

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

## **Statement regarding the decision to remove Judy Desjarlais from office**

Effective 12:00 p.m. MST, Tuesday, September 17, 2024, Judy Desjarlais has been removed from her role as Chief of Blueberry River First Nations (Blueberry) by the majority of Council.

This decision was not taken lightly, and was made with great care and consideration.

An independent investigation found that Judy Desjarlais engaged in conduct that violated the bylaws governing Blueberry. Based on these findings, and in accordance with the options laid out in Blueberry's bylaws, the majority of Council made the difficult decision to remove Judy Desjarlais from office.

"As a Council, we hold a deep responsibility to act in the best interests of our members, and we take this role very seriously," said Councillor Sherry Dominic. "This action was carried out in full accordance with our bylaws, in order to maintain trust in our governance and to protect the integrity of our bylaws, which are designed to serve and protect all of our members."

The reasons for the removal of Judy Desjarlais from office include the following:

- In November 2023, the majority of Council prepared a report (according to section 187 of Blueberry's bylaws) setting out various allegations against the Chief.
- The section 187 report was distributed in accordance with section 190 of the bylaws and received by all Council members, including the Chief, on December 3, 2023.
- The report was reviewed at a duly convened meeting December 8, 2023, which initiated an investigation against the Chief.
- An investigation into the Chief's conduct was conducted by an impartial legal investigator, and was concluded along with a report on August 9, 2024.
- The report concluded that the Chief exceeded her authority of position and failed to act honestly, impartially or in good faith. Additionally, It was found that the Chief

breached her obligations to Blueberry and caused substantial harm to Blueberry's ability to conduct business.

- On September 13, 2024, the majority of Council met at an in camera meeting to deliberate on the disciplinary action orders (under section 199 of the bylaws) after hearing from Chief Desjarlais, and passed a band council resolution for the removal of Chief Desjarlais from office.
- The removal order was effective as of 12:00 p.m. MST, Tuesday, September 17, pursuant to sections 201 and 202 of Blueberry's bylaws.

A summary of the investigation's findings can be found on Blueberry's website, which includes the Council's reasons and rationale behind this decision.

"At this moment, the next steps regarding our leadership are still being considered," said Councillor Wayne Yahey. "We respectfully ask for your patience as we navigate this process. As soon as more information is available, we will share it with the public."

"We want to uphold the integrity of our Nation and reaffirm that our bylaws apply to all members. This process is a demonstration of our commitment to fairness, accountability, and upholding the principles of our governance," said Councillor Dominic. "Even the highest positions within our community are subject to these rules, and this is crucial in maintaining trust and confidence with our members, stakeholders and partners as we move forward."

In the meantime, stakeholders and partners can direct their questions to Council members (contact information can be found on the website). Thank you for your understanding, patience and cooperation during this time.

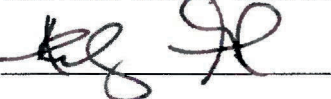
Councillor Sherry Dominic



Councillor Troy Wolf



Councillor Shelley Gauthier



Councillor Wayne Yahey

