

August 30, 2021

John D. Johnson, Sr., President  
Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Dear President Johnson:

We thank you and the Tribal Council for the hospitality you extended at the joint Tribal Council / Town Board meeting on August 17, 2021. We particularly appreciate the Council's measured, circumspect response to Mr. Gaulke's request.

We are concerned that our presence at the meeting may be construed as a gesture of support for Mr. Gaulke's request, which we believe does not reflect agreement among town board members or wide support by the community. Rather, those of us who attended and are noted below came to support the position articulated by Supervisor Hanson and to fulfill our ongoing commitment to oversee town board activity.

In our opinion, Mr. Gaulke seemed to convey that the Lac du Flambeau "voters" have approved constructing a new fire station. Actually, on a motion at the Annual Meeting to authorize the town board to borrow 5.1 million for construction of a new fire station, 18 electors voted yes and 14 voted no, hardly a community-wide commitment for the financing. Also, the motion was not on the agenda for the meeting, so only a few knew of the issue in advance. However, and importantly, we do believe that most of Lac du Flambeau's citizens actually favor having a new fire station, including many of the 14 who voted no on the financing.

We are equally concerned that the town board has yet to determine which financial institution will provide the best rates for the loan. At this time no one knows how much the community will pay to access the funds. In fact, we have been told on more than one occasion that 5.1 million will likely be insufficient. In the meantime, vouchers show the architect was paid more than \$80,000 for plans to renovate and expand the existing fire station, a project that was abandoned.

The good men and women who volunteer for the Fire and Ambulance Department must be incredibly frustrated, and justifiably so. They deserve better and we support them. We believe that a new fire station is needed, but we fear it will not happen until the decade-long trend of missteps ends.

Again, we respect the Tribal Council's leadership on this issue as well as other issues affecting Lac du Flambeau. Please accept our comments as intended, reflections of our commitment to watchful, responsible care of town governance.

Respectfully,

Norm Wetzel,  
with direction/consent by Roberta Gast, Kay Hoff, Bill McCutchin, Jim Sommerfeldt

Cc Town Board