



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bois Forte Representative Mark Drift Censured by Tribal Council

NETT LAKE, MN – The Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council (RTC) officially censured District I Representative Mark Drift at a meeting on October 9, 2007. The RTC actions were the result of a substantiated complaint filed last month by a Tribal Government employee.

Upon receiving the complaint, the RTC had requested a formal investigation by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT). The MCT report was delivered to the RTC on October 8 and the Council convened the next day to address the matter.

The RTC found that Drift violated provisions of the Band's Code of Ethics by engaging in intentional conduct that caused a person to feel "oppressed, persecuted, or humiliated" and that he had failed to exhibit the standards of ethical behavior required of all elected officials.

The Bois Forte RTC considered the allegations against Drift at a meeting attended by the entire Council, including Drift. Tribal Chairman Kevin Leecy stated that Drift was advised of the purpose of the meeting, that Drift had received notice of the charges on September 21, and that Drift was given an opportunity to respond in his own defense.

After deliberating nearly two hours, the five person Council reconvened to vote on the charges. Drift was allowed to vote, but by a vote of three to one the Council found that the violations were grounds for Drift's censure. Leecy also cast a ballot, but under Band Bylaws, the Chairman's vote is not counted unless it is necessary to break a tie.

Representative Drift objected to not receiving a copy of the investigative report. Chairman Leecy said that because Drift had previously disclosed confidential information about the case, the Council chose not to release the report to him. Leecy explained that it was the Council's policy not to publicly release investigative reports in such cases. Leecy said that even though Drift did not have a copy of the report, portions of it were read to him at the meeting to ensure that Drift understood the charges.

Leecy stressed that all proper procedures were followed under tribal law. "Mark Drift knew what the charges against him were, he met with investigators, he took the opportunity to present his defense before the Council, and he even voted," said Leecy. "He had every chance to clear himself, but the facts were clearly not in his favor."

Leecy went on to say, "For the good of the Band, we need to close the book on this matter. The Council did not start this, but we did what we had to do under Tribal law. We now want to move on to more productive efforts for our members. For the best interests of the Band, we hope that Mr. Drift does the same."

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