

**MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE
CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MEETING
GRAND CASINO MILLE LACS CONVENTION CENTER
ONAMIA, MN
SEPTEMBER 27, 2019**

10:05 – Mike Davis called meeting to order.

Joe Nayquonabe Sr. conducted invocation.

10:09 – Roll call conducted: Leech Lake (LL), White Earth (WE), Mille Lacs (ML), Fond du Lac (FDL), Boise Forte (BF), Grand Portage (GP), all present.

Agenda Topics

Value of the MCT Meetings

ML began meeting by opening discussions on the value of the MCT meetings.

LL requested an item be added to the agenda. Historical document dated December 29, 2000, “MINNESOTA CHIPPEWA TRIBE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM”. Copies distributed to delegates. LL talking about this document they found on meetings at LL. Commented as to why it was important, the constitutional revisions have been TEC driven. This sub-council had routed to some of the reservations in the past.

Discussion began by reviewing the frequency of the meetings.

WE would like to do a two-day meeting instead of a one-day meeting. Meet every other month.

ML – Mike brought up WE wanting to change meeting times.

A discussion took place regarding why these revisions efforts were not effective in the past. There was no trust by the people with the TEC handling these revisions and the wheels seem to turn slowly with little progress. Since the people are now involved, it is a positive. Sally F. recommended when we start making revisions, we should show the work on the big screen. Once the work has been completed on an article(s) we should send the final draft to everyone for review. Once everyone agrees on the final draft, each tribe will sign off on it.

Birdie further defined what the topic was intended to accomplish. The topic was intended to open up conversation as to whether we are being productive as a committee. If not, what are some other suggestions to improve our productivity.

LL commented and felt additional input should be provided by the committees regarding the times we meet. LL wants to meet on the weekends once a month since they have more people to get involved in the process. LL requested to take 15 minutes to agree on recommendations within our respective groups. Groups went to discussion.

LL – don’t want to slow down. Want to meet once a month on the weekend. Remember from 1998 never citizen driven but it is now.

WE – 2 days quarterly. Meet once a month and then one quarterly for a 2-day workshop.

ML – stick with a quarterly meeting 2 day. Not on the weekend.

FDL – quarterly two day and keeping once a month. Ok with the weekend.

BF – Third Friday every month. No weekends. Also ok with a two day quarterly during the week.

GP Getting agendas out as early as we can. Get them out two weeks before the meeting. Having one month off during the summer. To tend to family business and personal obligations. Meet every other month. GP recommended we have someone facilitate our meetings. Liked FDL's last meeting presentation. We are able to identify what we believe is important to include in the constitution. Why belabor (continue) to try to revise something we believe was wrong in the first place. Talked of our natural resources. Create something we think is important as opposed to continually try to re-write something that is wrong in the first place. Thanked FDL for their presentation.

BF enrollments are a Federal government action, not tribes. Secretary of Interior created blueprint of the constitution and we are hobbled by the SEC of Interior. That's the original idea of the government. How far can it go before the government who wants to eliminate us all together.

WE two-day meetings scheduled on Fridays and Saturdays. Please consider. Another conversation began concerning hotel reservations to attend these meetings. Want the tribal businesses to reduce room rates such as a tribal rate.

WE feels there will be a problem with meeting quarterly need to keep people informed.

LL believes if this is run by the people more apt to be successful vs. allowing government body leading.

LL. Set up a 2-day meeting next month and hash out what we are doing.

11:06 LL said a paid facilitator was shot down last time due to money. LL. Feel it was voted on and everyone said no. It will take away our authority. If we stop meeting once a month, we may fall off on meeting regularly. Doesn't understand why we are still talking about a facilitator.

FDL doesn't think we voted and didn't come to a consensus.

BF – Agree. Would like to stay with once a month every 3rd Friday.

Options were reviewed and it was determined by all committees to continue with meeting every third Friday of the month and also to conduct a 2-day meeting as part of our meeting schedule. No date was determined when to conduct the 2-day meeting.

TEC Update

11:30 LL TEC was contacted - Gary Fraser and he agreed to have delegates attend meetings, the convention should decide how we want to address the motions at the TEC meetings concerning constitution revisions.

Phil Brodeen, TEC legal representative updated the committee on the TEC topics, October meeting needs a real clear message on the draft of the felony clause, more focus on the main issues like enrollments.

TEC Representative responsibilities:

1. Reps to attend all regular and special TEC meetings.
2. Reps appointment is for four months with a start date of August 23, 2019.
3. All Reps have been identified.

TEC Representatives

ML – Maria Costello & Danielle Smith

FDL - Cheryl Edwards & Gerome Defoe

WE – Douglas Lee & Louis Johanson

BF - Millie Holmes & Stan Day

LL – Carrie Day Aspinwall & Frank Reese & Wally Sorbakken

GP – Larry Manthey & John Morrin

4. Reps are there to speak on behalf of the Delegate committee and a spokesperson will be identified.

(This comment was copied and added to this section which came from a later discussion)

WE – Finance committee question, need help with expenses such as hotel, mileage. Can we create uniformity to hotel pricing? ML – hotels usually dictate this. Sidra – bring to TEC – they need to put pressure on the casino, at least band member rate.

Add above topic as #3 – to TEC meeting in October. All in agreement!

Questions – Are we assigning 2 Reps? No, one is primary and each tribe can assign an alternate.

Will there be an agenda? That is what we are working on right now.

Are the Reps speaking on behalf of the Delegate committee and not individual tribes? Yes.

LL – The TEC reps should meet before the 30th and review what is going to be discussed. TEC Reps will meet the night before on the 29th.

Reps should be added to the agenda. LL – S.F. has already requested to be on agenda.

What are we going to address and present to the TEC?

“Let us do our work, we will set the timelines and draft the wording”.

Finance committee also has a statement to present to the TEC. Reps will request a resolution identifying the TEC as fiscal agent for this organization. They will only take direction from Finance Committee and no indirect costs.

Discussion about Blandin Grant opportunities. Each tribe has an opportunity to obtain funding from the Blandin Organization. If you have not utilized your grant, please request that funding is forwarded for the committees use.

ML stated they have already requested their grant.

WE - Blandin may consider a larger request collaboratively.

LL – stated an email was sent but did not receive a response.

BF – Any Finance sub-committee requests should be agreed upon by the entire committee before being presented to the TEC.

ML – 2020 Election – opportunity for survey distribution. Set survey deadline to distribute during election timeframe somewhere around April, communicate this to our communities, send out information out to communities, we also have opportunity for referendum on ballots as an option including enrollments, etc.

BF – Vote on Article 1 today, but our packet says options. As delegates, we took responsibility to bring forth recommendations. Enrollments are an issue! Elections, these issues need to be relayed out to our fellow citizens. As delegates, we need to understand our responsibility we should not wait on TEC. Urban member, my issues are different – as an enrolled member we need to move forward no matter what. We represent.

Marcy – GP – enrollment and felony issue. These were issues of last month.... We need to really consider putting items on a referendum. For instance, our election is affected by Duluth area and without social media. Felony issues in 1980s – we must consider the issues. We have tribal members who have are unable to run due to past history.

LL – 1998 Amendment – they failed as these items were behind closed doors. This needs to be a people driven process. Delegates need to move at our own pace.

We work at our pace regarding constitutional change, and we will inform TEC of our progress.

Vote LL – yes, ML – yes, GP – yes, WE – yes, GP – FDL - yes

BF – we cannot speak until we know our community “voice”. Mille Lacs agrees with this, but in the effort to move things forward as a delegation we must vote. Surveys are a must.

LL – Agree with Marcy – if we move to referendum we have not successfully done enough in education.

LL – There have been 2 referendums, resulting in 4. If we do piece meal, we may encounter this again. So, let’s wait.

ML – again reiteration – we cannot do anything without our community.

BF – We need some numbers here, before we think of survey.

WE – Voting for delegates for Cons. Convention – we are charged to make decisions and hence should not require our constituents’ opinions.

WE – bring back to our tribes, and attain community voice and when we return next month.

TEC agendas, perhaps a written report can be submitted and follow will indicate timeline. Referendum are specific devices to the Constitution; surveys may not provide the applicable information. We have a high bar to move forward, and hence voter participation is another priority we must consider.

Clarification – enrollments, land issues, felony.

Break for lunch 12:04PM.

WE – Lou – previous comment made was an individual comment and not a committee comment concerning meeting schedule.

LL – TEC come to each reservation – with budget presentation on where \$ is expensed. Stipends are provided to TEC members; we are constituents should have that information – transparency.

BF – let's be careful what we bring forward to TEC, stay on track. Comment is heard!

WE – MCT moneys \$60,000 is gone? Do we need to make a request to continue with operation costs for the delegates?

GP – MCT had control of funds, and \$2,500 was obligated for each host tribe. There have been other costs such as clerical, which brings us today Jane informed delegates that they would handle. TEC money may be considered inappropriate – its time to make change including financial responsibility of said groups.

LL – Request end of October – Finance Committee make a proposal

Facilitator: Let's move this to the finance area on the agenda.

Finance Update

LL BIA request was mentioned previously that funding was an opportunity.... need to clarify. Accountability of \$60,000. LL did get a response; money was supposed to be obligated to TEC for blood quantum. Gary F reported in July, money to support each tribe when they host the monthly meetings. \$4,000 – was LL expense, paid by programs – as the pool of \$60,000 should go to delegates to do other things.

WE – An excel spreadsheet was presented to finance committee, not all the money is expensed.

Sidra, Finance Committee – cost of meetings are being covered or reimbursed back to tribes. This was intended to cover room rental, continental breakfast, and soup and salad – light lunch, only. To date: LL covered there, ML covered theirs in January, FDL paid August. Others have sought reimbursement. Printing costs, and other misc. has been spent to date.

Request should be made to TEC. Rumors should be brought forward and can be squelched if you forward to the finance committee.

BF – on record – agenda – Enrollments/Membership. Making official note, as can't stay for full meeting. Lineage should be included.

ML – Irene Benjamin stated has been to 3 meetings, and finance is still being talked about including the blood quantum issue. When are the delegates are going to start working on issues? I want to see change when I come here, 10 months later we haven't moved much.

LL – We are making movement. Much of our time has been spent coming together as a committee, there are many priorities and ideas from all tribes but we are moving forward. From finance committee don't want to ask TEC, would like to get funds from outside and manage our own money.

Sub – Committee Updates - Education

ML – Birdie – subcommittee met this am. On each table, there is an education document to review. Basic recommendations on how education subcommittee could move forward.

Information sheet/highlights from our discussions – historical highlights, and list of recommendations was combined, provided another example from work being done with ML workbook Article II, **any further actions were found via website. 1) Committee – recommends creating the timeline to begin reviewing and discussing articles for our meeting topics., take responsibility for creating the timeline; bring to next meeting and gain consensus on the order. These documents can then be tools for committees to share with your own communities. These can help everyone get and stay on the same page with a consistent message.

Any comments or suggestions at this point?

ML- This can clarify discussion and consistent information from our meetings.

BF – Round table discussion, on blood quantum. Then bring to vote.

Facilitator – Is the Education Committee the right group to determine or suggest the right articles for review, in the future months. Bringing highlights, send out prior – 1-page info sheet.

LL – Education committee should be in charge of the highlights. But regarding agenda, involves full group.

BF – Education Committee – could be more effective as they are tasked. They create the targets; the large group can provide feedback – can happen in a timely manner (daily). If we break down and allow work groups to do their job, then it can be hammered out more quickly.

LL – Jason, education subcommittee is the right place.

WE – have subcommittee create timeline. Maybe create another subcommittee just for timeline.

FDL – agreement with subcommittee. They are tasked to do the framework – education committee – isn't it the education of the membership, and the process.

WE – Make a mountain out of a molehill, let the education committee move forward and we keep going. Treat this area as an update...not open door to hold up our business.

GP – Blood Quantum, research and stats on our bands – direct descendancy – more information will allow us to make more informed decisions.

Facilitator – Education go forward - create a timeline including all 15 articles, they will become scheduled agenda items. In addition, highlights will be brought back to committee, then it will be shared with all bands. Goal of highlight sheet, tribal member to understand information and share.

FDL – yes, GP – yes, ML – yes, LL – yes, WE - yes,

Discussion turned to Article II - Membership

WE – Blood Quantum, effects government eligibility - future IHS, schooling/education, housing, regulations (hunting), etc.

WE – Re-write Constitution? Remember our community comments and input, most talked about blood quantum.

GP – Blood Quantum – native artist, enrolled member, doesn't mean you are Anishinaabe. Some claim their membership, relates to money reasons. Indian Arts and Craft Act – is an example, you have to be an enrolled member. If you falsify there could be consequences including fiscal.

Facilitator – Review document presented by the subcommittee and work to finalize?

BF – Blood quantum – bottom end there has to be a cut-off point. Must be empowered to say NO.

WE – 5-6 scenarios combined for Blood Quantum including lineal. Get these together and bring them back next month.

LL – Structural issue – regarding enrollments. Divergent needs, which will impact each community. Full constitution reform, 80's let each band define – their own criteria. If enrollment can't be agreed upon, should it be considered structurally – put back to band, or one standard that applies to all? For further debate.

ML – Stated we also need to eventually address the overriding questions: Do we stay together as MCT? Do we separate completely? Do we re-organize more like a confederation meaning stay under the MCT but create our own constitutions by tribe? Enrollments – nearly justifies separation.

FDL, Jason – Red Lake brought information last month. Proposal.

ML – allows flexibility of each band. Each tribe has a priority and they may not be in the same order.

LL – MCT – new name. Looser government, considering some of these issues may have affected history. Benefits when combined 50,000 which can be monetary. Successor name.

WE – Enrollments, infrastructure or process – survey, back for review from membership.

WE – RBC

BF – Numbers will explode. How far will this reach? Citizens and Naturalization testing – we should be spiritual, and cultural.

BF – Enrolment – options, infrastructure, options, surveys – Survey for each topic? \$20,000 is the cost for each survey. This is beyond our financial efforts.

ML – How do we proceed? Stay the path, separate – do we write on our own there are topics that we are never going to agree on. We need to look at our numbers – on our own, or consensus?

GP – MCT – we are a government. GP Indians, become a federally recognized tribe. Tribe had to inherit government processes. Business Committee model, was set up at the beginning. We need to reform from where we are.

LL – Enrollment – who a tribe decides to enroll is a tribe's strength under sovereignty. This group, we can view ourselves, as new legislators – we are representatives. What powers and parameters do we have?

LL – What is stronger? Self-interest, and economic changes may hinder our movement. Resilience – we are still hear after genocide generations. We are here, and we will remain. We may move slow, but we are remembering who we are. We are leaders here, and share with family and community members. The current 40 people, can represent a much larger group. We are making decisions for our great grandchildren – we reach out much more than the 40 here – more like 4000. I have faith, we speak with one mind, one heart, one tongue we will always be here.

WE – Colonial government. We should come up with our own government – not colonization or European?

WE – Core strength, if we break up, we will not be as strong. Minnesota Chippewa Tribe – could be referenced as a tie to Minnesota.

BF – too early to discuss that we break from MCT. We need to talk to our membership first. May be beneficial to continue our discussion in terms of bullet points and by each band. Disband issue – too early.

BF – go back to the old way. Respect! Centuries later when we tied ourselves to government, we have constrained ourselves.

ML – monthly 1-day meeting remains on a Friday – as defined. Quarterly meetings, Friday and Saturday – ceremonies tie us to culture.

FDL – Jason – Decisions on blood quantum – there is opportunity to always go back. Change is needed today.

LL – Agenda review. Lineal descent and recognizing where they want to be recognized or identify with; which tribe. Appeal process – there should be a general counsel Our diversity is known. Nelson Act we lost all our trees, resources for LL are vital.

Tara K – lineal descent how will your programs be impacted. Sally – our IHS has provided some data and thus numbers. This group, can keep things like health care at our forefront. This is the group that will move things forward

LL – Jason - We feel confident how we, Leech Lake, would like to move forward. Sally – community is behind us and we are determined to make change soon. One suggestion was to write Article II to allow each tribe the opportunity to determine their own membership requirements.

GP – personal impact, money or programs – Government IHS – remember this is western medicine.

Facilitator – Break time 2:45pm.

Back to order 3:05pm

Committee – Articles?

LL – we were and continue to be focused on providing educational resources to our communities.

ML – roles of delegates to provide information/education. We won't have answer.

LL – Structural reference – we again want to understand where we are at.

WE – Would like to see LL proposal and bring to our communities, and get some input. I would appreciate any proposals from any other bands, to utilize.

Facilitator – Article II – end.

Tara – what are we doing with our conversations? ML – all different levels, so we envision as an education piece. LL – go ahead, we recognize we are slower. We would like to know others “options” and hence the highlight page. When asked to make decisions, we cannot as we don't have “solidly” from our members. Our voice....

LL- We have current constitution; there is no enforcement mechanism. TEC level – we see they make a choice on items to discuss. Sometimes ties to personal agendas. Uncomfortable with being told, feel better if there was a general council – where a member can appeal to. No offense – intended. Moratorium on enrollment example – previous Secretary/Treasurer from Mille Lacs Band. Ties to Mille Lacs, how can moratorium be so long standing? Treaty issues, like Big Sandy – may be hidden issues. The right to appeal, there is no resolution. Final decision sits with TEC, sometimes rubber stamping is inappropriate. So, membership issue – still no appeal, protect current membership with no future possibilities. Identifies with Leech Lake – a vote yes is not ...

WE – Can't make vote on membership, go out to your communities – ask for an answer in a month? Can't you bring a proposal in front of the people, to vote on?

ML – we cannot make decision we are delegates, not a representative. We do not follow RBC; we need to include community band members at every issue.

LL – position of LL, proposal Article II – lineal descent. This should go on a secretarial election we are using current community input and what the delegates must do. This is a process it is not the final proposal.

WE – none of us have the authority to vote on behalf of membership. Again, this is a process to bring forth “what we are hearing” and then getting confirmation.

ML – we are behind. We will get to the proposal phase. This could equate to 2 to 3 months.

WE – Proposal agreed upon from a combined delegation, each tribe can go back and get information.

GP – Meeting at LL, majority should move our business. Survey sub committee started 6 months ago; we are finalizing by October 11, 2019. We will send it out, this will be the groundwork around the enrollment issues. Personal comment – pro linear. Overall this is a very difficult issue, we should move forward like the separation of power.

FDL – Tara – Proposal does not include what the overall impact will be. Need to have full answers before we educate and ask for their input. We need to do our jobs successfully.

BF – If we do the proposal, aren't we missing the Education piece. Putting the horse in front of the cart, we are not following the process to stay on task.

Facilitator – are we done discussing Article II? Do we need to continue enrollments issue – move to unfinished business? Note – LL is ready.

LL – continue at next meeting, WE – take back to our communities and ask them what they feel and what more information or questions do they have and bring back here? Then let's discuss. Even here

at WE we don't have the same ideas on membership. So, continue on. ML – next item, FDL – next, BF – next, GP – next.

Survey Committee – Tara

We need contact information and we want to see all surveys that are out there. We would like to incorporate them all.

Finance – previously updated.

WE – who has the list for subcommittee groups.

ML – there are minutes but missing some information.

Look to Carrie/Kari?

WE – Finance committee question, need help with expenses such as hotel, mileage. Can we create uniformity to hotel pricing? ML – hotels usually dictate this. Sidra – bring to TEC – they need to put pressure on the casino, at least band member rate.

Add above topic as #3 – to TEC meeting in October. All in agreement!

October Meeting

LL agreed to host the next meeting. Tentative date is October 18, 2019.

Proposal for Grand Portage? They would like to host January 2020 – possibly Duluth.

Agenda items – October Meeting

Finalize Article II

Prepare to discuss Article IV

3:51 drawing

3:55 Meeting adjourned.

