

White Earth Reservation Business Committee

Regular Meeting

February 24, 2023

Mahnomen, MN

Chairman Michael A. Fairbanks called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m., roll call was taken with a quorum present.

Present: Michael A. Fairbanks, Chairman
Michael LaRoque, Secretary/Treasurer
Henry Fox, District I Representative
Eugene Sommers, District II Representative
Cheryl "Annie" Jackson, District III Representative

Absent:

Others Present: Curtis Rogers, Deputy Director
Antonio Solorzano, General Counsel
Ayecia Kemp, Executive Administrative Assistant
Maria Bevins, Recorder

Agenda Approval

Additions:

- **Consent Agenda: Native American Library Services Basic Grant (2023)**
- **Consent Agenda: Pull letter of support**
- **Affidavit for the Bushel property**
- **ICWA Commission Bylaws – Tabled**

Motion made by Michael LaRoque to approve with additions/changes; second by Eugene Sommers.
Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

RBC Meeting Minutes (01/25/23)

Motion made by Eugene Sommers to approved with changes; second by Henry Fox. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Program updates will be done quarterly; Next reporting date April 2023. Naytahwaush Community Council will be added on today's agenda.

Elders Council

Missy Fairbanks, Council of Elders Secretary is present and provided updates.

The elders have been meeting with Mike on the bus issue. They had to go from the original bus plan and had to take out the chargers. The chip was also an issue for the bus. The new bus will be coming in a few months. The cost for the bus is roughly \$196,000. The elders will be meeting with Laurie and Curtis regarding the Indian Health Service issues. The next elders meeting will be held in Naytahwaush on April 4th if they are up and running by this date.

Elders Commission

Pam Aspinwall, Emily Annette, and Toni Vizenor are present. Pam provided a brief update. They have been meeting for four months. The Elder's Commission was established to provide advice and recommendations on the various services that are provided to the elderly. They will make formal reports to the Tribal council.

PCA: up to our elders to request this service. There are different levels of care for a person in the home either medically or having medical issues as opposed to general housekeeping. The elderly would complete an assessment and will be provided these services for PCA or with an outside agency. They will be putting something in the Anishinaabeg paper regarding the Disability Hub to explain more about the process.

General health care and physical activity: there are different levels of those who might need some help and assistance in exercising in their homes. They are exploring ways to engage the elderly in physical health.

They received financial information from the Finance Department regarding charges to their budget.

Community Council Updates

Naytahwaush:

Karen Wadena, Donovan Burnette, and Tara Mason are present. The NCC letter was provided to the RBC for review and Tara referenced the NCC letter. (Please see attached).

Brief discussion held on the requests regarding a Valley Fair trip. In the past, NCC has worked directly with the Unit Lead. As this seemed to be a concern, do they collaborate directly with the Boys and Girls Club Director? NCC found it easier to collaborate at the Unit level. NCC has not spoken to Boys and Girls Club or partnered on anything for youth because they are unsure of how the Tribal council would like communication and planning to happen. Eugene stated they started the YCI meetings back up. NCC would like to be included in these meetings. For the events, these should be in the NCC event calendar that is submitted with the NCC budget. Michael LaRoque commented on the Boys and Girls Club. When dealing with Unit Leads there is often times the lead did not collaborate or communicate with the Director. When NCC talks with the Unit Lead, make sure the lead is communicating with others.

Concerns brought forward regarding lighting and street signage for the Water Tower Projects for safety. Eugene stated they will be administering a street lighting sidewalk project in Naytahwaush. Eugene will get more information from Michael Bowman. The project will be completed by 2025 with no later than 2027 depending on funding cycles with DOT.

Concerns brought forward regarding the dog issue not being addressed. Merlin Deegan will look into this concern. Michael LaRoque stated, RBC has been discussing future funding for this purpose and for the Animal Commission to be back and running. The RBC is also discussing securing funding for a second Animal Patrol Officer. Tara stated that the White Earth Housing Authority needs to address policies within their leases.

A brief discussion was held on NCC request they had submitted. Curtis sent the request to the Donations Committee. Michael LaRoque stated that they have been working on policies/procedures and bottlenecking these requests. Ayecia will be the point of contact for these requests. Laurie and Curtis have been tasked to work on the policies/procedures. Some of the funding will be shifted to Gary Padrta, Donations Committee. This committee meets monthly. All the requests coming into the RBC will go to Ayecia. Ayecia will address and send the request to where it needs to go such as: Behavioral Health or to the donations committee.

Curits stated that the Donations Committee will be meeting more often and expanding funding if they receive the Youth and Elder requests to cover the larger requests. NCC will request that tribal members are on the Donation Committee. Important that our tribal members are the ones that are delegating out the dollars. Another request is for the Donation Committee that they are more flexible on funding different activities.

Cheryl commented on having machines to fund the 18-54-year-olds because there is nothing for them monetary wise and asked about this several times. Tara commented on what NNC does for their community and to help their volunteers with stipends.

Brief discussion held on turning in requests in advance notice.

Old Business

- **No old business**

New Business

Ratification – Letter to MN DNR:

Motion made by Michael LaRoque to approve; second by Eugene Sommers. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Ratification – PUC Appointments; Mindy Iverson as Chair and Jacob McArthur as Vice Chair Terms will be for two years:

Motion made by Eugene Sommers to approve; second by Henry Fox. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

RBC is looking into new policies for requests. Brief discussion held on the Youth and Elder fund requests.

Youth and Elder Fund Donation Request – Rita Swenson – RBC will assist with their gift and donations funds.

Youth and Elder Fund Donation Request Mahnomen High School – Refer to the Donations Committee.

TIWIA Donation Request – Refer to the Donations Committee.

Consent Agenda / Signatory Request for February 24, 2023

Addition:

- White Earth Economic Development Native American Library Services Basic Grant 2023.

Table:

- ICWA Commission Bylaws – Signatory Request

Executive Session:

- Arvig Support Letter Border to Border Grant
- Bagley Casino – Bushelle Properties

Motion made by Michael LaRoque to approve Consent Agenda / Signatory Requests with changes; second by Henry Fox. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Cheryl and Henry stepped away from meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Motion made by Eugene Sommers to go into Executive Session at 11:19 a.m.; Second by Michael LaRoque. Motion carried: 2 for, 0 against.

Meeting Recessed at 11:19 a.m.

Cheryl and Henry returned to meeting. Meeting Reconvened at 1:49 p.m.

State of the Band:

RBC in consensus to hold the State of the Band April 27th, 2023.

MN DNR Land Acquisition District I – Bejou Area:

Curtis provided a brief update on the MN DNR acquiring 80-acres. Dustin Roy joined the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Via Conference call and provided a brief update on the 80-acres within the boundaries of the White Earth Reservation. Rob Baden reached out asking for RBC approval in the State to acquire this parcel. The 80- acres is surrounded by State Conservation land. They plan to convert this piece from farmland back to native prairie. This will further extend the wildlife area that it is surrounded by. Many members use this area for hunting and gathering. Request was tabled and recommendation for Dustin to join the RBC debriefing meeting to be held on Monday, February 27, 2023 for further discussion.

Arvig Border Grant Financial Commitment:

A brief discussion was held on the signatory request. A proposed letter supporting Arvig’s application for the Border-to-Border grant application. Garden Valley had concerns. Arvig wants 20% of the project. This was brought forward to the PUC.

Motion for the letter of support and financial commitment:

Motion dies due to no first or second; 4 nays; the RBC is not in favor for the letter of support and no financial commitment.

TUC Budget:

Jacob McArthur and Mindy Iverson are present. Documents were provided to the RBC for review. Ms. Iverson provided a brief overview of the Tribal Utility Commission Report. They would recommend amending it six months in [REDACTED]

The Commissioner position is open and has three applicants. Requesting for one more week for this position as they received two more applicants. RBC in consensus in one more week.

Tribal Utility Commission Draft Budget 2023:

Motion made by Eugene Sommers to approve; second by Cheryl “Annie” Jackson. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Buschelle Property:

Jacob Syverson is present. Antonio provided a brief update on the affidavit. Antonio is requesting for the Chairman or Megan Bakken to sign. Jacob provided a brief update on what was needed.

1. Affidavit signed by the Tribe.
2. Remove the Exceptions.
3. Taxes estimated for this year.

Antonio is requesting for permission to execute the affidavit for the Chairman to sign:

Motion made by Henry Fox to approve; second by Michael LaRoque. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Executive Session ended at 2:33 p.m.

Motion made by Henry Fox to adjourn at 2:33 p.m.; second by Michael LaRoque. Motion carried: 4 for, 0 against.

Michael LaRoque, Secretary/Treasurer