

Current council too lax on policy enforcement: Hill

Recent decisions by band leadership show inconsistent application of hiring guidelines, contends District 1 Councillor David Hill

By Paul Baswick

SIX NATIONS — Band council is "picking and choosing" when and how it follows its own hiring policy, District 1 Councillor David Hill said Tuesday night.

Hill made the comment at the Dec. 18 general council meeting at I.L. Thomas school, after two similar contract extension requests were met with differing results.

The motions, presented back-to-back by Health portfolio holder Barb Harris, were put forward to request that the six-month contracts of Cynthia Barton, acting counselor at New Directions Addiction Services, and Marnee Moore, acting nutritionist at Health Promotion and Nutritional Services, be extended.

Council voted to extend Barton's, but not Moore's. Six Nations' hiring policy outlines that such extensions are not permissible, but that the positions must instead be posted and that new applicants be considered for the job.

The committee asked for the extensions, explained Harris, as there was a threat both positions would otherwise remain vacant for the next six months.

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David Hill

"We are strapped for counselors," she said.

"Your are going to jeopardize people who are already in a program."

But Hill, who voted against both motions, said it isn't right for council to make decisions which fly in the face of its own policy.

"We seem to be breaking a lot of policy. Now we're going against policy again," he said.

"If we're going to break policy, let's

just throw the policy book out the window. Let's throw it out the window and go day by day. That's what we're doing here."

The extension issue appeared to be placed under greater scrutiny once the first request was approved, and as Hill continued to speak against policy infractions.

"Here we are extending contracts...[these positions have] got to go to the community to give them a fair chance to get a job...we're not doing that."

District 3 Councillor Susan Porter suggested that Moore's position be posted through Grand River Employment and Training. She reasoned that Moore, who would likely be the strongest candidate for the job, could re-apply and resume her position with minimal discontinuation of service and without council having to stray from its hiring policy.

District 3 Councillor Roger Johnathan argued that Moore could not get the job through GREAT, however, as she is neither native nor a band member.

District 4 Councillor and GREAT board chair Glenda Porter said that although Moore is ineligible for funding through GREAT, she would be able to apply for a position which is merely posted by GREAT and funded through Health.

The funding request was then rejected.

Harris said Thursday that Health director Ruby Jacobs plans to speak to the issue of Moore's extension before other options are explored, but added that posting the position through GREAT remains a possibility.

Hill, also contacted Thursday, again stressed how important it is that council not only apply its own policy, but that it be applied consistently.

"You can't apply it to someone and then decide not to apply it to someone else."

He says that although council is within its authority to override the hiring policy, each infraction of the band's guidelines further weakens the legitimacy and purpose of policy.

"If you're not going to follow it, what's the sense of having it at all?"