

# Resolutions

## VGFN General Assembly 2021



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## 01. Youth Council Age

*Resolution No. 2021-01 - Passed by Consensus*

### WHEREAS:

- A. The older youth seem to get all the opportunities;
- B. The younger youth would like to participate;
- C. The younger youth would like to have their voices heard, acknowledged and recorded;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. The Youth Council age be amended to 12 to 25 years of age.

## 02. Ban on Single Use Plastic

*Resolution No. 2021-02 - Passed by Consensus*

### WHEREAS:

- A. The *Yeendoo Diinehdoo Ji'heezrit Nits'oo Ts'o' Nan He'aa Declaration* [VGFN Climate Emergency Declaration] recognizes climate change is a threat to the people, community, lands, waters, animals and way of life and is a call to action;
- B. The VGFN General Assembly recognized the importance of reducing the use of single use plastics when in 2004-4 it agreed by consensus to ban the use of disposable products at VGG events;
- C. Single use plastics used in the retail and hospitality sectors are resource intensive, their production, transportation and disposal contribute to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions;
- D. Old Crow lacks plastic recycling or the ability to transport plastics to recycling facilities in other jurisdictions;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. The use of all single use plastics for retail and hospitality in Old Crow will be banned by January 1, 2022.

### 03. Training Opportunities

*Resolution No. 2021-03 - Passed by Consensus*

**WHEREAS:**

- A. VGFN Citizens are unemployed;
- B. VGFN Citizens need to feel empowered to apply for and work for Vuntut Gwitchin Government;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. Positions of internships be created to work alongside Vuntut Gwitchin Government employees.

### 04. Vuntut Gwitchin Government employees in Whitehorse and Elsewhere

*Resolution No. 2021-41 - Tabled*

**WHEREAS:**

- A. Vuntut Gwitchin Government is housed in Old Crow, on traditional Vuntut Gwitchin land;
- B. Many employees are now housed in Whitehorse, Yukon;
- C. We also have employees that are housed in other parts of Canada;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG employees in Whitehorse and other parts of Canada perform work duties in Old Crow on traditional land;
- 2. Some positions have already been determined to be located in Whitehorse and these should remain: Citizens Advocate/Administrative Assistant, Whitehorse Family Support Worker, Whitehorse Education Support Worker;
- 3. Council will review VGG employees working in Whitehorse and develop a strategy.

## 05. Harm Reduction Policy

*Resolution No. 2021-05 - Passed by Consensus*

### WHEREAS:

- A. Many citizens deal with grief, common intergenerational trauma, unresolved underlying trauma and compound trauma and they cope by using substances. Some people have substance dependency issues. The opioid crisis is impacting our people. Although we often hear that the land heals, our citizens face severe barriers to accessing their own land due to lack of access to harm reduction services such as a safer supply of substances (i.e. alcohol and methadone). This could be considered a violation of their rights as Vuntut Gwitchin citizens;
- B. Current government policies encourage high risk behaviors, criminalization and stigmatization of health and mental health issues;
- C. Harm reduction is an evidence-based approach that saves lives (safer supply, education) and money (less medivacs, doctor billing hours) and is compassionate care. Harm reduction is necessary health care. Harm reduction promotes safety and connection in the community;
- D. Abstinence based programming does not work for everyone. Harm reduction is about meeting people where they are at and providing support, there is no expectation of sobriety;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG develop a harm reduction policy;
- 2. Align our programs and services with harm reduction policy;
- 3. VGG work towards low barrier supports for people with addictions in Old Crow including a safer supply of drugs and alcohol and sterile equipment and supplies, and harm reduction education;
- 4. VGG will look into partnerships with other governments to provide the appropriate health care services;
- 5. VGG will review the personnel policy through a harm reduction lens.

## 06. First Wave COVID-19 Essential Worker Pay

*Resolution No. 2021-06 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGG paid 4-5 employees essential worker pay, all other essential workers that were deemed essential by VGG did not receive this pay;
- B. Some VGG employees feel it is not fair to those who were essential workers but did not get the Covid pay, which was equivalent to one week's pay;
- C. The process was not fair and transparent and equitable to all essential workers at that time;
- D. This created discontent amongst employees as they did not feel valued or treated equally;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. That Council review the essential worker pay;
- 2. That all essential workers from the first wave of Covid be paid the same amount.

## 07. Comprehensive Government Services and Housing Development Planning

*Resolution No. 2021-71 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. There is no comprehensive plan for housing for the next five years;
- B. Old Crow is in a housing crisis;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. As a priority, VGG create within six months a comprehensive 5-year plan for building houses to meet the needs of the community and consult the community in this process.

## 08. Prohibition Bylaw Amendment

*Resolution No. 2021-08 - Passed by Consensus*

### WHEREAS:

- A. Prohibition came into place in Old Crow in 1991;
- B. Since 1991, the prohibition bylaw has been an ongoing topic of debate in the community;
- C. A resolution was passed at the VGFN GA in 2005 to review the alcohol prohibition bylaw (no. 2005-15). In response a consulting firm was hired to assess the community's opinions on the prohibition bylaw. Questionnaires were distributed with a 75% return rate. The surveys showed that people want change to prohibition, want more prevention programs, want prohibition to be enforced differently;
- D. The VGFN GA in 2008 passed resolution no. 2008-04 directing leadership to follow through on the implementation of the Prohibition Review Report recommendations;
- E. The VGFN GA in 2013 passed resolution no. 2013-05 directing leadership to research and develop recommendations for changes to the existing prohibition bylaw;
- F. The VGFN GA in 2015 passed resolution no. 2015-05 directing leadership to hold community meetings and consultations and that meaningful and binding decisions be made based on the results of these meetings;
- G. There have been no changes to the prohibition bylaw to date;
- H. Prohibition is not working for the citizens of Old Crow;
- I. The prohibition bylaw in its current state prevents the provision of harm reduction services by service providers in Old Crow;
- J. Prohibition is creating harm in the community;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG take the necessary steps to amend or repeal the current prohibition bylaw, with the following conditions:
  - a. VGG explore and implement harm reduction models and healing pathways forward with the necessary programs and services to support wellness in Old Crow as presented in option 2 of the Prohibition Pathway Forward Briefing Note presented to the General Assembly by Chief and Council on October 13, 2021;
  - b. The VGG leadership must present and finalize the VGG Wellness and Happiness Index (the "Index") along with a Wellness Plan;
  - c. VGG will present the Index, the Wellness Plan, and a draft amendment to the bylaw to the General Assembly for final approval.



## 09. Old Crow Flats Camp

*Resolution No. 2021-09 - Passed by Consensus*

### WHEREAS:

- A. Since time immemorial the *dinjii zhuh* have used Old Crow Flats to sustain/maintain their way of life, it provided food and economic sustainability. In 1993 the citizens of VGFN agreed to protect this pristine eco-rich region as a Special Management Area, never to be developed or disturbed;
- B. The Elders deemed this eco-rich area, a place of healing, advising that it will one day be filled again with Vuntut families, that the sound of Gwich'in laughter will radiate in the traditional area of our Flats;
- C. Our citizens have not used this area in approximately 30 years, people are not springing out anymore;
- D. Times have changed drastically where we have lost our connection to the historic rich area, no longer are families passing on the traditional teachings, language and gifts of spending longer stretches of time on the land together;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. That Council direct VGG Natural Resources, Health and Social, Education departments collaborate and fund a three-week pilot camp in Old Crow Flats for Vuntut Gwitchin citizens and their families to work remotely from the Flats;
- 2. That up to 10 citizens are supported in living and working remotely in the Flats;
- 3. That planning, research and fundraising take place in 2022 and the camp takes place in 2023;
- 4. That satellite internet and generators be made available to people.

## 10. Recognition of Dagoo Nation

*Resolution No. 2021-09 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. Dagoo descendants currently form part of the citizenship and have beneficiary status within the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation;
- B. Historically Eagle Plains, Whitestone, Fishing Branch are the traditional territory of the Dagoo Nation;
- C. We want our children to recognize and know their heritage;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. That Vuntut Gwitchin Government recognize the Dagoo Nation.

## 11. Chance Oil and Gas Participation

*Resolution No. 2021-11 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. Chance Oil and Gas is meeting with VG citizens in Old Crow and Whitehorse without VGG involvement;
- B. This engagement is important to all citizens for many reasons;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. Council directs the chair of the NR Committee to move forward with a discussion with the Vice President of Government Relations of Chance Oil and Gas with VGFN Elder mediation.

## 12. Review of Council indemnities under the *Governance Act*

*Resolution No. 2021-12 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGFN has had a difficult time in recent years attracting and maintaining a full Council;
- B. s.35 of the Governance Act outlines indemnities of council members;
- C. Cost of living in the Yukon and Old Crow has dramatically increased;
- D. Council member salaries are too low for the work and sacrifices they are asked to make in their elected roles;
- E. Current council member salaries are lower than the majority of positions within the government and have not been adjusted to the rate of inflation since 2012;
- F. There are many reasons for high turnover, including low rates of pay;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG seek out an independent review on the organizational structure, design, and remuneration of Chief and Council to reflect the work Council members put in and that Council positions remain attractive and competitive for skilled Vuntut Gwitchin members;
- 2. VGG bring Review Report back to the General Assembly for review & approval.

## 13. Bring Northern Hub of Mental Wellness and Substance Use back to Old Crow

*Resolution No. 2021-13 - Passed by Consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGFN has repeatedly vocalized the need for more mental health supports including mental wellness, substance use, and harm reduction;
- B. In June 2021 the Northern Hub of Mental Wellness and Substance Use was pulled from Old Crow after having built relationships with community members since October 2020;
- C. Pulling the Northern Hub of Mental Wellness and Substance Use from Old Crow has negatively affected our community and was made without community or client consultation;
- D. VGFN citizens deserve to have consistent access to therapists and councillors to support their mental health and facilitate accessing other treatments;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. That VGG request from the Yukon Government that the Northern Hub of Mental Wellness and Substance Use be brought back to Old Crow for one week per month as per their previous schedule.

## 14. Safe playgrounds

*Resolution No. 2021-14 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. Children in Old Crow need safe places to play outside;
- B. There has been lots of vandalism and garbage left in playgrounds in the past year;
- C. Many playgrounds are becoming overgrown with willows and grasses to the point where children can no longer play;
- D. Many playgrounds lack garbage cans and benches;
- E. No playgrounds in Old Crow have swings that accommodate toddlers;
- F. There is playground equipment that has been purchased for Old Crow that has not been set up;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. Playground maintenance will become a responsibility of the GS Department;
- 2. This responsibility will include regular cleanings, clearing brush and grass, and ensuring there is enough equipment including garbage cans, benches, swings, and structures.

## 15. VGG to review and increase contract amounts for cooks and cooks' helpers

*Resolution No. 2021-15 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGG hires local residents as cooks and cooks' assistants for community events;
- B. Cooks pay is the same whether you cook for 50 or 200 people;
- C. Cooks pay rates appear intended to cover one day of pay, but cooking requires time spent meal planning, shopping, and preparing food that needs time (e.g. dry meat);
- D. Due to COVID19, increased safety measures (e.g. individually packaged meals) requires that cooks and cooks assistants work longer hours;
- E. Amounts for cooks and cooks' helpers have not been increased in many years despite increases in the cost of living;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG will review the wages for cooks and cooks' assistants contracts and increase the rates accordingly.

## 16. VGG to review and increase equipment rental rates

*Resolution No. 2021-16 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGG's rental rates for equipment (e.g. ATV, snowmobile, boat) have not been increased for many years;
- B. Equipment purchase, operating, and maintenance costs have increased considerably since VGG rental rates were established;
- C. Current VGG rental rates do not reflect the cost of operating equipment;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG will review equipment rates paid for snowmobiles, toboggans, boats, and ATVs to reflect the increased costs of purchasing, operating, and maintaining this equipment.

## 17. Update VGG Finance Policy

*Resolution No. 2021-17 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. The VGG Finance Policy has not been updated since 1995;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG will update the Finance Policy by the next General Assembly.

## **18. Consult with the community to build an on the land treatment centre**

*Resolution No. 2021-18 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGFN elders have said that being on the land is a source of healing;
- B. VGFN citizens have a very close connection to the land of their Traditional Territory;
- C. Currently VGFN citizens seeking treatment have to go treatment centres outside the VGFN Traditional Territory;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG will consult the community regarding the construction of treatment centre out on the land on the VGFN Traditional Territory;
- 2. Depending on community support, VGG will seek out external funding and resources to construction an on the land treatment centre for VGFN citizens on the VGFN Traditional Territory.

## **19. VGG Government Modernization**

*Resolution No. 2021-19 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGG hasn't modernized its internal frameworks, policies, procedures, processes;
- B. VGFN values and principles should be reflected throughout the government;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG develop a robust and comprehensive framework of policies to modernize the governments approach to support staff and citizens.

## 20. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

*Resolution No. 2021-19 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. The Gwich'in have led efforts to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for decades;
- B. Our efforts are most successful when we keep this issue in the forefront for political leaders and the general public by using diverse voices from the community and implement community-led tactics;
- C. We are at tipping point in our efforts to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with oil and gas leases issued and a law that requires development but an Administration that has committed to restoring protections;
- D. We have had to adapt our tactics in seeking protection of the Refuge to account for the changing legal landscape and the ongoing global pandemic;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. Vuntut Gwitchin Government hold an Advocacy Gathering for the community which includes:
  - a. opportunities for training which encourages community members, and particularly youth, to become more involved in work to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;

- b. A review of what has been done in efforts to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge since the legal landscape has changed and brainstorming of strategic tactics we could implement that accounts for this and the ongoing pandemic.

## 21. To extend the GA from three days to five

*Resolution No. 2021-18 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. The GA currently does not have enough feasible time to speak to issues and all of our entities in three days;
- B. The GA should be held during the work week as we are a growing government, we need to extend the days so that there is enough time to speak to all of our issues without being restricted;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. The GA be extended for five days, Monday to Friday;
- 2. All entities will present at the GA.

## 22. Board Appointments

*Resolution No. 2021-18 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. VGFN has a goal of creating wealth across generations and to establish a framework of economic development that establishes opportunities for all Vuntut;
- B. The VGG entities need to provide all Vuntut with the opportunity to be mentored and sit on VGG boards and there is no clear appointment process;
- C. Current board VGG board members have served many years, sometimes since inception;
- D. All Vuntut citizens need to be involved in the management of VGG entities and there is a need for specific measures and efforts to provide opportunities for young Gwitchin to be involved in these entities;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG ensure that its entities include the involvement and perspectives of young Gwitchin;
- 2. VGG establish an appointment process, that focuses on mentorship and support for youth involvement, for the appointment of new members to VGG boards, including VGLP, VGBT, and VGT.



## 23. OCDC Special General Assembly

*Resolution No. 2021-18 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. OCDC has been bailed out by VGG;
- B. OCDC has not followed the original intent of the creation of OCDC;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG hold a meeting to resolve the issues surrounding OCDC after OCDC gets their financials in order.

## 24. Climate change strategy for the North Yukon

*Resolution No. 2021-18 – Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. The Yeendoo Diinehdoo Ji'heezrit Nits'oo Ts'o Nan He'aa Declaration (2019) recognizes the adverse impacts of climate change on the lands, water, animals, and people of the VGFN;
- B. The 2019 VGFN GA directed the government to pursue carbon neutrality;
- C. We recognize the importance of Traditional Knowledge, land based information, and western scientific data to inform how we will adapt to a changing world; and
- D. We recognize our Northern First Nations neighbours are facing similar concerns that presents an opportunity for collaboration;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG seek the involvement of NND and TH to prepare a climate change strategy for the North Yukon that addresses monitoring, mitigation, and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

**25. Tl'oo K'at***Resolution No. 2021-25 - Tabled***WHEREAS:**

- A. GA has not been at Tl'oo K'at for 2 years;
- B. This is our traditional meeting place;
- C. There is a loss of connection to our past and the future on the land;
- D. The old Tl'oo K'at site had family tent frames;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG legislate that all GAs be at our traditional meeting place Tl'oo K'at;
- 2. VGG Increase housing capacity at Tl'oo K'at with more tent frames and Internet;
- 3. VGG help citizens build family tent frames at Tl'oo K'at.

**26. Gwich'in Arts Summit 2024***Resolution No. 2021-26 - Tabled***WHEREAS:**

- A. There are many talented Gwich'in artists both in and outside of our homelands;
- B. Our people are DJs, painters, carvers, designers, poets, tanners, musicians, linguists, quill workers, sewers, beeders, snowshoe makers, and more;
- C. Arts are empowering and healing for our people;
- D. Our community has continually expressed interest in tourism and in bringing together elders, youth, education, and culture;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG set aside funding to plan a Gwich'in Arts Summit in 2024;
- 2. VGG hire 3 citizens to plan this Summit;
- 3. VGG ensure the Summit occurs in Old Crow with at least a portion at Tl'oo K'at;
- 4. VGG ensure some Summit activities happen on the land.

## 27. VGG Events Coordinator Position

*Resolution No. 2021-26 - Passed by consensus*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. The Vuntut Gwitchin are known for hosting traditional events, this is how we gather and celebrate. It is important to continue this tradition;
- B. Currently it is hard to get coordinators and the traditional part gets lost in the event when we try to organize an event at the last minute;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGG post and hire a full-time permanent position of Events Coordinator;

## 28. Description: National Conference on Migratory Fish Species

*Resolution No. 2021-26 - Tabled*

### **WHEREAS:**

- A. Salmon returns to their spawning grounds have been the poorest on record this year and have been on a downward trend for decades;
- B. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation relies on salmon for their subsistence and traditional needs;

**THEREFORE**, the General Assembly of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation resolves that:

- 1. VGFN calls for a national Indigenous conference on migratory fish species to address the increasingly low population.