

MCT Constitution Reform Convention
May 19, 2023, 9.m. to 4 p.m.
Hosted by Mille Lacs Band Delegates – Mille Lacs Convention Center, Onamia, Mn.

Welcome – Invocation

9:10 – Julie opens up the meeting with a welcome. Joe N. conducts invocation.

Roll Call

Delegation Roll Call – GP, BF, FDL, LL, MLB, WE – All present.

Housekeeping – Meeting Management Discussion

9:16 – Michele – Reviewed the grandfather’s teachings and reviewed the 3-minute limit rule.

There are handouts on the voting process. Reviewed the voting consensus guidelines. Birdie reviewed what we are attempting to do today with an open discussion about meeting management. Constructing a handbook was recommended. A question was raised about which committee should be tasked to draft the handbook. MLB displayed its recommendations for meeting management.

LL – Sally – Recommends the Drafting Committee complete the handbook.

FDL – Cheryl – Recommends the microphone is utilized when a participant is speaking; we all need to hear everyone’s comments.

LL – Frank – Commented that we’ve discussed this before, and we need to move this forward.

LL – Carrie – I appreciate the work that is being presented. Standard decorum we should always be respectful to each other and the host. The conversations are more engaging when people can hear you. This is something that is done all the time; setting standards and creating standard operating procedures, and it is very helpful with staying on track and getting the work done.

GP – Michelle – Would like to have an opportunity to talk about this more within the delegations to come up with other recommendations.

Chat has questions.

FDL – Carol – stated they couldn’t hear what we were proposing. There is trouble with audio and hearing from the Zoom participants. Carol would like to see another committee complete the handbook.

LL – Wally – we need to create another committee to complete the handbook. All groups have rules, and others adopt Robert’s rules, but he is not saying we need Robert’s Rules of Order; instead, we create something simpler. A Rule Sub-Committee is one recommendation.

GP – Marcie - states she is not interested in the Drafting Committee creating the handbook. They only have six people are in our meeting. They have too much work to do to complete it. Doesn’t believe we need a handbook. Do we need a handbook? General comments are yes.

WE – Raymond – We like the Rules Committee recommendation.

WE – Patty S – agree the rules should be simple along with good etiquette. One rule covers respect, and we keep them simple.

FDL – Cheryl – Two points. Drafting is too busy. 2nd, our delegates were asked to go through meeting minutes on the various votes that were completed. These completed votes should go in this book as well. We need to

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record these decisions and put them on paper for the record. It can be utilized for orientation for new people and reference for the senior delegates.

WE – Patty – stated they created a code of conduct for their delegates. They know what the expectations are for their delegation members.

FDL - Wayne D - Address zoom problems with technology. Invest in technology as a delegation. Need to put in procedures for Zoom activity.

FDL – Cheryl has agreed to take on the responsibility of creating the handbook.

9:51 am – Wally comments that since we are early, he would like to introduce his brother Leroy.

9:52 – Testing the speaker that was installed to correct audio issues.

TEC Committee Update

9:53 MLB – AI–TEC Update. Opens discussion on last TEC meeting. He stated he was a little confused about the meeting conversation but acknowledged it became about the July deadline. The referendum questions were raised by the TEC but we were not ready to discuss this. He was not sure what we should or need to do about the outcome of this meeting. They were confused about what we were going to give them. It seemed they expected a finished document to make changes to the Constitution. What’s realistic as to what we will be giving them?

GP – Michele Beeksma – There is a disconnect as to what the TEC was expecting compared to their minutes. Recommendation for the fall. If they disapproved of ours, they would move ahead with 32.15. The impression was that it was the Alliance Document. They may have thought the Alliance document has a recommendation. Still wanting an understanding. The April meeting was just supposed to be about the church money. They tabled the church money; this is contingent on the July 1st request. Talked to Chavers and April. They needed to understand what was going on. This July meeting, they are asking us to present a PowerPoint on the Alliance document.

FDL – Cheryl – picking up from Michelle B. To understand the Alliance document and what is our education curriculum, when it will be ready and done for the education piece for the meetings. Have our education committee move towards completing the curriculum.

WE – Myke Brown. Offered a PowerPoint presentation to the committee.

FDL – Cheryl – We need to come to a consensus on what to present to the TEC.

FDL – Carol presented recommendation to the TEC. The draft document was posted and reviewed. (Comments were made but since the audio was spotty not all comments were captured). Just discuss enrollments and put that document up for a vote. It would remove the secretarial process and would satisfy the TEC instead of 32-15. We all know we have several projects. Amend the current constitution. This is the idea, remove the oversight from the Constitution. Will go to the hands of a grand council. A diagram is shown. Carol reviews the diagram and the recommendation as to what we can do to move forward. Made comments about enrollments, Article II. Membership. This recommendation will be presented to the Drafting Committee this Tuesday.

GP – Sandra – Requests verification on the Grand Council.

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FDL – Carol – It's in the Bylaw and includes all enrolled tribal councils.

LL – Frank – a reminder from way back, the TEC was going to stay out of our procedures. We will come up with a new constitution. We are getting way-sided by TEC requests. Let's get back on track by doing our own constitution.

WE - Myke Brown - WE had that same discussion, and we agree. That's the reason for Louie's motion, and they do not rush our process; we need more time to educate. This explains Louie's motion.

LL – Frank – Back in WE, there was a TEC meeting, BIA removing Sec of Interior from our constitution. The BIA stated they would use the rule passed in the 1800s, rejecting everything if we tried to remove the S of I.

WE Patty S – Proposal, it saddens me that we keep asking for a waiver; we need to follow our process, not do the same things as in the past. This is how we should proceed.

GP Marcie – At an MLB meeting, we wanted the S o I out of there. It was all convoluted; they were talking apples and oranges. Constitution and the new alliance.

MLB – Birdie – How are we going to proceed?

GP – Michele – They don't' under what we are doing. The Secretarial Election occurs in the fall. The Alliance does not have to be done.

LL – Wally – We are falling into the trap of what we need to get done. 1963 and 64, that's when they added the blood quantum. The people should be dictating the timeline.

MLB – Birdie comments on the non-binding questions. Stick to those questions and move forward with educating the people about the enrollment criteria.

FDL – Carol – TEC has put that weight on us. Tip the table towards the people. People want to be part of the decision-making process.

Break 10:40

Return 11:08

FDL – Cheryl - recommends we support allowing each band to decide its own enrollment. What are some other options, other ideas?

MLB – Al – confused. Do we bring to the TEC recommendations for the Alliance document in place of the constitution? Sovereignty is put together as a document of our values; the MCT is not a government, not a tribe. Exercise our sovereignty and stay together under the Alliance. Don't need to get approval for the alliance. No constitution. It should be structured as an organization. Agrees with Cheryl.

WE – Louie – Let each reservation decide who is a member? Who will be left out?

LL – That's what the alliance document does; it keeps us together.

MLB – Irene – Two things – don't understand dissolving the MCT. What about the membership? If we disconnect from each other, how will we ensure they have the right to enroll? There is no guarantee; MLB has had a moratorium for years. Don't understand why we don't have a big summit on this. You are piecemealing this process.

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LL – Sally – The Bands have been making their own decisions about enrollment since 2018. We are not getting rid of our alliance. We have always exercised our autonomy. What we actually do is not written down. A written constitution for each band by the people will support our actual practices.

WE – Tammy Skinaway – disheartened by voting, elder refuses to vote. People change when they go into an office. It's about trust. Boots on the ground.

Michaa – Referred to the MCT as not structured like other tribes. He believes this is a strength. We are a Nation.

WE – Patty – WE is in support of 32.15.

We - Ray B. – enrollments could get out of hand. There is a concern for improper actions. TEC represents the U.S. government, not the people. To make a new path to sovereignty, we have to exercise it. Make our document sovereign; take our power back.

FDL – Cheryl – in no way are we trying to break up our tribes; what we are trying to do is put in writing that, currently, each reservation makes its own decisions, TEC rubber stamps. Sovereignty, we exercise it at the band level. We want it in writing. Alliance holds us together. The recommendation today is separate from that. We are trying to move our work forward.

What is our decision about the TEC on the deadline? The delegation wants a separate meeting to determine what we need to do for this May 26th?. It was determined June 2nd will be the date, and during this meeting, and this topic is the only agenda item.

Enrollment Date Extension Motion

11:48 – MLB – Julie – Discussion took place about the enrollment extension. The exact language was disputed, so it was determined to table this vote until June 2nd.

Survey Sub-Committee Vote

11:48 pm – MLB – Julie – Opens up the vote to dissolve the Survey Committee.

FDL – Cheryl – states there are still members in the Survey Subcommittee, and what needs to happen is to update the survey. Cheryl states that the survey needs a purpose and who will be attending these meetings.

WE – Myke will volunteer for WE. Recommends creating surveys for members with their input, blood quantum, and membership, so multiple surveys vs. one big survey.

FDL – Cheryl – If each delegation wants to do their own survey for their own folks, that is acceptable. Survey Committee is to create one broad survey for all members.

Irene – if we want to survey the people, is it all the people or just the reservations?

It was determined to keep the Survey Committee active. The Survey Committee will need delegates to join the committee. The Survey Committee will provide updates on the status of the committee. Tammy Skinaway has agreed to lead the participation efforts for the Survey Committee.

Marcie has requested that there still be a Zoom option for the individuals who cannot attend in person.

11:55 pm Break for lunch

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1:13 pm – Meeting begins

Announcement – Thursday, July 20th is the July date for WE host.

Sandy Lake Vote

1:15 pm – MLB – Julie opens the agenda item concerning Sandy Lake being a 7th delegation. Michele – recaps the TEC discussion concerning 62 – 40 and comments on the constitution does not recognize them as part of the MCT. She also commented that MLB has never had an issue with them participating in the delegation meetings.

MLB – Julie – A motion is welcome to come to the table and to recognize Sandy Lake as a 7th delegation.

FDL – Cheryl – this became a question because we don't have anything in our minutes that we agreed they have a vote. No agreement that they have a vote as a delegation. We need it written down; otherwise, it will de-legitimize the delegation; we need this in our minutes.

LL – Wally – understands the concern about the legitimization. Let's make an MCT delegation party and endorse those candidates. Believes Sandy Lake has recognized treaties; we should recognize them. Irene, does TEC recognize them? No, they did not per 62.40.

WE – Patty - discussed this, and we thought they were a part of us; within the alliance document if we were going to do this.

MLB – Lilah – comments on how can we recognize them as a Sandy Lake Delegation when they are enrolled in MLB.

FDL – Wayne – they are also Red Lake.

LL – Sally – we have an honorary member of the LLBO. We did not like it when we had to split the Nelson money.

WE – Tammey Skinaway – Grandmother was at White Earth. Moved to Sandy Lake. She is enrolled in White Earth. Looking back to the Sandy Lake Tragedy.

GP – Michele – Sandy Lake is working or has its own identity; they are their own community. They lack the federal recognition part. Thinking as an Indigenous group, they signed treaties. They were their own people; what we didn't address is the right to vote.

MLB – Michele – words matter; there are only six bands recognized under the constitution; we can only form 6 delegations. If we do seven, that is a violation.

LL – Wally – it's not so much about the vote but the voice.

LL – Sally – comments on the Blue Lake Rancheria as an example; Wyatt, and Hopa were separate tribes; they went out to gain recognition and got it. It's not LLs place; to be involved with an MLB issue.

Michaa – Sandy Lake is in their process. We have a lot of ceremonial events. We were shocked this was being brought up. Phil Brodeen brought clarification about this. We can participate in any way the delegation sees fit. Many of the people of our district are aware of our issues. Define anything on the work we are doing.

WE – Tammey Skinaway – shows up on behalf of her grandmother.

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Various comments are occurring - FDL – wants to start the motion. Anyone enrolled in MLB is part of MLB. Recommendation to recognize them as a supporting member and then make a motion.

MLB – Irene – weren't we considered an autonomous group? I don't understand how we can't include Sandy Lake.

MLB – Al – asked why we are being questioned and why the comment we are suppressing anyone. MCT law requires you to be federally recognized.

FDL – Cheryl – 62-40 means what it says, it supports them gaining Federal recognition, but it does not state they recognize Sandy Lake as a Federally Recognized Tribe.

MLB – Michele – confirms by reading the resolution again.

Michaa – anyone is familiar with how the MCT operates. Resolutions are law. Spirit of the law, Implied law, random comments concerning involvement with this delegation.

Discussion occurs on the language of the motion.

LL – Sally – Recommends, "Sandy Lake does not have a vote until they are federally recognized."

Julie conducts the vote:

GP no, BF no, FDL no, WE no, LL no, MLB yes.

Discussion occurs after the vote:

MLB – Michele – states there are only six recognized bands under the MCT.

MLB – Lilah – we are not saying or blocking their voice. They don't have a vote until they are federally recognized.

GP - we agree on that same issue; they have a voice in the room, but allowing them to vote gives them equal status and recognition.

A 2nd vote occurs:

GP no, BF no, LL no, FDL no, MLB yes.

Delegation initiates the numbering procedure to continue to discuss issues.

3rd and final vote occurs:

GP no, BF no, WE no, LL no, FDL no, MLB yes.

the final process determines if there is no consensus, the vote dies. Sandy Lake does not have a vote as the 7th delegation.

2:47 Break

MCT Analysis Report

3:02 pm Meeting resumes. Julie comments that we will table the MCT Analysis Report for another meeting.

Committee Updates

MLB – Julie – Moves to Committee updates.

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TEC – No additional TEC updates.

Finance – The Bush Foundation wants us to change the grant again, and we will submit another revision.

Education – The committee is beginning work on the Sovereignty Information Sheet. We are also going to initiate creating the education curriculum for the grant money. If you have any pieces we can use, route them to your Education delegate.

When is the next TEC meeting? July, usually at the end of the month. 2nd week of the month in July.

LL – Wally – the meetings are usually mandated on a certain day every month. But, they are not mandated to follow the constitution.

Another project recommended by the Education Committee is to set up a presentation for the MCT to come in and tell us what they do. We would like to understand what they do. Possible presentation for our July meeting.

Drafting Committee – Marcie stated the Drafting Committee is wanting more information about the MCT Tribe, state and federal grants, how they set up their hierarchy, grants, and elder program, we need to know about these programs. Job descriptions. Once the Alliance document is complete, the bands are going to be in need of them. They are working on various things on the alliance, and constitution; let's see how it all looks. We are always examining things. Asked if Rita wanted to add anything.

Survey Committee – Nothing more from the Survey Committee.

Open Discussion

3:00 pm – LL – Frank – Let's go back to having in house meeting.

MLB – Michele - commented about the 3-minute timer; little weird, but thanks to everyone for going along with it.

WE – Tammey Skinaway – Inquired about getting more of the green handouts.

Tammey Skinaway getting the green books.

GP – Michele – has delegates out of state, not an option for only in-house meetings for them. FDL – Cheryl – agrees that we need to keep the zoom even if it is cumbersome. Encourage everyone to attend if they can.

WE – Patty - whoever is on the Finance Committee. Constitution booklets, do we have any money to pay for them? Zaagibaagang created these handouts

MLB – Al – might have a couple 100 of them. Will bring them to the Boise Forte meeting.

GP - Marcie – we need the MCT org chart, job descriptions, and other information.

FDL – Cheryl – FDL also has the books we can bring to the next meeting. She also commented to Marcie that Education is working on setting up a presentation by the MCT staff.

WE – Myke – what are the limits for the sub-committees?

FDL – Cheryl – One primary one alternate per band, per sub-committee. If a delegation wants to make a proposal to change our subcommittees, they can do it. Drafting, Education, Survey, we will accept as many that

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want to help. If you want to change the subcommittee rules, make your request to your Facilitation member, and we will get it on the agenda.

MLB – Danielle requested to see the minutes that support that guideline.

WE – Patty – July meeting Thursday the 20th.

Boise Forte to host the next meeting on June 2, 2023.

MLB – Julie – Requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MLB motioned to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Leech Lake.

Meeting adjourned. 3.27 pm