

# Six Nations Band council may hire PR firm to improve image

By Donna Duric  
Writer

Six Nations Band Council may be hiring a public relations firm to help with both the council's and community's image.

"We want people to know what we're doing," said Councillor Helen Miller at last Wednesday's Corporate and Emergency Services Committee.

Miller complained the band's newsletter's layout is "ugly" and needs more content that hasn't already been covered by local media.

"It needs to be fixed," said Miller of the newsletter. "Number one: the whole layout has to change. I think it's ugly. We need to look at how much it would cost to do colour."

Band Council's monthly

newsletter cost \$400 to print with a distribution of 3,000 to Six Nations community members and business.

She suggested getting it printed at an on-reserve printing company that began publishing a newspaper last summer, but Councillor Bob Johnson cautioned against that.

"Just a word of caution: if we're going to use a printer, that we be as independent as possible because they do have a publication," he said.

Six Nations Band Council has refused to allow Turtle Island News' print company to bid on print jobs with the band saying its because the company owns the newspaper.

Instead Band council has routinely printed with another local printing company but it

is now also a partner in a newspaper.

"My second concern about the newsletter is it doesn't have enough in there about what council is doing," she said. "The stuff in the newsletter, we already read in the newspaper. We want people to know what we're doing. "The newsletter should be telling the community what we're doing. There's no point in putting a big story on the first two pages about the water treatment plant, for example, when the newspapers already did it."

The Turtle Island News was the only local and regional media to feature the opening of the water treatment plant.

Elected Chief Ava Hill's new political advisor Eliza Montour suggested they publish all of council's travel plans and

schedules, as well.

Councillors Bob Johnson and Mark Hill questioned what its current communications department does.

Policy Analyst Murray Maracle said the department does the newsletter and updates council's Web site, which Miller said is out of date.

"People are saying it's outdated," she said admitting she doesn't look at the website. "I haven't looked at it in a few years so I don't know."

She suggested council also start letting people know what council is doing in closed meetings.

"We need to start letting people know what we're doing in closed meetings. We can do that without revealing confidential information. We need to start doing that."

She also lamented that none

of council's committee news makes it into the newsletter.

Only the Turtle Island News regularly publishes council's committee news. The committee also agreed to look at hiring a public relations firm or expert to improve council's image, as well as the community's image.

Councillor Mark Hill questioned the public relations role of council's current communications department and full-time communications officer Karen Best.

Finance Director Gary Phillips said, "They're doing some of that (public relations) but this is bringing it to the next level where you're communicating to a wider audience and making more use of different avenues...like social media, you get a wider audience nowadays with social

media. That's where council is headed."

Council's Lands and Resources Director Phil Monture piped up during the meeting, "I think what you're talking about is absolutely critical. Anytime we try to move something forward, you've got the federal and provincial governments out there doing media blitzes that just puts a stereotype (on us) in a negative light. We have so much positive that's going on here (on Six Nations)."

Miller suggested council try to "embarrass" the government through billboard and local television commercial advertising.

The committee recommended to full council that it begin working on revitalizing the newsletter and improving public relations.