position for a full time mentor for the trainees. **Action: Partners should work together to customize job descriptions with each First Nation – IDSS Lead.**
31. Laurel talked about the difficulty in getting Wasagamack trainees into the program due in part to the age and maturity levels in Wasagamack versus Garden Hill and that the age of the trainees makes a difference.
32. Ernie indicated that it was hard for many of the trainees who are on SA to all of a sudden have to change their daily patterns and behaviours.
33. Jay asked if there was any money in the PSPP budget to hire a person to act as a “Job Coach”.
34. Ernie indicated Wasagamack has hired a mentor and is paying them \$500 every two weeks. He explained that the person is also helping his assistant with trainees and with the paperwork. He noted that the First Nation will review the position and its implementation at the end of March to determine if it will continue with the position.

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

35. Laurel commented that there is money for a half-time project coordinator from the communities and those monies are part of the communities' ASETS contribution. She said the position was set up as a half-time position so they could do other work with Employment and Training. She said it was anticipated that the person hired would have more flexibility under that approach. **Action: Evaluate the effectiveness of this approach and address any issues – First Nations Lead.**
36. Jay summarized some of the needs that have been identified from this meeting:
- Need structures in program plan to support and enhance coaching and mentoring activities – **First Nations Lead**
 - Assistants' job descriptions should be revised as required and confirmed as soon as possible – **First Nations Lead**
 - Need individual with the ability to do that job to fill that role
 - Person needs the support through the ASETS program to do the job – **First Nations Lead**
 - Person needs to be held accountable and must be given the tools and the authority to do the job – **First Nations Lead**
37. Laurel committed to resend the job description to everyone again for review and revision. **Action: Send job description to all partners and set up process to review and revise as required by the First Nations – IDSS Lead.**
38. Felix commented on how the assistant's job is evolving depending on what is happening in the program – classroom, cutting in the bush, constructing houses.
39. Laurel indicated that the coordinator's job is two-fold; job coach and mentor regarding attendance, punctuality, behaviour; and community coordinator regarding logistics and implementation (set up sawmill, repair equipment for use, get materials into community, etc.).
40. Felix commented about how he and trainees are using personal equipment and vehicles to do the jobs they have to do in the program right now because they don't have any program equipment, vehicles, supplies or materials to do program activities. **Action: Fully identify equipment and materials required to carry out training activities and develop mechanisms to ensure they are available when needed – IDSS Lead.**
41. Elsie asked who is responsible for paying for damage if Felix's or a trainee's vehicle or equipment is damaged. **Action: Clarify responsibility for reimbursing staff and trainees for any damage to their vehicles or personal equipment and ensure they are covered by IDSS for any liabilities arising out of the use of their own vehicles or personal equipment – IDSS Lead.**

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

42. Shirley explained how she went to Indigenous Services Canada to make a case for the trainees' Social Allowance not to be taken away from them when they receive the \$1,000 per month stipend because that the stipend would be used for personal expenses for the program (vehicle, gas, oil, equipment, clothing, etc.). ISC was in agreement with this so these personal expenses are to be covered by the stipend while they still receive their Social Assistance.
43. Laurel confirmed that Shirley wrote a letter to Sherry Beardy to ISC Social Assistance regarding the \$1,000 stipend and asking that it not affect the trainees' SA and that the reason for the stipend was to cover gas, oil, using personal vehicle or snowmobile, cost of getting to work, etc., She suggested that the reason for the stipend and the fact they should be using it for these specific purpose should be explained again to the trainees. **Action: Confirm that trainees understand that the stipend is for them to cover those extra costs – First Nations Lead.**
44. Elsie discussed the issues with trainees getting (not getting) their stipends on time and reporting for EI (some people are reporting their allowance and then not getting EI, some people are not reporting their allowance and still get their EI). **Action: Identify and deal with specific EI issues with individual trainees – First Nation Lead.**
45. Elsie spoke to the verbal abuse the Employment and Training staff are getting at the community level because of issues with delays with some trainees having not received some of their "pay" as expected (due to lack of completed WE forms). She noted that some trainees ended up selling personal items to buy food and pay bills. She is getting questions from leadership and all of this is a strain on trainees, families and the community. She explained that she and Felix and have personally loaned money to some trainees to get through the times when they were not receiving their pay as anticipated.
46. Ernie indicated that he does the finances himself so he is able to more quickly respond to emergency needs such as these.
47. Shirley outlined the University's requirements for paying stipends to trainees and explained the efforts she undertook to deal with the challenges for ensuring trainees received their stipend through the WE system, but there was only so much that could be done without the proper paperwork.
48. Rezwanul explained what Shirley and he had done to resolve the issues and said he has worked with Felix to get the use of WE cards for all the trainees sorted out.
49. Jay noted that it can be a systemic challenge to work with WE cards and bank cards, noting that there will be different reactions from individual trainees and how everyone needs to be fully informed as to expectations/responsibilities with respect to ensuring the appropriate paperwork is in place. He suggested that there may be problems in the future and it is important to have in place early warning and early response systems to deal with any future problems.

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

50. Shirley noted the need to better track attendance and who is actually attending and who is not. She said that some trainees are getting paid when they are not actually attending training activities and this is destroying the “work system” and affecting the motivation of those trainees who are attending and working according to program requirements.
51. Laurel agreed that **pay s** should be linked to attendance.
52. Elsie commented that all other First Nation training programs are monitored and only paid on the basis of their actual hours in class or on the job.
53. Laurel indicated that it was her understanding that it was not possible for the University to change the bi-weekly stipend each payday because of their system
54. Shirley explained that the University is not able to pay trainees by cheque. She mentioned how she had to go to the Dean and Director for a special system to start with, and that “work around” was only supposed to be used for one month (until everyone had their paperwork done); this did not happen as planned and the University ended up implementing special measures for three months. She confirmed that they had to stop making exceptions as the limits of what she is allowed to do had been surpassed. She noted that she had to meet with Dean and Director and ask for forgiveness for the problems that were being created for the University’s normal practices.
55. Jay commented on these pay issues having caused many problems and frustrations and frictions at all levels of the program delivery, and that those frustrations are often most forcibly expressed at the community level. He suggested that some of these challenges may not be able to be overcome. He noted that because the existing structure and system is not able to use “pay” as an incentive or disincentive, there is a need to find some way to change the existing process or other ways to build other incentives into the program to encourage better attendance and participation for trainees. The group brainstormed some ideas about how to provide incentives and confirmed the need to come up with some ideas on how to do so. **Action: Partners need to identify, discuss and decide upon possible incentives for encouraging trainees to be at work all the time – Anokiiwin Lead.**
56. Jay noted that many of the challenges that every partner has experienced in implementing the initial stages of the program and some communication issues created personal conflict between the partners; however, most of those start-up challenges have been resolved and everyone needs to learn from those experiences, put any animosity in the past by acknowledging what everyone is experiencing and appreciating the good things that they are accomplishing, recognizing that everyone is working towards the benefit of the trainees and supporting good communication and understanding of each other’s’ challenges. **Action: Need to refocus on common goals, collective strengths and rebuild the team – Anokiiwin Lead on Team Building.**

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

57. Shirley and Rezwanul commented on the need for more extensive tracking and once a trainee's attendance falls below a certain point, their stipend is discontinued until they improve their attendance.
58. Elsie commented that some of the trainees are still going to work even though they weren't receiving their stipend for a period of time because they had not completed the required paperwork for WE cards. (NOTE: Trainees are paid retroactively for any wages they missed because they didn't have WE cards once they secure their WE cards).
59. After lunch the group continued reviewing the program structure chart prepared by Anokiiwin. Shirley commented on the University's responsibilities as outlined on the chart. She noted that Program Tutors needed to be removed from the University's responsibilities and that she has used all the funding on stipends for this fiscal year. She said she will see about getting some of her grad students to do video promos on the program. **Action: Identify grad student who can prepare promotional videos and support them in doing so – University Lead.**
60. Shirley presented and explained the survey results regarding this training program for Garden Hill First Nation and Wasagamack First Nation in terms of some of the demographics and results so far of the program. She provided the results to the communities and went over each graph and finding. The communities asked that these results be distributed to others (Anokiwiin, IDSS, public) as each individual's information was anonymous.
61. Shirley re-emphasized the fact that the stipend is for gas, PPE, daycare, etc. so the trainees can keep their Social Assistance and EI, **Action: Reinforce the purpose of the stipend with individual trainees – First Nations Lead.**
62. Shirley noted that three trainees identified sexual harassment as a barrier in their questionnaire. It is not known if the sexual harassment occurred as part of the program or before it or during unrelated activities. Jay noted that this needed investigation and a resolution. **Action: Review sexual harassment issues with trainees, confirm circumstance and take action as required. IDSS Lead.**
63. Laurel reviewed IDSS' Interim Report (narrative) noting that the Wilderness First Aid was best attended and the Intro to Forestry was the least attended. She suggested there is a need to make training courses and activities more learner centred and interesting. **Action: Review and revise curriculum and training activities to increase relevance to trainees – IDSS Lead.**
64. Laurel expressed concerns about getting the lumber cut and out of the bush for safe and secure storage while getting the equipment required to process it set up and repaired. **Action: Identify equipment required for the program and current access to it at the community level and put in place contingency responses if the community doesn't have the required equipment along with encouraging the communities to take responsibility for ensuring the equipment and supplies are available – IDSS and First Nations Lead.**

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

65. Suggestion was made that the trainees need to get the lumber grading course earlier on in the program so they can improve upon their cutting of the lumber so that it will meet required specifications; then they can come back and grade the lumber. **Action: Identify and take action on options for revising lumber grading training activities – IDSS Lead.**
66. Jay indicated that the program needs a more comprehensive detailed implementation plan (master plan) with desired outcomes, specific objectives, timelines for specific activities and tasks, identification of resources required and how to secure them as needed (infrastructure, financial [budget and cash flows], human, political support, monitoring mechanisms, contingency plans and formative and summative evaluations. **Action: Collaboratively prepare and execute a comprehensive 2019-20 program implementation plan through a formal planning process - Anokiiwin Lead.**
67. There was a discussion on how this plan is different than the responsibilities in MOU.
68. Elsie reiterated her belief in and support for the program. She noted that she will be able to be in the community more now. She reinforced her concern about the need for better communication between the partners. She explained that Vice Chief Wood (before her passing) encouraged her not to give up. She is committed and will stay committed to the successful implementation of the overall program. She noted that having Felix involved in the program there is very helpful.
69. Elsie confirmed that she will work with Lionel Flett and the First Nation's Housing Manager to get the sawmill into the red building. **Action: Make arrangements to locate the sawmill in the red building – Elsie Lead.**
70. There was a general discussion on urgent program issues such as utilizing the winter road in order to ensure the equipment and building materials are shipped to the communities in a timely and cost-effective manner. **Action: Identify immediate program activities involving the use of the winter road and ensure mechanisms are in place to ensure they are completed as soon as possible – IDSS and First Nations Lead.**
71. Elsie commented on how the trainees are enjoying the program. She remarked that trainees are commenting on Facebook about how they are enjoying the program. She explained how even though there was no equipment, the trainees dug out a road to the bush after the snow storm so they could cut timber and they have been cutting logs for 2 weeks. She said they are currently looking for ways to haul the logs back to the community even though there are continuing problems with accessing the equipment or gas they need. She noted that they are selling dry wood for gas money for the program.
72. Elsie has asked Chief and Council to buy a truck for the sole use of the program to pick up and haul wood. She suggested that it might be able to set up an account at Mikisew to buy gas, oil, tow rope, etc. for the sole purpose of the program. **Action: Follow through of purchase of truck and setting up account at Mikisew and develop contingency plan in case it is not possible to do so – Garden Hill Lead.**

Partners' Meeting – February 28, 2019 – Meeting Notes

73. Elsie commented on how Garden Hill Employment and Training had originally committed \$150,000 each year to the PSPP project; however, due to unforeseen financial circumstances they were not able to commit to that level. She noted that the First Nation will pay IDSS Employment and Training's share of the Job Readiness course. **Action: Reimburse IDSS for Garden Hill's share of Job Readiness course – Garden Hill Lead.**
74. Elsie noted that a position as Instructor has been budgeted for Cameron Fontaine into the 2019-20 Employment and Training budget. **Action: Confirm funding for Cameron Fontaine in Garden Hill's Employment and Training 2019-20 budget and fill position – Garden Hill Lead.**
75. Elsie indicated that she will look at utilizing the youth summer student program to provide assistance to Felix. **Action: First Nations should identify and take action on utilizing their summer student employment funds to assist program community coordinators – Garden Hill and Wasagamack First Nations Lead.**
76. Laurel commented that if one community can get a skidder then both communities can share its use. She said that a skidder for sale had been found in Duluth and purchasing it would be cheaper than getting the other one they found here from Quebec.
77. Discussed calling Nelson Loggers in Wabowden to see if Jim McIvor had anything to rent or sell; also suggested contacting logging operations in Lynn Lake (name not known).
78. Garden Hill First Nation and Wasagamack First Nation received word before the end of the meeting that their proposals for purchasing equipment for this project had been approved. This will help alleviate the need to locate a used skidder.
79. Closing prayer