

MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MEETING
Black Bear Casino Resort
Carlton, MN
August 23, 2019

Call Meeting to Order:

Rick Defoe opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Opening Ceremony:

Traditional Blessing provided by Rick Defoe

Traditional Drum provided by Cedar Creek

Roll Call:

Bois Forte, Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and White Earth- all present.

Wayne Dupuis, FDL Reservation, welcomed all in attendance.

Tara Kimmel (Fond du Lac) - hands out packets including the Delegate Meeting Minutes from July 19, 2019, and the agenda for today.

White Earth distributes copies of a statement dated July 8, 2019 from White Earth Secretary/Treasurer Alan Roy.

FDL Presentation "Indinawemaaganidog": How Do We Consider Who Is A MCT Member/Citizen/Enrolled/One Who Belongs? By Jeroam Defoe

- In the past villages were organized by families and clans.
- Newcomers were accepted as the community allowed
- The change took place with outsiders wanting access to our land and resources.
- Outsiders began to identify us as Lake Superior Chippewa or Mississippi band
- The treaties started organizing us
- 1847 treaty between the Lake Superior and the Mississippi Chippewa stipulated half-breeds and mixed bloods shall be considered Chippewa.
 - o The only treaty to make this designation
- The Supreme Court acknowledged treaties as the supreme law of the land.
- Initially identified by dodeim
 - o Gitche Gami imimmi, michi zibi ininni
 - o Then Fond du Lac Band, Grand Portage Band, Bois Forte/Nett Lake Band, Mille lacs Band, Leech Lake Band, White Earth Band.
- Changes in the Constitution effected enrollment in the mid 1800's
 - o US pressured us into using blood designations such as full blood, half blood and mixed blood
 - o The Indian Reorganization Act initiated blood quantum for enrollment
 - 1964 Minnesota Chippewa tribe was coerced into a secretarial vote on blood quantum requirements for the Tribe.
 - 1967 A vote by the Tribal Executive Committee rescinded this requirement with a vote of 8 to 2
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs included this condition and presented to congress as an omnibus bill – it was approved.
- MCT Constitution uses a blood quantum system today.
 - o Belonging criteria needs to be reflective of the values, beliefs and customs of our nation.
 - o Trend analysis pinpoints future dates that will result in no births or insignificant number of people to renew our tribe.

- 2013- population of the MCT is 41,000
 - 2098 projected population just under 9,000
 - Decline per band
 - Bois Forte 3,375 to 1,109
 - Fond du Lac 4,226 to 995
 - Grand Portage 1,113 to 120
 - Leech Lake 9,224 to 2,663
 - Mille Lacs 4,406 down to 1,835
 - White Earth 18,746 to 2,271
- Rick Defoe (Fond du Lac) opened the floor to discussions
- Bois Forte discussed designing a separate blood quantum to prevent extinction.
- Leech Lake talked about the process of lineal descendants, and most families date back to 1855. The 1947 rolls include less people than 1855.
- A recent undated letter from Samuel R. Strong, Tribal Secretary of Red Lake Band had been distributed. The letter is addressed to all Red Lake Tribal Enrolled Members, and originally included a Red Lake Nation Enrollment Survey. Secretary Strong's letter discusses the loss of membership due to the current blood quantum standards due to inaccuracy and decreases since 1958. Secretary Strong proposes to make all enrollees born through 1958 full blood (4/4)
- Bois Forte is opposed to the Red Lake Proposal- which leaves our future generations to deal with this issue. The proposal by the Red Lake Tribal Secretary is a temporary solution. Deciding our members by blood quantum was never our idea. The system was created by the Federal government to continue the genocide of our people. There are other ways by identifying family, everyone knows their family and by knowing our cultural ways.
- Grand Portage -our people have to go back to our language, our customs and our traditions and Ojibwe way of thinking. Learning our history, identifying ourselves by our place name. We have to know who and where we are from. We have to continue our oral history. Catholic Church records are a way to research for anyone who does not know their history.
- Fond du Lac-I would like to look into expanding our rolls, and look into our Canadian heritage. This may be a way to expand our blood quantum. We may need to move to accept bloods from other areas. Learning our language is an import key to our culture, our way of life.
- White Earth reminded all if this was to come to a vote, this group would be outvoted.
- Rick Defoe (Fond du Lac) - Does Anishaanabe life depend upon the treaties?
- Bois Forte-They are rules and laws to follow, just as they follow. The government wants us to disappear and eventually we will with blood quantum. Our enrollment has been linear in the past, nothing to prove we ever measured ourselves by blood quantum.
- White Earth many are concerned if we no longer use blood quantum, will be loose services too? It's a legitimate concern.

- Grand Portage- When treaties and enrollment agreements were being signed, many of our people did not know English. Documents show the constitution was controversial at the time, and elders were against blood quantum.
- Fond du Lac discussed the coercion taking place within agreements between the US and the tribe. The amount of timber being taken from our land amounted to millions of dollars. In 1947, the TEC could see what it was doing to our people. The riches of American were the resources of our people. In 1947 my great-great grandfather signed the Treaty which included mixed breeds, and half-breeds. What human being would cut off their descendants?
- Multiple Grand Portage members expressed their opinions about money and resources not entering into discussions on Article I- Organization and Purpose, or Article II- Membership. Money has corrupted us, as a tribe we traded and bartered.
- Fond du Lac- As a representative of my band, I have been asked to bring the following to the meeting. If Red Lake Reservation is proposing to bring full blood status to all born before 1958, why do we need a date? We could also bring full blood status to all enrollments as of now. Full blood quantum status would put things in place for our children and grandchildren.
- Leech Lake held a delegate meeting last night, and it was a consensus we do not want blood quantum as a requirement for citizens. We traded our land for treaties, and to be able to interact with other governments. Now some of our children and grandchildren cannot get services at Indian Health Service. Blood quantum requirements are eliminating our tribes.
- Grand Portage agreed with eliminating the blood quantum requirement, and moving to a direct descendant requirement instead. According to a recent poll we have taken 95% of the comments agreed with using direct descendant requirements vs. blood quantum. We need to explore avenues why we would keep blood quantum requirements in place. With an influx of new members, we need to find ways to balance out services. The proposal at Grand Portage was to destroy Blood quantum.
- Bois Forte- A young mother had moved from White Earth to be with their husband's family at Leech Lake. Her husband and children are Leech Lake citizens; she wants to know how she can become a Leech Lake citizen to belong with all of her immediate family. Traditionally this would have happened; today she remains a White Earth citizen.
- Leech Lake- a survey of was taken at Leech Lake. 400 members indicated they would want to accept only Ojibway blood, 292 believe we need to remove blood quantum requirements from the constitution.
- Bois Forte –Blood quantum determines what services we qualify for, this is going to be a big issue. If we allow descendants into the system, how will this affect services? Educational scholarships are important, and could be greatly affected. We have citizen who have never lived on the reservation and are urban people.
- Bois Forte- if we follow the seven generations teachings we wouldn't be having this conversation. We have to recall the garden philosophy, 1st row is for orphans, 2nd row for elders, and the remaining is for everyone else. We have to try to incorporation our 7 generations teachings about what makes us Anishaanabe.
- Fond du Lac- many talk about the color of hair, skin or the color of one's eyes, but never talk about our spirit within our heart.

- Grand Portage- a lot of members would like to have opened to First Nations, Canada and Red Lake. The constitution should give flexibility to the band to determine who belongs to the band.
- Wayne Dupuis (Fond du Lac) - at 1:00 p.m. today we have speaker Thomas Linzey to discuss the rights of nature and unfinished business.
- Sally Fineday (Leech Lake) – would like to call for a round table vote on removing Blood Quantum from the constitution.
 - o Leech Lake- A recent survey of our members made this an easier decision for us, we know what our members want- Unanimous
 - o Mille Lacs- We need to have a formal conversations with our communities- Abstain from vote
 - o White Earth- We need to take this back to our community- Abstain from vote
 - o Grand Portage- We need input from members- Abstain from vote
 - o Bois Forte- Would like the vote put back to our people through Referendum. Abstain from Vote
 - o Fond du Lac- Would also like to see placed as a referendum vote. Abstain from vote
- Fond du Lac confirmed we need 10,000 signatures to place in referendum vote.
- **Ricky Defoe provided a traditional blessing for our lunch today.**
- **Jeroam Defoe presented homemade ricing knockers for each band.**
- **Ricky Defoe Introduced Tom Linzey.**

In 1995 Tom co-created the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund to help people research environmental laws. Good news in December 2018, granted by the 1855 treaty authority, the Right of Manoomin. This means Manoomin has the right to exist, flourish, evolve and rest. Also means members are able to enforce, defend and protect Manoomin rights and their environment.

30 years ago nature having rights was for an Indigenous value system. Western World thinking is the more you own the more you can destroy. Corporations have been treated and protected as persons, why not eco-systems. In the U.S., Toledo Oh discovered the important of Lake Erie, 500,000 people without drinking water for four months. Lake Erie now has a Bill of Rights.

Western courts have not been friendly to eco system laws.

Grand Portage asked if the application of Manoomin rights applies to other reservations such as Grand Portage. Tom confirmed it's a law. Manoomin has rights.

Wayne Dupuis (Fond du Lac) – confirmed Fond du Lac has designated our Air as Class I. The classification will impact any development coming into our reservation or our area of Minnesota. Classifying your Air can be done through the EPA.

Theresa Han (Grand Portage) As Indigenous people of Duluth, how do we protect the rights of the St. Louis River Estuary? Tom Linzey asked Theresa to contact him through his organized CELDF- Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund. There are programs currently working to protect the St. Louis River Estuary, Tom will be able to give Theresa contact information.

-Sharon Day (Bois Forte) asked if the Right of Manoomin could be used to block mining. Tom responded Climate change will change wild Rice; pipelines also bring about climate change.

-Tom discussed starting a bill of right for Lake Superior to uphold standards of the lake similar to Lake Erie. Environmentally Minnesota is the 2nd fastest warming state.

-Ricky Defoe (Fond du Lac) thanked Tom Linzey for his time and inspiration today.

-Jeroam Defoe (Fond du Lac) called for Subcommittee Reports.

-2:20 p.m. Break-out sessions for Subcommittee meetings

-2:30 p.m. In session

-Finance Committee Report

- Sally Fineday will be reaching out to the Blandin Foundation

-Cheryl Edward will be reaching out to the Bush Foundation

-We will be reaching out to the MN Chippewa Tribe for the following

-Death rates

-age projects over time

- Jolyn Donnell will be sending the cost of each meeting out to all the delegates.

Education Committee

-The committee is working on a contact list. We will have scheduled a conference call for the night before the next meeting on Thursday, September 26. We need Leech Lake and Bois Forte delegate contact information.

Survey Committee

- Two delegates present today. Will report at the next meeting.

Leech Lake Proposal-TEC representatives

- Jason Decker (Leech Lake) motioned to send two members from each band to the TEC meetings. A copy of the motion was sent face book and by email. Copies have been brought today.

-Leech Lake Moves as Follows:

1) That the Constitutional Convention appoint, at minimum, one delegate from each band, for a four-month term, to attend all regular or special TEC meetings that take place during their term.

2) That the appointed delegate(s) shall speak on the behalf of the Constitutional Convention at any regular or special TEC meeting on any issue that the Convention has asked the delegate to address (e.g., updating the TEC regarding the constitutional convention, asking questions related to the constitutional convention, officially asking for action to be taken on the conventions behalf); and

3) That the appointed delegate(s) report back to the constitutional convention regarding any regular or special TEC meeting(s) that they attend, including a summary of the meeting.

Two Representatives from each Band have been chosen:

Fond du Lac

Cheryl Edwards
Jeroam Defoe

White Earth

Douglas Lee
Louis Johansson

Mille Lacs

M. Daniel Smith
Marie Costello

Bois Forte

Milly Holms
Stan Day

Leech Lake

Carrie Day Aspinwall
Wally Storbakken
Frank Reese

Volunteers

Larry Manthey
John Morrin

Leech Lake's Proposed Motion to include

- 1) Appointment of Delegates
- 2) Talk to TEC Clarify Consulting with the Convention. On election, Enrollment and felony provisions of enrollment.
- 3) Consult Summary of meeting
- 4) Consider Right of Nature- Natural/Spiritual Law

Jason Decker (Leech Lake) would like to motion to move forward with the first three items above.

White Earth- 2nd the motion.

Fond du Lac- Yes; White Earth- Yes; Mille Lacs-Yes; Bois Forte- Yes; Grand Portage- Yes; and Leech Lake-Yes.

By Consensus the Motion passes.

-Next TEC meeting will be held October 30th at 8:30 a.m.

- Plan to meeting as Convention delegates the night before the TEC meeting.

Sally Fineday will request for the Delegates to be on the Agenda.

Jason Decker asked if the Delegates can be a permanent item on the Agenda.

-Next Constitutional Convention Delegate Meeting will be held at Mille Lacs, September 27.

Block of Rooms: "MCT0926" Contact: 320-532-7777, or 800-626-5825

9:00 a.m. Full Breakfast Meeting to follow at 10:00 a.m.

-Bois Forte Proposed Motion for Timeline

- Suggested to wait for next meeting due to time constraints.

-Request for delegates to review the proposed motion and to send any questions or suggestion by email.

Quilt Drawing Winner- Rita Evans, of Grand Portage

3:52 p.m. Adjourn. Cedar Creek provided the Traditional Traveling Song.