

To the Nation from the Tribal Chair, Joseph “Zeke” Rupnick:

Dear Tribal Members,

This past week has been very troubling for everyone. Not only do we have the pandemic to deal with, we are in the midst of our tribal election cycle when emotions always run high. Now is a time to reflect on what has happened, learn from the mistakes we all have made and begin to heal the wounds. Before I decided to address the members, I felt that I needed help. Many know I follow traditional ways and last evening, I offered my nensema, smoked my pwagen and asked for healing for the people. In short, my prayer to the creator is to help the people work together to build a better place for our children and grandchildren just as our relatives before us asked.

Most have heard that there was an inquiry about decisions I have made and actions I have taken. This is true. To ensure relevant facts were presented and for transparency, Tribal Council requested our legal counsel investigate issues raised. Monday, July 13, 2020, legal counsel presented the facts of the investigation to Council. Council heard the facts and discussed what actions, if any, were needed. Their decision was no action is warranted.

No one likes confrontation but sometimes we must have that to move forward. We must have disagreements to identify the flaws in our system in hopes of making the government better able to serve the people. Those that serve in positions of leadership must make tough decisions daily and understand those decisions will not please everyone. It is a tough job in which a few have accepted.

In the meeting when Council called me in, Vice Chairman Pahmahmie said we need to communicate better and be willing to have the hard discussions. I couldn't agree more, we all need to work on intercommunication. It's hard at times to open your mind to others' points of view especially if it is something you are very much against. We are all human, but as leaders, we must work beyond a single mindset and consider others' points of view. This is not an easy task.

Now is a time for us to come together and not allow half-truths and rumors to divide us. We should ask questions to gather the facts before we spread information not based on fact. We cannot take a difference of opinion as a personal attack. We should be able to debate openly without fear of reprisal. Each of us has something to offer and when we come together, collectively we can make better decisions for the people.

Migwett

Joseph P. Rupnick, Chairman

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation