

Terms of Reference for the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Ratitsénhaienhs

Approved via MCED # __ /2026–2027 on ____, 2026

Purpose

- 1.1 The Terms of Reference (TOR) establish and describe the duties, roles, and responsibilities of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) Ratitsénhaienhs as elected representatives of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke using the principles of the *Community Vision Statement* as the priority guiding document.

Decision-Making Authority

- 2.1 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are elected to their position according to the *Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Election Law* ("MCK Election Law").
- 2.2 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs has the authority to render decisions on the:
 - 2.2.1 Political priorities of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke with community input and a focus on restorative practices;
 - 2.2.2 Overall strategic direction of the MCK as an organization;
 - 2.2.3 Laws, regulations, and policies affecting governance in Kahnawà:ke; and
 - 2.2.4 General planning, allocation and use of MCK resources.
- 2.3 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs do not hold authority to intervene in operational and/or administrative matters of the MCK as an organization, unless formally mandated to do so by the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs.

Accountability

- 3.1 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are accountable to the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke, to each other, as equals, and to the MCK as an organization, with respect to all actions and decisions pertaining to their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.2 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs must perform the duties, roles and responsibilities of their positions faithfully, conscientiously and diligently, respecting their *Oath of Office* and *Code of Conduct*, and in accordance with the administration guidelines and operational policies for the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs, and all other applicable MCK policies and regulations.
- 3.3 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are expected to conduct themselves and make informed decisions that respect the principles of fairness, dignity of persons, compassion, and consensus, harmonious with the traditions, philosophies, and customs of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke.
- 3.4 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs shall be cognizant of their position as a leader and ensure that their actions, whether personal or within their professional capacity, are taken so that they do not

tarnish the public image or credibility of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs or of the MCK as an organization.

General Roles

- 4.1 The role of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs is to protect and defend the rights and interests of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke, promote collective well-being, protect the jurisdiction of the Mohawk Territory of Kahnawà:ke, and to uphold and ensure the effective governance of the community.
- 4.2 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are expected to:
 - 4.2.1 Support the revitalization of Kanien'kéha and protect Kanien'kehá:ka culture and traditions;
 - 4.2.2 Contribute to the protection and advancement of Kanien'kehá:ka Nationhood;
 - 4.2.3 Assert and defend Kahnawà:ke's jurisdiction;
 - 4.2.4 Strive to unify Kahnawà:ke;
 - 4.2.5 Support the continued development of Kahnawà:ke legislation;
 - 4.2.6 Maintain and enhance territorial connection for current and future generations;
 - 4.2.7 Be mindful of the principles of the Kahswéntha (Two Row Wampum);
 - 4.2.8 Foster economic self-sufficiency for Kahnawà:ke;
 - 4.2.9 Support social development and the well-being of Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke;
 - 4.2.10 Ensure community development and the effective provision of community services; and
 - 4.2.11 Protect the environment and territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke.
- 4.3 In carrying out the roles outlined above, the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs must serve the community respectfully and encourage creative and critical thinking, mindful of the impact to the next seven generations.

Duties and Responsibilities of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs

- 5.1 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs have all the duties and responsibilities in accordance with the *Declaration of Oath of Office*, the *Relationship Framework between the MCK Executive Director and MCK Ratitsénhaienhs & Ohén:ton Í:rate/Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs*, *Political Principles to Guide Decision Making*, and all other applicable policies, laws, and regulations of the MCK.
- 5.2 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs must protect and promote the jurisdiction of Kahnawà:ke in their respective role(s) as prescribed by applicable policies and portfolio mandates to:
 - 5.2.1 Support the creation of Kahnawà:ke legislation by participating in the Community Decision Making and Review Process (CDMRP);
 - 5.2.2 Engage and negotiate with external governments; and
 - 5.2.3 Provide direction on political decisions.

- 5.3 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are expected to:
- 5.3.1 Attend and participate in all scheduled Council, Portfolio and Community meetings, notifying the community when absent for whatever reason;
 - 5.3.2 Ensure follow up to decisions of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;
 - 5.3.3 Ensure all necessary correspondence is addressed; and
 - 5.3.4 Participate in portfolios team(s) and any committee(s) to engage with files as assigned.
- 5.4 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs will:
- 5.4.1 Provide guidance and strategic direction to the MCK, as an organization;
 - 5.4.2 Provide leadership in community and organizational disputes;
 - 5.4.3 Report regularly to the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke on political and global activities of the MCK, including the training taken by the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;
 - 5.4.4 Support MCK Units to operate independently from the political body;
 - 5.4.5 Collaborate with the MCK Executive Director to ensure effective operation of the MCK, as an organization;
 - 5.4.6 Be available to all community members to assist with concerns and issues, whether or not they pertain to their specific portfolios; and
 - 5.4.7 Collectively respond to community conflict(s) to mitigate safety risks.
- 5.5 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are assigned roles on portfolio teams and must:
- 5.5.1 As Portfolio Leads, call Portfolio Team meetings and set meeting agendas;
 - 5.5.2 As Portfolio Leads, provide direction to the relevant Portfolio Coordinators and Teams, and ensure implementation of portfolios' mandates;
 - 5.5.3 Portfolio Lead, in collaboration with other Portfolio Chiefs, provides strategic direction to the Portfolio Teams;
 - 5.5.4 As Portfolio Leads, act as the official spokesperson for Portfolio Teams, issue and sign all relevant correspondences from the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs, and approve press releases in accordance with directions from or decisions taken by the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;
 - 5.5.5 Participate in governing boards and commissions in an advisory capacity and as liaisons to the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;
 - 5.5.6 As Portfolio Leads, negotiate with external governments and organizations;
 - 5.5.7 Ensures that MCK Ratitsénhaienhs approval of portfolio mandates is obtained as mandates are updated;
 - 5.5.8 Provide strategic direction to the Portfolio Teams;
 - 5.5.9 Provide regular updates to, and obtain direction from, the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;

- 5.5.10 Regularly report to the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs on external government actions affecting Kahnawà:ke prior to communicating it to the community;
- 5.5.11 Provide input on major projects within the portfolio mandate; and
- 5.5.12 Foster positive and effective relations between members of the Portfolio Team.
- 5.6 When mandated by the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs, a Ratsénhaienhs/letsénhaienhs will act as a liaison or board/committee member on a community organizational board/committee. In this mandated role, they are specifically responsible to:
 - 5.6.1 Inform the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs of the activities of the organization;
 - 5.6.2 Inform the board/committee of political positions or issues relevant to the organization;
 - 5.6.3 Facilitate communications between the organization and the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs;
 - 5.6.4 Assist the organization's leadership in engaging with government bodies; and
 - 5.6.5 Encourage the organization to adhere to shared Kanien'kehá:ka values.
- 5.7 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs may provide direction to programs, services and projects of the MCK, and collaborate with community organizations, as required.
 - 5.7.1 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are responsible to report to the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke and account for funds used or available for programs and services administered by the MCK and community organizations.
- 5.8 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are responsible to ensure the development of policy responses to issues that fall outside the authority of MCK Administration, and/or that current policies and procedures do not address. They are responsible to:
 - 5.8.1 Consult with the community and MCK executive leadership on possible policy responses.
- 5.9 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs may assign additional duties to a Ratsénhaienhs/letsénhaienhs in accordance with governance policies (including, but not limited to, the *MCK Portfolio Governance Roles & Responsibilities*, and *Relationship Framework between the MCK Executive Director and MCK Ratitsénhaienhs & Ohén:ton Í:rate/Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs*).

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Attributes of the letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs

- 6.1 letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs should possess knowledge of:
 - 6.1.1 The principles and practice of Onkwehón:we leadership;
 - 6.1.2 Kahnawà:ke legislation, policies, programs, procedures, regulations, and jurisdiction;
 - 6.1.3 A thorough understanding of community issues;
 - 6.1.4 An awareness of external political environments; and
 - 6.1.5 A strong grasp of the community's present and future needs.

- 6.2 Portfolio leads must have relevant knowledge and skills to be considered as Portfolio Leads.
- 6.3 letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs must participate in available training and commit to improve their skills in, including, but not limited to:
 - 6.3.1 Governance;
 - 6.3.2 Verbal and written communications, including computer skills;
 - 6.3.3 Conflict resolution and mediation;
 - 6.3.4 Leadership, representation, and advocacy;
 - 6.3.5 Negotiations;
 - 6.3.6 Problem solving;
 - 6.3.7 Interpersonal relations and diplomacy; and
 - 6.3.8 Coping and stress management.
- 6.4 letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs must be committed to improve their ability to speak Kanien'kéha and continue to advance their knowledge of Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten.

Roles Specific to the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs

- 7.1 In addition to all the sections above, the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs has additional roles and responsibilities, outlined in the following sections.
- 7.2 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs function as the leader and spokesperson for the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs and the MCK, as an organization.
- 7.3 Within three (3) months from the start of each term of office, the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs will propose a letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs to serve as an alternate Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs (Alternate) who will exercise the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs authority in the event of their temporary absence.
- 7.4 The proposed Alternate must have served one (1) full term in office, be in good standing and remain in good standing throughout their appointment, subject to approval by formal decision of the Ratitsénhaienhs.
- 7.5 Should the position of Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs become vacated at a point in time that exceeds six (6) months prior to the next scheduled general election, the Alternate shall exercise the authority of the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs until such time as a new Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs is elected via by-election.
- 7.6 The acting Alternate will work in transition with the new Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs post by-election for a period of four (4) weeks minimum.
- 7.7 As circumstances warrant, the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs may select a new letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs to function/hold the position as the Alternate.
- 7.8 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs, through consensus, may designate a letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs to fulfil duties and responsibilities of the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs when both the

Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs and Alternate are unavailable or if the latter position is vacated.

- 7.9 The role of the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs is to lead the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs to protect and defend the rights and interests of the Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke, promote community overall well-being, protect the jurisdiction and integrity of the Mohawk Territory of Kahnawà:ke, and contribute to the effective governance of the community.
- 7.10 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs will ensure that all practices, activities, decisions, and organizational circumstances of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs and the MCK are lawful, prudent, and consistent with accepted business and professional ethics.
- 7.11 Accordingly, the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs is expected to:
 - 7.11.1 Ensure the effective operation of the MCK;
 - 7.11.2 Create a climate of trust and collaboration among the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs; and
 - 7.11.3 Ensure that MCK Ratitsénhaienhs are fully informed on all matters affecting Kahnawà:ke as a community.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs

- 8.1 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs has all the duties and responsibilities of a letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs in accordance with this *Terms of Reference*, the *Declaration of Oath of Office*, the *Relationship Framework between the MCK Executive Director and MCK Ratitsénhaienhs & Ohén:ton Í:rate/Í:iente ne Ratitsénhaienhs*, *Political Principles to Guide Decision Making*, and all other applicable policies and regulations of the MCK.
- 8.2 In accordance with their authority and discretion, the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs shall:
 - 8.2.1 Chair all duly convened and special Council meetings;
 - 8.2.2 Approve final Council Meeting agendas;
 - 8.2.3 Approve the weekly Council Communiqué in collaboration with Office of the Council of Chiefs (OCC) leadership;
 - 8.2.4 Facilitate decision making among letsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs;
 - 8.2.5 Facilitate conflict resolution amongst the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs and/or employees of the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs (MCK Executive Director and OCC leadership);
 - 8.2.6 Call special Council Meetings or in-camera sessions;
 - 8.2.7 Direct logistical coordination of meetings;
 - 8.2.8 Review all proposed resolutions and directives;
 - 8.2.9 Approve all records of decisions issued at, and minutes of, Council Meetings;
 - 8.2.10 Review, prioritize, and schedule Strategic Discussion items;
 - 8.2.11 Approve the weekly schedule of Strategic Discussions;

- 8.2.12 Direct memorandums to the Executive Office and key leadership regarding meeting format changes and changes to scheduling criteria;
- 8.2.13 Call meetings;
- 8.2.14 Serve as line supervisor of the Executive Director and Director of the OCC;
- 8.2.15 Act as the administrative intake and responsible authority on administrative and personnel matters pertaining to the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs (ie. timesheets, formal complaints from MCK Ratitsénhaienhs against MCK Ratitsénhaienhs);
- 8.2.16 Receive complaints against the Executive Director and OCC Director, and determine the appropriate course of action; and
- 8.2.17 Schedule Grand Chiefs Office sessions and any associated follow-ups.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Attributes of the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs

- 9.1 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs should possess a sound knowledge of:
 - 9.1.1 The principles and practice of Onkwehón:we leadership;
 - 9.1.2 Kahnawà:ke legislation, policies, programs, procedures, regulations and jurisdiction;
 - 9.1.3 A thorough understanding of community issues;
 - 9.1.4 An understanding of external political environments; and
 - 9.1.5 A strong grasp of the community's present and future needs.
- 9.2 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs should possess the skills necessary to be effective in the role, including:
 - 9.2.1 Governance;
 - 9.2.2 Verbal and written communications, including computer skills;
 - 9.2.3 Conflict resolution and mediation;
 - 9.2.4 Leadership, representation, and advocacy;
 - 9.2.5 Negotiations;
 - 9.2.6 Critical thinking;
 - 9.2.7 Problem solving;
 - 9.2.8 Interpersonal relations and diplomacy; and
 - 9.2.9 Coping and stress management.
- 9.3 The Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs must be committed to continually improving the skills listed in section 9.2 and their ability to speak Kanien'kéha and continuing to advance their knowledge of Tsi Niionkwarihò:ten.

Approval

- 10.1 In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between any provision(s) of this document and the *MCK Election Law*, the *MCK Election Law* supersedes any such provision.
- 10.2 This document shall come into force upon the passing of a Mohawk Council Executive Directive (MCED) and will replace any previous versions of the *Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Terms of Reference for the Ietsénhaienhs/Ratsénhaienhs* and the *Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke Terms of Reference for the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs*.
- 10.3 This document and any subsequent amendments must be approved by an MCED.

Review

- 11.1 The MCK Ratitsénhaienhs will undertake a review of this document three (3) months prior to the end of their term of office, led by the Ohén:ton Í:iente/Í:rate ne Ratitsénhaienhs.
- 11.2 The newly elected MCK Ratitsénhaienhs will undertake a further review of the document within three (3) months of being elected.
- 11.3 Any proposed amendments shall be reviewed by a Governance Advisory Team (GAT) composed of at least three (3) Kanien'kehá:ka of Kahnawà:ke for eventual validation by the community.
- 11.4 If no such GAT can be struck following reasonable effort, the proposed amendments must be posted for a 30-day feedback period before being approved with appropriate community engagement by the MCK Ratitsénhaienhs.