



So, you want to run for council?

A support and orientation handbook for
the Citizens of Champagne and Aishihik
First Nations



CHAMPAGNE AND AISHIHIK FIRST NATIONS



Acknowledgements

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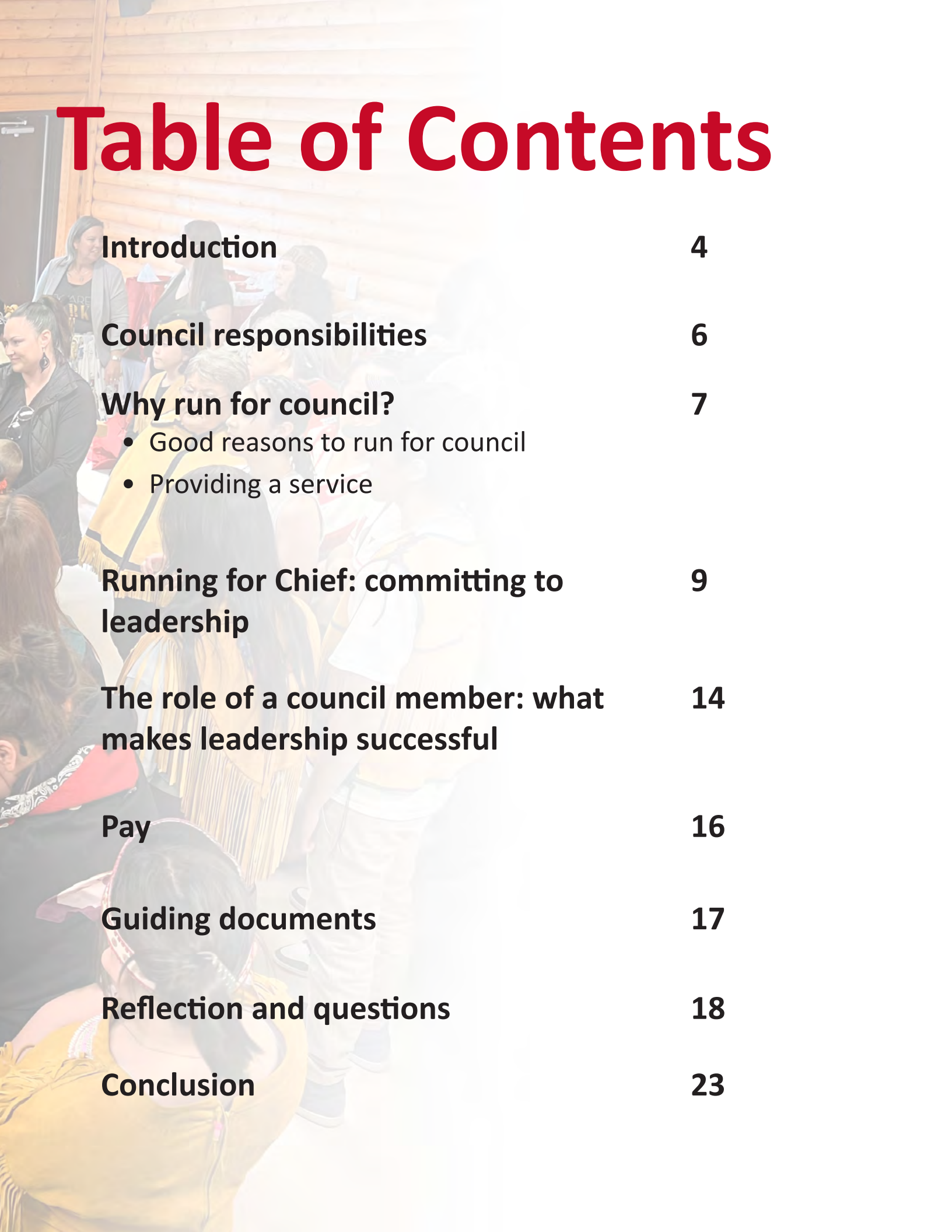


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Introduction

Serving on the First Nations Council for Shadhäla Äshèyi yè Kwädän (CAFN) is both an honour and a responsibility.

Running for Council means considering whether to enter public service at the highest level of government. Citizens who are nominated may have supporters, but if elected, they serve and represent all people in every community.

Caring for the people and the land is central to the cultural identity and living memory of Shadhäla Äshèyi yè Kwädän. Traditional knowledge teaches the importance of inclusion, mutual respect, and stewardship of the land, and explains why these values are upheld.

For generations, people followed inherited laws and ways of life that guided hunting, fishing, trade, and marriage. This way of life functioned like a constitution, keeping all parts in balance for the wellbeing and survival of the people. Although outside contact disrupted the Kwädän way of life, the responsibility to care for the people and the land remained.

Our journey to reclaim the right to govern our people and our land has been long. In the 1960s and 1970s, our Elders and leaders called on the federal government to recognize and restore our traditional ways. After twenty years of negotiation, we reached our First Nations Final Agreement and Self Government Agreement in 1993. In July 2000, our Self Government Agreement gave us the authority to create our highest law—our Constitution. All other CAFN laws flow from it, and enacted legislation cannot conflict with or override it. The work of First Nations Council in creating new laws is always guided by the Constitution.

Our Constitution was created to reflect our values, beliefs, and priorities. It is our shared responsibility to keep the intent of the Constitution alive as it gives us the power to shape our future and to decide how we relate to one another and to our government.

A sworn duty of trust

The CAFN Constitution affirms the Dakwan Shadhala ye Asheyi as distinct cultural Nations in the world. This sovereignty is by virtue of the rights and powers bestowed by the Creator and occupancy of the land since time immemorial.

CAFNs' authority to exercise its rights and responsibilities for the wellbeing of the people and protect the land and its resources for future generations is entrenched in the Constitution.

The elected Chief and Council have a sworn duty to uphold this supreme law that defines the government's structure and protects citizens' rights.

The CAFN Dän nätthe dätth'i is elected every four years and made up of:

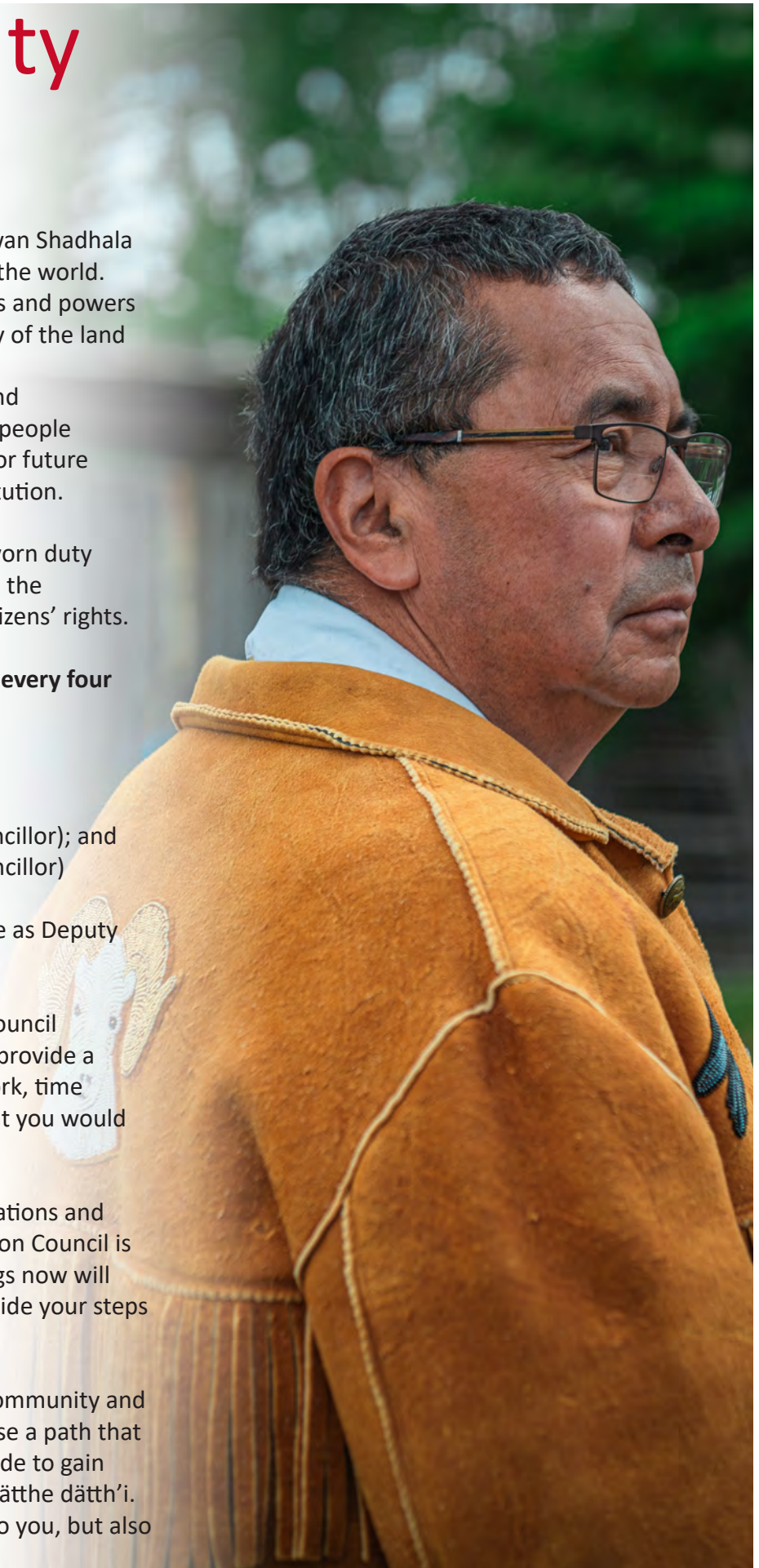
- Dän nätthe äda (Chief);
- 4 Dän nätthe dätth'i (Councillors);
- 1 Äshāw Dän nätthe äda (Elder Councillor); and
- 1 Shāna Dän nätthe äda (Youth Councillor)

The Council appoints a member to serve as Deputy Chief.

If you want to know what running for Council would mean to you, this handbook will provide a basic understanding of the expected work, time commitments, and political environment you would be entering into for the next four years.

This information may clarify your motivations and strengths, helping you decide if serving on Council is right for you. Thinking about these things now will help you make informed decisions to guide your steps forward.

There are many ways to support your community and First Nation government. You may choose a path that aligns with your values, or you may decide to gain more experience before pursuing Dän nätthe dätth'i. Every step you take matters—not only to you, but also to those who share your journey.





Council Responsibilities

Leadership — Serve the needs of the citizens and community to promote healthy, unified, and self reliant people.

Fiscal — Provide oversight of financial activities of the government, including review and approval of all CAFN budgets and expenditures.

Accountability — Ensure that CAFN policies and procedures are in place so staff can fulfill their responsibilities efficiently.

Legal — Function as the executive and law making authority of the CAFN government.

Attendance — Be present at important meetings, including regular CAFN Council meetings, as well as other internal and external meetings.

Intergovernmental Work — Exercise sovereignty and meet with other governments while following intergovernmental protocols.

This work often touches on the heart of the community, where feelings may surface and must be managed thoughtfully. Council members are responsible for considering every perspective and making decisions that benefit both the CAFN government and its citizens. Sometimes this can be difficult with varied interests; however, policies and acts guide Council in proper and responsible decision making.

To serve on Council, a citizen must be at least 24 years old and ready to oversee political, operational, and legal responsibilities as a trustee in a fiduciary role. This foundational step is key to managing the interests of CAFN citizens, communities, businesses, and governmental affairs.

Council members often deal with matters affecting daily life. By standing for election, you demonstrate commitment to serving citizens and strengthening CAFN.

Why Run for Council?

Knowing why you want to be a Council member is the first step. Before deciding to run, it's wise to weigh both positive and negative reasons for seeking political office. There are considerations on both sides that need to be thought through carefully before becoming a candidate.

Good Reasons to Run for Council

Strengthening the First Nation

If your main goal is to strengthen your First Nation, that is a strong reason to run for CAFN Dän nätthe dätth'i. As a Council member, you can help CAFN government become self reliant by blending traditional ways with modern self governance in the Dän K'e way.

The government consists of four branches: the General Assembly, the First Nations Council, the Elders Senate, and the Youth Council. Under the Constitution, the Chief and Council are primarily responsible for implementing the Final and Self Government Agreements. In their role as the Executive Council Office, members develop CAFN policies and legislation while ensuring the financial stability of the First Nation.

Giving Back

CAFN delivers a wide range of programs and services for the benefit of citizens. It is part of Dän K'e to give back to your people and contribute to CAFN in meaningful and impactful ways.

Improving CAFN Communities

A sincere desire to strengthen and improve the quality of community life is an important reason to run for Council. A Council member with this motivation contributes to a constructive environment that upholds principles of good governance and ensures that quality programs and services create opportunities for all citizens.

Improving Government

If your ideal government is fair, transparent, and accountable, and you want to contribute to building and upholding such a system, these are strong reasons to run for Council.

Creating good government requires a willingness to learn how the government is structured, understand processes and policies, and commit to responsible decision making.

Desire to Be a Good Role Model

Good health and strong ethics are vital for public service. Council members benefit from resilience, energy, and family support. A Council member with integrity inspires others, and your actions and words will be respected.

Skills and Experience to Contribute

Skills in traditional practices, language, culture, finance, business, management, communication, or mediation are valuable contributions to Council.

You Are Willing to Learn

Understanding government processes and working toward community wellbeing is key to being an effective Council member.



Providing a Service

A good politician is helpful to the people they serve.

Once elected, Council members become leaders of Shadhäla Äshèyi yè Kwädän. It is a mistake to see public office as a source of personal importance. Public service is not about personal power or status; it is about feeding your spirit as you help others.

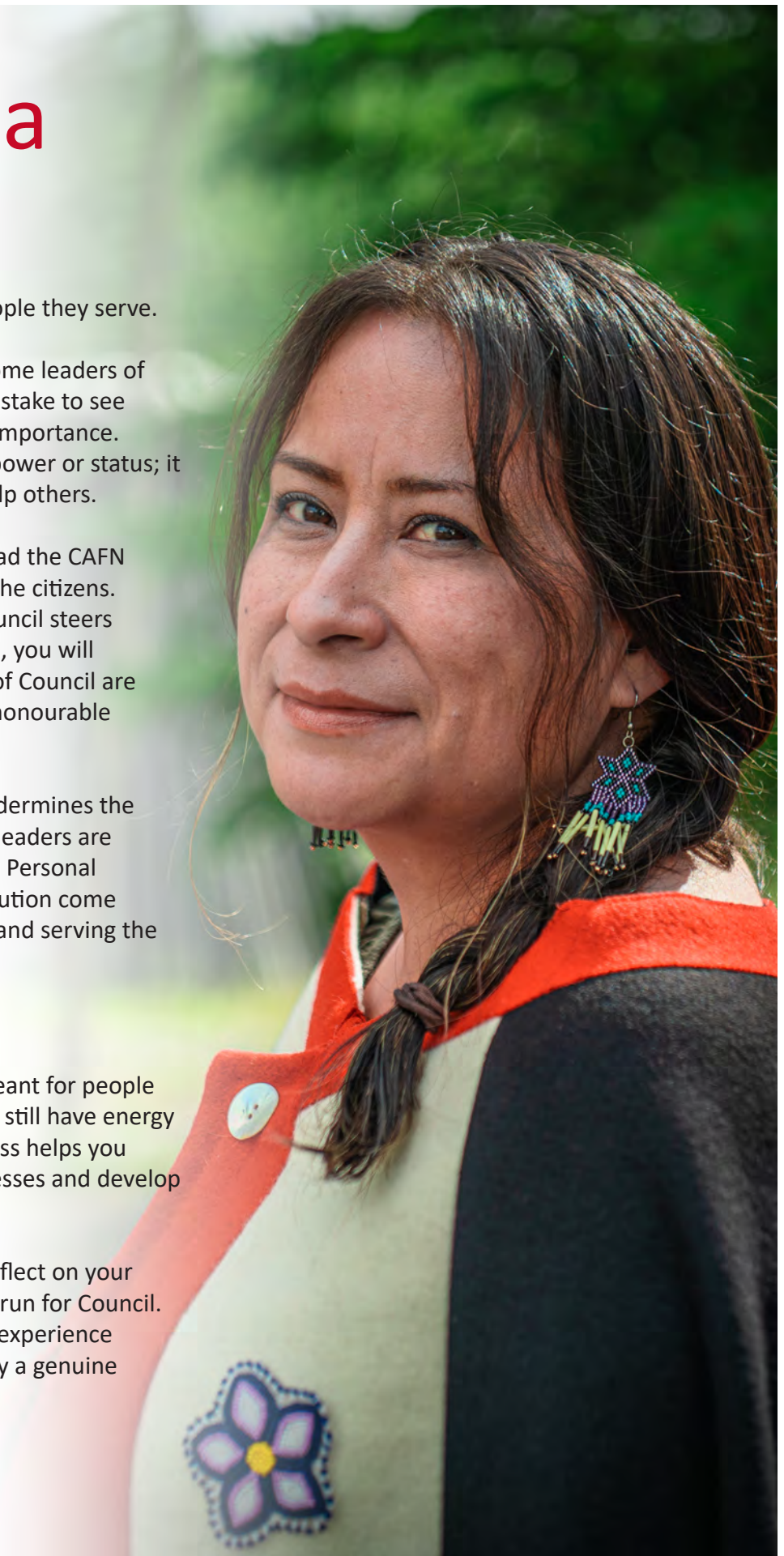
Council members are entrusted to lead the CAFN government in ways that best serve the citizens. Working cooperatively as a team, Council steers the government in Dän K'e. If elected, you will quickly realize that you and the rest of Council are answerable to those you serve, and honourable conduct is expected.

Seeking office for special benefits undermines the purpose of Council service. Effective leaders are healthy, ethical, and forward looking. Personal growth and the value of your contribution come from strengthening the government and serving the citizens.

What It Takes to Be in Public Service

The demanding work of Council is meant for people who can take care of themselves and still have energy left over to help others. Self awareness helps you recognize your strengths and weaknesses and develop effective leadership.

These ideas are meant to help you reflect on your decision and clarify why you want to run for Council. You and the community will find the experience rewarding if your decision is driven by a genuine desire to contribute to CAFN.



Running for Chief — Committing to Leadership

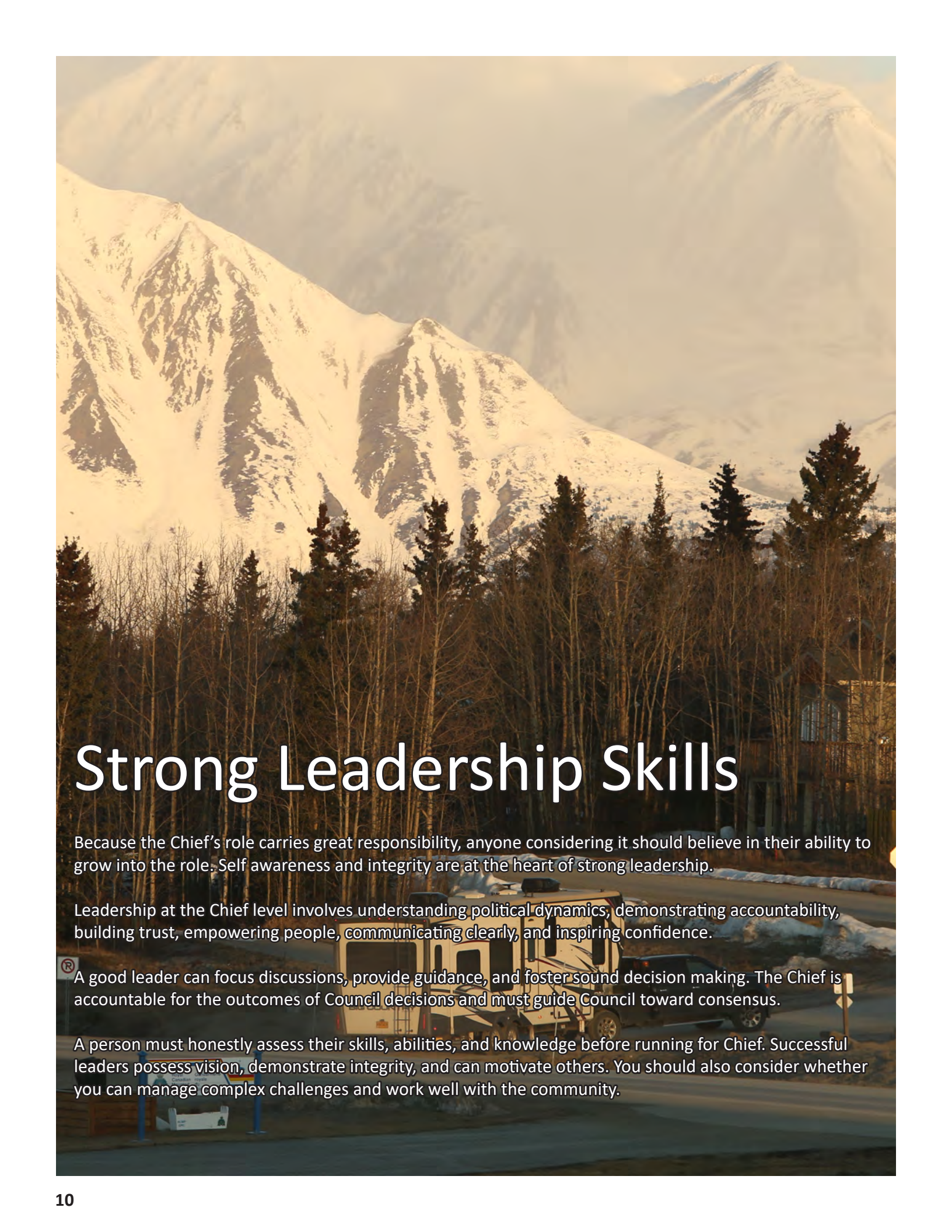
The Chief plays a vital role in leading Council, meeting citizens' expectations, and guiding the government's work. Strategic plans support the wellbeing of citizens and strengthen CAFN communities. The Dän nātthe äda reports annually to the General Assembly (Nlashejel) on Council's initiatives and progress.

The CAFN Constitution grants the First Nations Council both legislative and executive powers, as well as political oversight over all governmental functions. The Chief and Council determine strategic goals and set limits on resource management through established or newly enacted policies, procedures, legislation, and regulations.

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Council, the Chief oversees government operations and serves as the only management link to the CAFN Executive Director. The Executive Director holds administrative authority over staff, who are expected to perform their duties in alignment with Council objectives. The Chief does not manage staff directly.

The Chief is the main spokesperson for the First Nation, providing a clear voice of leadership on all matters of Shadhäla Äshèyi yè Kwädän. The Chief ensures CAFN rights, titles, and interests are represented and protected in all processes and decisions, including interactions with other governments and the media.





Strong Leadership Skills

Because the Chief's role carries great responsibility, anyone considering it should believe in their ability to grow into the role. Self awareness and integrity are at the heart of strong leadership.

Leadership at the Chief level involves understanding political dynamics, demonstrating accountability, building trust, empowering people, communicating clearly, and inspiring confidence.

A good leader can focus discussions, provide guidance, and foster sound decision making. The Chief is accountable for the outcomes of Council decisions and must guide Council toward consensus.

A person must honestly assess their skills, abilities, and knowledge before running for Chief. Successful leaders possess vision, demonstrate integrity, and can motivate others. You should also consider whether you can manage complex challenges and work well with the community.

Elder and Youth Councillors

CAFN voting citizens elect one Chief and six individuals to serve four year terms on First Nations Council. To sit on Council, an Elder must be at least 60 years old, and a Youth must be between 16 and 24 on polling day. Including both Elders and Youth in decision making was an important decision made during land claims negotiations and the development of the Constitution.

This approach is rooted in Dän K'e, which highly values Elders for their knowledge and counsel, and recognizes the importance of mentoring future leaders by including youth in governance.

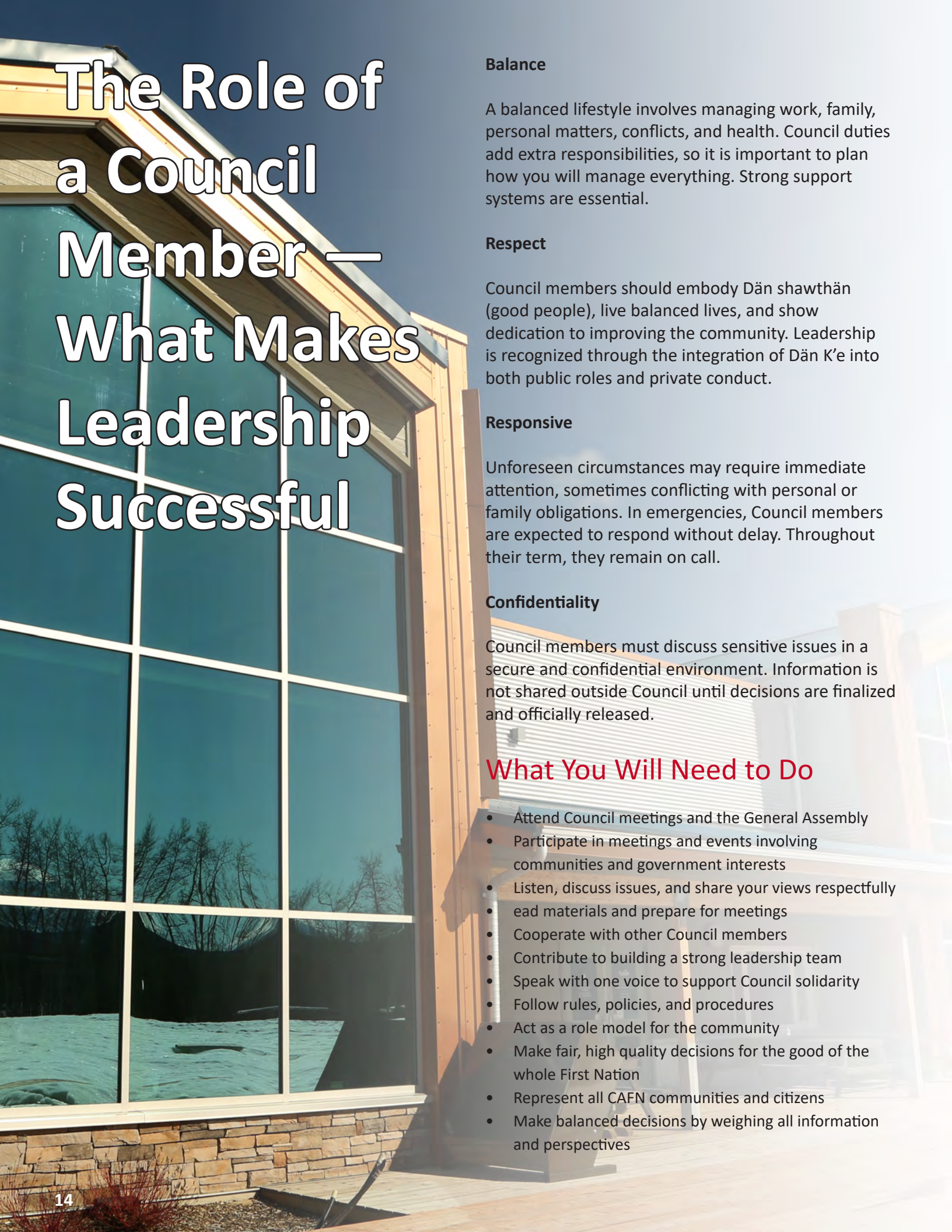
The Elder Councillor sits independently of the Äshāw (Elders) Senate. They may attend Senate meetings and may be elected to sit on the Äshāw Executive, but they do not hold an ex officio role. The same applies to the Youth Councillor and their relationship to the Youth Council.

The Elder Councillor carries wisdom and tradition, while the Youth Councillor brings the perspectives of younger generations. Their duties as regular Council members include knowing the code of conduct, following procedures, and understanding the issues, policies, and processes involved in decision making.









The Role of a Council Member — What Makes Leadership Successful

Balance

A balanced lifestyle involves managing work, family, personal matters, conflicts, and health. Council duties add extra responsibilities, so it is important to plan how you will manage everything. Strong support systems are essential.

Respect

Council members should embody Dän shawthän (good people), live balanced lives, and show dedication to improving the community. Leadership is recognized through the integration of Dän K'e into both public roles and private conduct.

Responsive

Unforeseen circumstances may require immediate attention, sometimes conflicting with personal or family obligations. In emergencies, Council members are expected to respond without delay. Throughout their term, they remain on call.

Confidentiality

Council members must discuss sensitive issues in a secure and confidential environment. Information is not shared outside Council until decisions are finalized and officially released.

What You Will Need to Do

- Attend Council meetings and the General Assembly
- Participate in meetings and events involving communities and government interests
- Listen, discuss issues, and share your views respectfully
- Read materials and prepare for meetings
- Cooperate with other Council members
- Contribute to building a strong leadership team
- Speak with one voice to support Council solidarity
- Follow rules, policies, and procedures
- Act as a role model for the community
- Make fair, high quality decisions for the good of the whole First Nation
- Represent all CAFN communities and citizens
- Make balanced decisions by weighing all information and perspectives

Time Commitments

As self government continues to be implemented, the workload remains significant. Councillors work at least five days each month, often more. The role requires a flexible schedule.

Being on Council means you do not follow regular job hours. Meetings may be called on short notice, and you may have three to four meetings a week, plus community functions.

Meetings Include:

- Regular monthly Council meetings
- Special Council meetings as needed
- Executive Council of the Whole (ECW) meetings
- All General Assemblies and Special General Assemblies
- Standing Committee meetings
- Additional CAFN meetings on specific topics
- External meetings representing CAFN

Teamwork

Council members collaborate in a cooperative way, learning to function as a unified group and speak with one voice to ensure solidarity.

This includes offering ideas, listening constructively, and acting in ways that build a positive, well functioning Council while maintaining personal integrity.

Conduct

Dedication to Dän K'e helps guide Council processes and procedures. These documents guide Council conduct. Council is responsible for addressing questionable conduct and disciplining itself when necessary.

Each Council member must uphold the traditions and cultural values of the CAFN Constitution. Laws and policies outline the rules and guidelines for ethical and legal behaviour.

Confidentiality

Upon signing the Oath of Confidentiality, newly elected Council members pledge to preserve and maintain the confidentiality of all information entrusted to them during their term.

Conflict of Interest

If a Council member or their immediate family may benefit directly from a matter before Council, the member must report it. The issue is then handled under the Conflict of Interest Regulation.

Communications

Council members must learn how Council communicates with other governments and CAFN staff. Communication and negotiation with other governments and the media are important responsibilities.

Training

Orientation and briefing provided to the new Council offer a basic understanding of government structure and processes. Board and committee training, chairperson training, and other learning opportunities may also be available.

Community

Councillors must understand all aspects of community life and how community issues connect to government processes. Each community elects delegates to the General Assembly, allowing the two branches of government to work together to meet community needs.

To Sum Up

Know the basic government structures and processes that shape Council's work. Be familiar with the CAFN Constitution, CAFN laws, and the policies that guide Council procedures. Understand how Council develops policies and laws and how government puts them into action.

Learn how Council communicates with other governments and CAFN staff. Communication and negotiation with other governments and the media are also important.

Pay

Salary, Honoraria, and Benefits Councillors

The Government Administration Act (GAA) is an important document for Council members and citizens considering running for Council. It is enacted under the First Nation's inherent right to self government and is consistent with the CAFN Constitution. Amended in 2020, the Act establishes how the government is structured and administered.

The GAA sets out Council's mandate to promote transparency and effective government operations. Part IV, Dän nätthe dätth'i (Council) Remuneration, covers compensation for public service, including an annual base salary, per meeting honoraria, and access to available benefits plans.

Remuneration Regulations are legally binding and establish monetary amounts and accountability requirements for receiving public funds.

Chief

The Chief serves as a CAFN employee and receives full time pay and benefits, including holiday pay. Regulations set the Chief's annual base salary, which increases according to a formula based on years served.

Section 42 of the CAFN Constitution defines the Chief's authority and responsibilities.

Deputy Chief

Council appoints a member to serve as Deputy Chief. When acting as Chief, the Deputy Chief is paid a prorated amount based on the Chief's salary and is not eligible to claim honoraria for duties related to the Chief's role.

Councillors are not considered employees but receive an annual base salary covering preparation and attendance at Council meetings and the General Assembly.

Supplemental payments are provided for additional work and meetings. Councillors follow rules to receive honoraria and travel expenses. Pay varies month to month due to flexible schedules.

The average salary for a councillor that includes base pay and supplemental payments for additional work and meetings is \$78,267.

Councillors are not eligible for EI, overtime, paid holidays, or sick leave, but may participate in available benefit plans:

- Medical
- Dental
- Life insurance
- Travel insurance
- RSP matching
- Pension contributions
- CAFN travel rates

Also provided:

- Reimbursement for travel expenses
- Use of a CAFN computer and email
- Use of a CAFN cell phone or reimbursement for personal use

Guiding Documents

Many documents guide the council's work and decision-making. Most are available online at www.cafn.ca. These include (and are not limited to) the following:

- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Final Agreement
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Final Agreement Implementation Plan
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Self-Government Agreement
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Self Government Agreement Implementation Plan
- CAFN Constitution
- Yukon First Nations and CYFN Umbrella Final Agreement

CAFN acts and regulations

- Lottery Licensing Act
- Traditional Activities Protection Act
- Fish and Wildlife Act
- Goods and Services Tax Act
- Government Administration Act
- Income Tax Act Lands Act
- Äghàa'an Enrollment Act
- Financial Administration Act
- Dákwänje Nàts'ual Act (Language Act)
- Legislative Process Regulation
- Election Rules and Regulations
- Legislative Process Regulation

Terms of reference for:

- Äshèyi Negotiations Standing Committee
- Dän Tán Gà Dijäl Standing Committee
- Finance Standing Committee
- Housing Standing Committee
- Regulation for Council Remuneration
- Conflict of Interest Regulation
- Election Rules and Regulations

CAFN policies and procedures:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Human Resources Policy and Procedures | • Elders Senate Rules of Procedure | • Governance Standing Committee |
| • Finance Policy | • Youth Council Rules of Procedure | • CAFN Annual Reports & Audits |
| • Board and Committees Policy | • Language Standing Committee | • CAFN Financial Statements |
| • Communications Policy | | |
| • Community Wellness Policy | | |
| • General Assembly Rule of Order | | |

Reflection and questions

It is hoped this handbook has helped you better understand the role, responsibilities, and scope of First Nations Council.

If you are considering running for Council, these questions can help you reflect on your readiness, the strengths and experience you bring, and the areas where you may want to grow.

You do not need to have every skill or answer right away. These questions are meant to help you recognize your strengths and identify where you may need more experience or support. They also offer a clearer picture of what the role of a Council member involves. If you can answer most of them positively and are willing to keep learning, you may be ready to serve your community on Council.

Knowledge of CAFN

- How well do you know CAFN communities and citizens?
- How long have you lived in a CAFN community?
- How familiar are you with CAFN culture, traditions, and language?
- Do you know how to balance traditional ways with new approaches?
- How familiar are you with the history of CAFN government and its people?
- Are you familiar with the CAFN Constitution, laws, and agreements?
- Do you understand how the General Assembly and Council work together?
- Do you understand the roles of the General Assembly, Council, and CAFN staff?
- Do you understand Council's role in the overall CAFN government structure?

Communication

- Are you comfortable speaking in public?
- Are you confident in your reading and writing skills?
- Are you comfortable speaking with Elders and Youth?

Computer Skills

- Do you have basic computer skills?

Financial Understanding

- Do you understand the basics of budgets financial documents and reporting?

Teamwork and Decision-Making

- Are you a good listener with good judgment?
- Are you comfortable assessing situations and making decisions?
- Can you express your views clearly and respectfully in a group setting?
- Are you flexible and willing to compromise when appropriate?
- Do you believe in consensus, council solidarity, and speaking with one voice?
- Do you work well in a team environment?

Problem-Solving

- Are you able to approach problems logically?

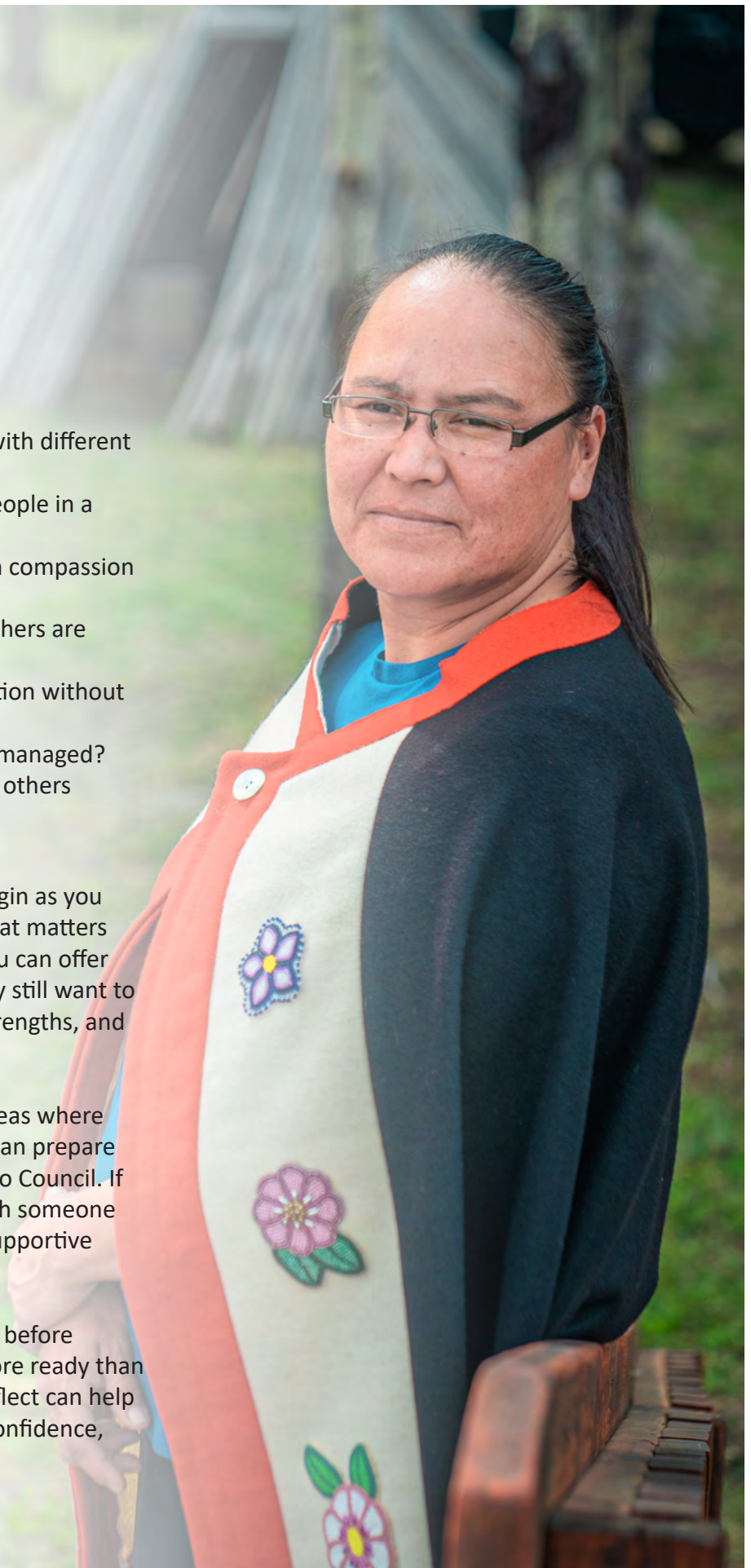
People Skills

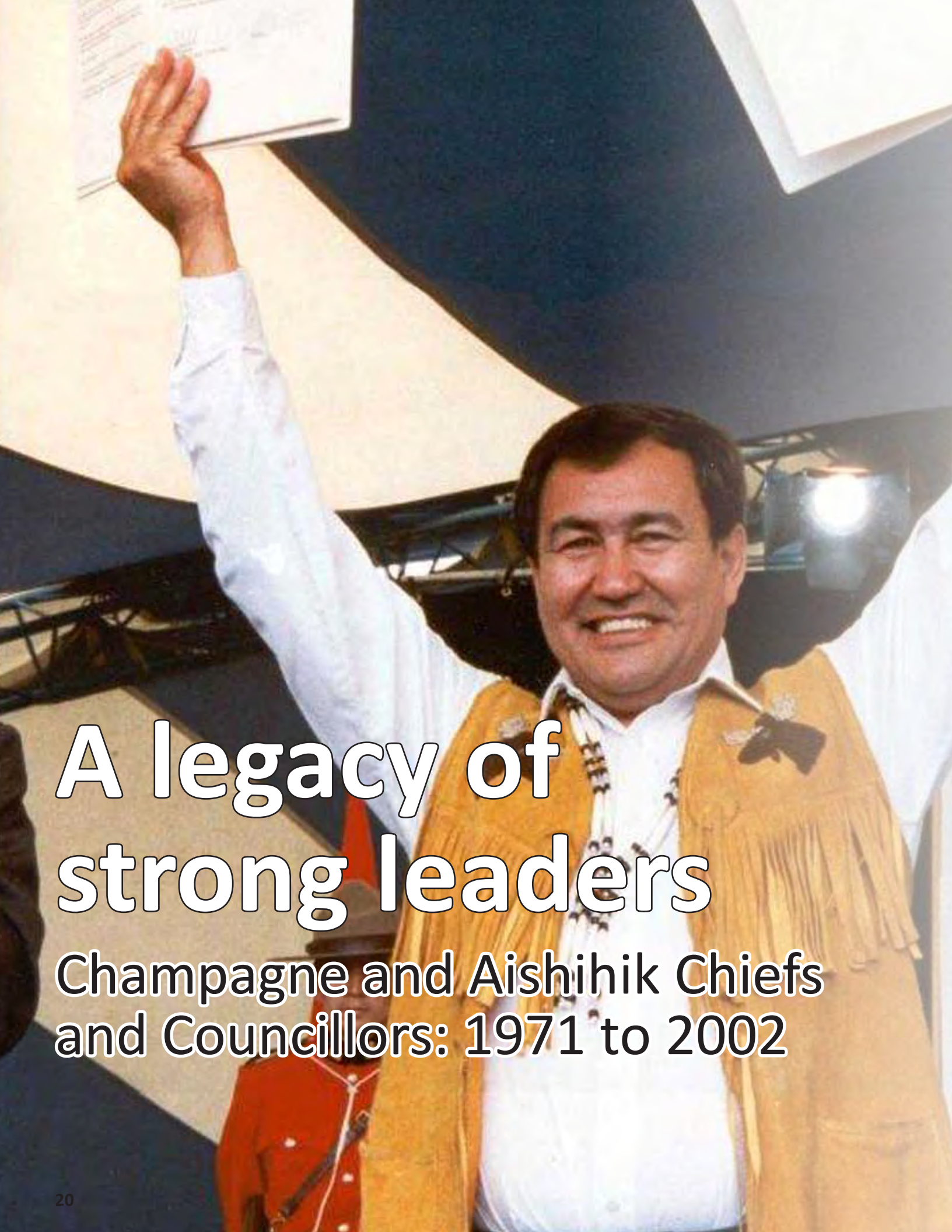
- Do you have experience of working with different personalities?
- Are you comfortable working with people in a variety of settings?
- Can you respond to people with both compassion and objectivity?
- Are you able to remain calm when others are emotionally upset?
- Do you know how to manage a situation without letting emotions take over?
- How do you think conflict should be managed?
- Have you had to make decisions that others disagreed with or found difficult?

These questions are simply a place to begin as you reflect on your skills and experience. What matters most is taking an honest look at what you can offer as a Council member and where you may still want to grow. Everyone brings their own gifts, strengths, and opportunities for learning.

By recognizing your strengths and the areas where you would like to build confidence, you can prepare yourself to serve well if you are elected to Council. If you feel unsure, it may help to speak with someone you trust who can offer an honest and supportive perspective.

You may decide to gain more experience before running, or you may discover you are more ready than you realize. Either way, taking time to reflect can help you move forward with greater clarity, confidence, and purpose.





A legacy of strong leaders

Champagne and Aishihik Chiefs
and Councillors: 1971 to 2002

Year	Chief	Councillors
1971	Harry Allen	Donjek Brown, Fred Jim
1972	Ray Jackson	Donjek Brown, Fred Jim
1973-74	Ray Jackson	Fred Jim, Moose Jackson
1975-76	Moose Jackson	Fred Jim, Ray Jackson
1977	Harry Joe	Dave Joe, Martha Smith, Lilly Smith, Harold Kane, Lorraine Allen
1978	Harry Joe	Dave Joe, Martha Smith, Harold Kane, Lorraine Allen, Marge Jackson
1979-1980	Ray Jackson	Harold Kane, Frances Fromme, Marge Jackson, Dave Joe, Lilly Smith, Lorraine Allen, Alex Van Bibber (Elder)
1980-1982	Paul Birckel	Harold Kane, Lorraine Allen, Dorothy Wabisca, Charles Hume
1982-1984	Paul Birckel	Harold Kane, Moose Jackson, Harry Smith, Chuck Hume, Rose Mazur, Frank Chambers, Alex Van Bibber (Elder)
1984-1986	Paul Birckel	Harold Kane, Charles Hume, Moose Jackson, Harry Smith, Rose Mazur, Rose Washington (Elder)
1986-1990	Paul Birckel	Patt Delaney, Chuck Hume, Harold Kane, Frances Oles, Rose Mazur, Rose Washington, Trudy Long (Youth), Paddy Jim (Elder)
1990-1994	Paul Birckel	James Allen, Chuck Hume, Patt Delaney, Lawrence Joe, Rose Mazur, Oliver Jim, Hazel Hubbard (Elder),
1994-1998	Paul Birckel	Charles Hume, Jimmy Allen, Gerald Brown, Ron Chambers, Frances Oles, Harry Smith, Patricia George (Youth), Paddy Jim (Elder), Rose Turner (Elder)
1998-2002	Bob Charlie	Charles Hume, Ron Chambers, Gerald Brown, Kathy Van Bibber, Steve Smith, Kathy Kushniruk (Deputy Chief), Frank Chambers (Deputy Chief), Alicia Patterson (Youth), Devon Kinney (Youth), Moose Jackson (Elder)

A legacy of strong leaders

Champagne and Aishihik Chiefs and Councillors: 2002-2026

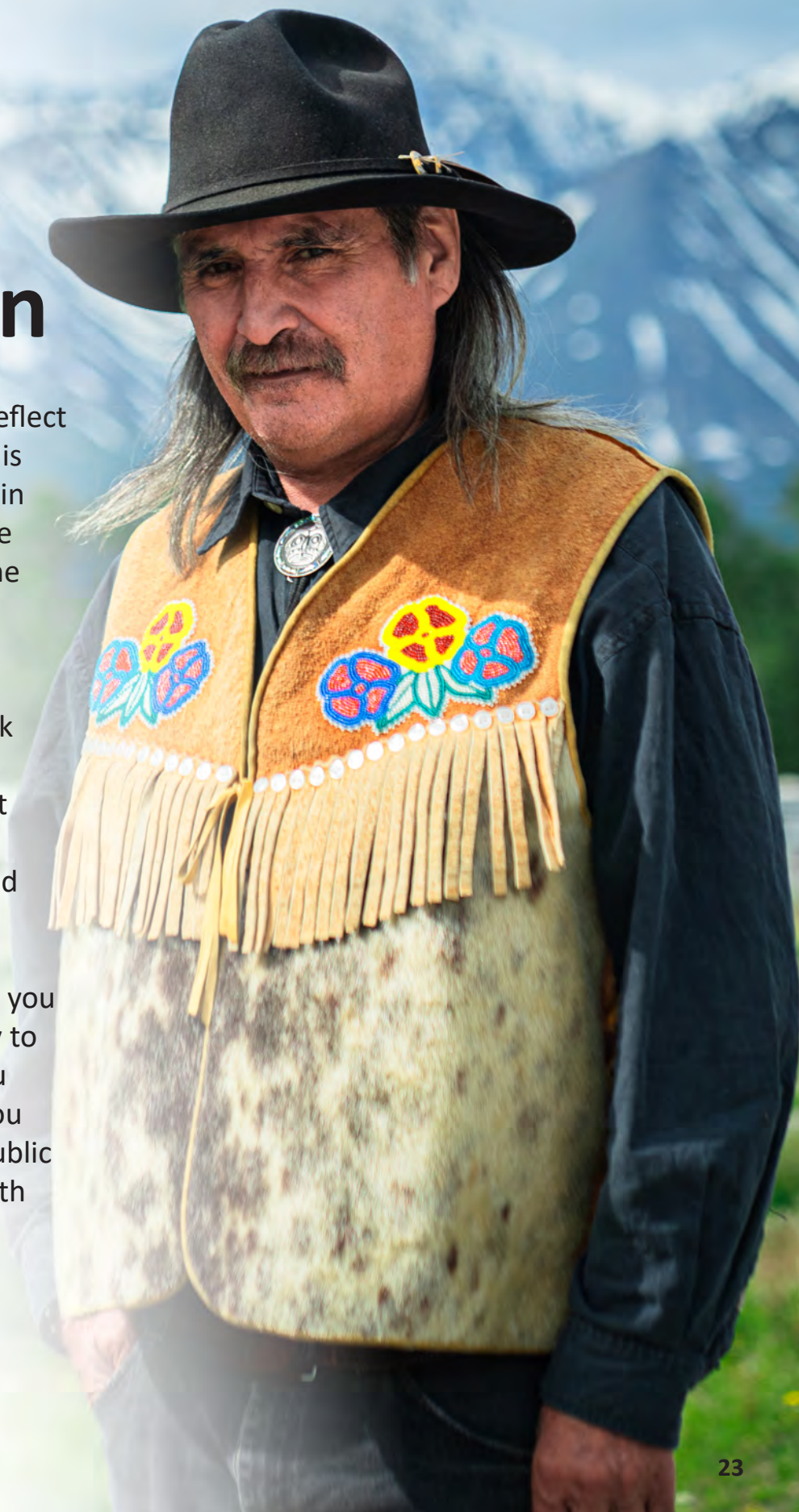
Year	Chief	Councillors
2002-2006	James Allen	Gerald Brown, Kathleen Van Bibber, Doris Anderson, Clinton McCuaig, Shadelle Chambers (Youth), Moose Jackson (Elder)
2002-2006	Diane Strand	Kathy Van Bibber, Steve Smith, Lorraine Stick, Mary Jane Jim, Joshua Darbyshire (Youth), Moose Jackson (Elder)
2010-2014	James Allen	Mary Jane Jim, Leslie Walker, Harold Johnson, Dayle Macdonald, Bradley Joe-Malegana (Youth), Albert Hume (Elder)
2014-2018	Steve Smith	Rose Kushniruk, Shadelle Chambers, Kathy Van Bibber, Leslie Walker, Nicole Nicholas-Workman (Youth), Carol Buzzell (Elder)
2018-2022	Steve Smith	Rose Kushniruk, Barb Joe, Marie McLaren, Mickey Beattie, Jessica Mazur (Youth), Mundy Joe (Elder)
2022-2026	Barb Joe	Margaret Chiblow, Carol Buzzell (Elder), Shyenne Sparvier-Kinney (Youth), Donnie Williams, Lawrence Joe, Sharmane Jones, Mickey Beattie

Conclusion

There is a great deal here to reflect on. We hope this information is useful and that the questions in this handbook help you decide what is best for you and for the CAFN government.

Serving on Council can be demanding, but this handbook is intended to encourage and support you if the time is right to run. Like any government, CAFN needs caring, skilled, and motivated leaders.

We hope this handbook helps you decide whether you are ready to serve and supports you as you make your choice. We wish you all the best as you consider public service and reflect on your path ahead. Good Luck!





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