



news

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BOIS FORTE TRIBAL COUNCIL CENSURES REPRESENTATIVE MARK DRIFT, INVOKES PROCESS FOR HIS REMOVAL

TOWER, Minn. – The Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council (RTC) formally censured Representative Mark Drift, Sr. on Monday for misusing Band funds and invoked a process that could remove Drift from office.

The censure was the result of a two-month investigation by the Bois Forte Band into allegations that Drift used an RTC credit card to obtain cash at other tribes' casinos for personal reasons, and that he failed to reimburse the Band for unauthorized expenditures.

The charge card irregularities were detected by the Band's internal review procedures and, in accordance with the Band's fiscal policies, reported to Secretary-Treasurer David Morrison, Sr.

“We closely monitor our budget because we handle various grants, tribal operating revenues, and federal self-governance budget allocations,” Morrison said. “It is unfortunate that this incident occurred, but it is fortunate that we had the procedures in place to discover it. We have now completed our internal review and will use the Band's procedures to resolve the situation.”

After receiving the internal review, which detailed 16 credit card irregularities by Drift, Morrison reported to the RTC yesterday. The RTC took action today by passing a motion to censure Drift, and by ordering him to repay the money owed the Band by April 21, 2008.

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The RTC also invoked a process that could result in Drift's removal from the council. If at least 20 percent of eligible Band member voters living on the Bois Forte Reservation sign a petition calling for Drift's ouster, the RTC will confirm the validity of the signatures and addresses and then hold a formal hearing on the charges against Drift.

The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Law Enforcement Services is also conducting an investigation into Drift's credit card irregularities and may choose to file criminal charges against him under tribal and federal laws. The BIA was alerted about the situation by Morrison.

This is the second time the RTC has officially censured Drift, who represents Band members in District 1 of the Bois Forte Reservation near Nett Lake. In October 2007, the RTC found that Drift had violated provisions of the Band's Code of Ethics by engaging in intentional conduct that caused a tribal government employee to feel "oppressed, persecuted, or humiliated," and that he had failed to exhibit the standards of ethical behavior required of all elected officials.

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