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Kivalliq Inuit Association

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Election Reform Release for Kivalliq Inuit Association

November 9, 2020

STATEMENT

I am pleased to provide an update on the Bylaw and Electoral Process KIA began earlier this year, and to report on the final steps required to complete the process.

Background

KIA adopted new bylaws in 2017 to formalize and update several of our policies and procedures. These revisions were necessary, and the intent was good. However, as a result of these new bylaws, some KIA beneficiaries were cut off from the organization that represents them.

The revised bylaws required that voters must be “usually resident” in the Kivalliq for a period of one year prior to election. That meant that some students at Nunavut Sivuniksavut or university, people in long-term care in Winnipeg and their guardians, Kivallirmiut working in other regions and many others were unable to participate as voters or as candidates in our elections.

I believe that KIA, like our communities, should be open and inclusive; a beneficiary stays a beneficiary wherever they reside. When I campaigned in 2019, I promised to take action to reconnect our fellow Kivallirmiut with KIA, and to eliminate barriers to everyone’s full participation in their own organization.

What We’ve Done (January-October, 2020)

Immediately following the 2019 election, KIA commissioned an independent review of our policies and procedures. The final report was received in February 2020.

While our corporate priority for March and April was working with staff, Board and affected communities to respond to the COVID crisis, the findings and recommendations of the report were analyzed internally by the President, Vice-President, Secretary Treasurer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Governance & Community Liaison, President’s Assistant, and legal counsel.

The President, COO, Director of Governance & Community Liaison, and legal counsel then conducted a full review of the existing bylaws, as well as an analysis of relevant bylaws in place within NTI, KitIA and QIA.

In June, preliminary needs and recommendations were formulated and discussed with the leadership, and direction was provided to legal counsel. Initial legal considerations and options were provided

for consideration. The President mentioned to the Board at that point that a brief deferral of the election date might be required.

Draft revisions of the Elections Policy and Bylaw were prepared, reviewed and amended through September and early October. We have now completed the final draft and will be presenting the revisions to the Executive Committee next week.

Following Executive approval, an Annual General Meeting will be called to approve the Bylaws and revised policy. Following approval by the Annual General Meeting, these will be filed with Nunavut Registrar of Societies, and brought into effect upon their approval.

What Will Change

The proposed revisions will allow any eligible member of the Kivalliq Inuit Association to run as a candidate for office with KIA, and to vote in KIA elections.

The revisions will also give KIA the authority to postpone the scheduled date of the December, 2020 election to an April, 2021 election. The revisions will also give the KIA the authority to postpone future elections, if necessary. The current bylaws do NOT allow for any such deferral, even in the event of Acts of God such as the current pandemic. This short postponement will:

- Allow for the development of election policies, procedures and material that reflect the revised policy and bylaws
- Provide the opportunity for newly eligible KIA beneficiaries to consider their candidacy
- Reflect Health Canada and the Government of Nunavut directives to minimize contact and large gatherings during the current crisis.

Our Commitment

If any KIA beneficiary has any concerns over this process or timeframe, I encourage them to get in touch with our office directly and immediately. Every one of our Board members and management team is committed to completing this process as quickly and transparently as possible.

Our goal is to ensure that KIA's next election, and every subsequent election, allows the full participation, as candidates or as voters, of the entire membership we are honoured to serve and represent.