

# PENTICTON INDIAN BAND

## HOUSING COMMITTEE MODELS

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### INTRODUCTION

Penticton Indian Band has identified the need for a Housing Strategy to guide current and future governance on the response to address the community's housing needs. The first phase of the Housing Strategy is identification of a housing committee structure.

A housing committee can play an important role in helping to address community housing needs. The housing committee can be an advisory or a decision-making body. The structure, composition and authority of a housing committee are based on decisions made by the First Nation.

To start the process of identifying a housing committee structure, Penticton Indian Band (PIB) will work with members to identify their preferred model for a housing committee. Members are encouraged to share their opinions, ask questions and offer input in order to guide the decision-making process with respect to implementing a housing committee.

### HOUSING COMMITTEE MODELS – OPTIONS FOR A HOUSING COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

To guide the discussion, four different committee models are presented and each includes information on:

- Membership: Who would be on the housing committee? Consider whether an alternate member is selected in addition to the regular committee member.
- Size: The number of individuals who would be on the committee
- Eligibility criteria: The criteria for being a committee member
- Skills, knowledge and abilities: These would be an asset for the committee; and
- Pros and cons of each model.

### SUGGESTED HOUSING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

A list of common committee responsibilities is provided. These could either be fully in place when the committee is formed or, could be phased-in to allow for the capacity development of committee members.

### HOUSING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference confirms the Housing Committee's mandate, structure and size, eligibility criteria, accountability, authority, structure, responsibilities, term of office, operating rules for meetings, requirements for reporting and the process for replacing/selection of a committee member mid-term.

## **Housing Committee Model #1 – Member/Community-Based**

### Membership

Membership reflects the diversity of the community. This can include members or residents from specific groups/demographics such as families, Elders, singles, youth, off-reserve members or representation from housing situations (i.e., tenants from single family homes or specific housing projects such as Elders, apartments), homeowners, or by geographic area of the community. Members can be elected by the membership or appointed by Council.

### Size of the Committee

A minimum of five and a maximum of seven members provides for good representation. This size generally allows the committee to meet its mandate and have a variety of experience and opinions to brainstorm and discuss important issues. The Housing Manager acts as a resource to the committee and has no voting privileges.

### Criteria for Membership

To be eligible, a committee member must be:

- A registered member or resident in the community.
- 18 years of age or older.
- In compliance with the housing policy/agreement related to their tenure, where applicable.
- In good financial standing with the First Nation.
- Able to sign the First Nations' Oath of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest form.

### Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

These are considered an asset to the committee:

- Knowledge of the current housing portfolio.
- Understanding of housing programs and services.
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills to support committee practices.
- Ability to travel (i.e., for capacity development opportunities).
- Ability to work in a team environment.

### Pro's and Con's

Pros: Reflects the diversity of the community.  
Allows for eligible members/residents to participate in housing activities.

Cons: Meetings are usually scheduled around a members' work or other commitments, often outside of normal working hours.  
Funding will be required to cover operational expenses (e.g., honoraria).

## ***Housing Committee Model #2 – Resource/Administration-Based***

### Membership

Membership is made up of representation from the First Nations' administration staff. This can include staff from housing, finance, health, social development, lands, child and family services, etc. Members are usually selected by the head of the administrative department.

### Size of the Committee

A minimum of three and a maximum of five is ideal. Where the First Nation wishes to have representation from all departments and where there is a large administration, subcommittees or ad-hoc committees can be used to allow for input from all departments rather than having a large committee. The Housing Manager is a full voting member of the committee.

### Criteria for Membership

To be eligible a committee member must be:

- An employee of the First Nation or an entity of the First Nation, Tribal Council.
- 18 years of age or older.
- In compliance with the First Nations' human resources policies.
- In compliance with the housing policy/agreement related to their tenure, where applicable.
- In good financial standing with the First Nation.
- Able to sign the First Nations' Oath of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest form.

### Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

These are considered an asset to the committee:

- Knowledge and experiences of their departments and connections to housing,
- Knowledge of the current housing portfolio,
- Understanding of housing programs and services,
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills to support committee practices,
- Ability to travel (i.e., for capacity development opportunities),
- Ability to work in a team environment.

### Pro's and Con's

Pros: Experience with time management, problem-solving, planning, reporting, etc.  
Requirement to be on the committee is part of the job.  
Committee meetings can take place during working hours.  
Can reduce or eliminate operating costs for the committee.  
Can help to avoid or minimize duplication or overlap of services.

Cons: Meetings are scheduled within working hours.  
May result in a lack of diversity (e.g., age, gender)  
May result in a lack of familiarity with community dynamics, culture or history,

## ***Housing Committee Model #3 – Traditional/Family-Based***

### Membership

Membership reflects the families or clans that are represented within the community. This can include branches of the same family, extended family, kinship ties, adoption, surnames that are linked, individuals who trace a descent to a common ancestor, or share a common history. Members are selected by their family/clan.

### Size of the Committee

This will depend on the number of families/clans within the First Nation. Consideration will have to be given as to how to address individuals who fall outside of a defined family/clan or do not want to be represented by theirs. The Housing Manager is a resource for the committee and has no voting privileges.

### Criteria for Membership

To be eligible a committee member must be:

- Recognized by their family/clan,
- 18 years of age or older,
- In compliance with the housing policy/agreement related to their tenure, where applicable,
- In good financial standing with the First Nation,
- Able to sign the First Nations' Oath of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest form.

### Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

These are considered an asset to the committee

- Support of their family/clan
- Understanding of housing programs and services,
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills to support committee practices,
- Ability to travel (i.e., for capacity development opportunities),
- Ability to work in a team environment.

### Pro's and Con's

Pros: Reinforces/supports traditional customs and practices

Cons: Although representing family/clan, it may be challenging to put the needs of the community first.  
Size of the committee can become an issue if there are many families/clans.

Meetings are scheduled around a members' work or other commitments, often outside of normal working hours.

Funding will be required to cover operational expenses (e.g., honoraria).

## ***Housing Committee Model #4 – Skills-Based***

### Membership

Membership reflects specific skills that are required or desired for a housing committee. This can include background or experience in finance, planning, communication, construction, economic development, etc. This can include experienced professionals (employed or retired) who are interested in volunteering their services or may require volunteer hours to maintain certifications. A First Nation may consider looking beyond the membership to identify specific requirements. Members are appointed by Chief and Council or the Housing Director.

### Size of the Committee

A minimum of three and a maximum of five is ideal. Individuals can be invited to participate in ad-hoc or subcommittees if unable to be a regular member of the committee. The Housing Manager is a resource to the committee and has no voting privileges.

### Criteria for Membership

To be eligible a committee member must:

- Have a specific skill set that is identified by the Housing Manager,
- Agree to provide their expertise without compensation,
- Be 18 years of age or older,
- Be in compliance with the housing policy/agreement related to their tenure, where applicable,
- Be in good financial standing with the First Nation,
- Be able to sign the First Nations' Oath of Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest form.

### Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

These are considered an asset to the committee

- Understanding of housing programs and services,
- Awareness of the First Nations' structure, history and customs,
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills to support committee practices,
- Ability to travel (i.e., for capacity development opportunities),
- Ability to work in a team environment.

### Pro's and Con's

Pros: Provides access to specialized skills and expertise,  
Experience with time management, problem-solving, planning, reporting, etc.  
May reduce the operating costs related to the committee.

Cons: May lack diversity (e.g., age, gender),  
May not be familiar with community dynamics, culture or history,

## ***Suggested Housing Committee Responsibilities***

The responsibilities and functions of the housing committee are determined by the First Nation. These can change as the committee gains experience, develops capacity, meets/exceeds their goals or, the First Nation expands its housing programs and services.

Following are some examples of housing committee responsibilities:

- Support the work of the housing department (i.e., housing policy implementation and enforcement),
- Participate in review and evaluation of current housing programs and services,
- Contribute to housing policy development and/or updates,
- Enhance the community's awareness and understanding of housing activities, plans, policies etc.
- Participate in community engagement with respect to housing activities,
- Support comprehensive community plans,
- Participate in housing needs assessment and pursue changes that will help meet needs identified,
- Review applications for housing assistance and make recommendations for approval,
- Provide advice on procedures to follow to resolve property management challenges or policy violations including arrears management, tenant damage, vacant or abandoned homes, etc.
- Contribute to the annual report to Chief and Council,
- Attend required meetings, conferences, training and/or planning sessions,
- Sign the Oath of Confidentiality and the Conflict of Interest form.

## ***Terms of Reference for the Housing Committee***

After a decision is made as to housing committee model, the next step will be to develop a Terms of Reference for the committee. The Terms of Reference guides the committee and holds them responsible to the community. It confirms the objectives, authorities, responsibilities/tasks to be performed, operating rules, etc. Some items within the Terms of Reference will be defined by Chief and Council and others by the community or by the housing committee itself. Each committee member, and alternate, must sign the Terms of Reference prior to beginning their work as a committee member. Following are some of the items that should be included:

- 1) What is the mandate or objective of the committee?
- 2) What is the committee structure? For example:
  - Size of the committee (minimum and maximum).
  - Are alternates selected? If so, how many?
  - What is the maximum term? Allow sufficient time for members to gain experience and stagger terms so that knowledge and experience is maintained when members leave.
  - Will a member of Council be on the committee? If so, will they have regular voting privileges or only in the event of a tie?
- 3) To whom is the committee accountable? For example:
  - Chief and Council or, Chief Executive Officer/Band Manager or the Housing Manager.
- 4) What authority does the committee have? For example:
  - Is their authority related only to one tenure (e.g., rental) or all tenures?
  - Approval of housing expenses (e.g., for rental housing - repairs, maintenance and for homeownership – renovations), approval of applicants for available rental units/homeownership loans.
- 5) What are their responsibilities?
  - Refer to previous page.
- 6) Will the committee have executive? For example:
  - Chairperson. If so, is it a rotating chair or permanent position? Confirm voting restrictions, if any.
  - Secretary (non-voting).
- 7) Is a budget required for operation of the committee? For example:
  - Honoraria and travel.
  - If honoraria are paid, specify or refer to finance policies.
- 8) Confirm the grounds for termination of a committee member. For example:
  - How many meetings can be missed during a calendar year or term of office?
  - What happens when a conflict of interest is not reported or acted upon as required?
  - In such cases, what is the process to notify the member, who is responsible to do so? How is a replacement member selected?