

MCT CONSTITUTION REFORM MINUTES

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2022

HOSTED BY GRAND PORTAGE VIA ZOOM

Attendees: Sandra Borden (GP), Jason Burnett (GP), Rita Evans (GP), Michele Hakala-Beeksma (GP), Levi Libra (GP), John Lemire (GP) Marcie McIntire (GP), Ellen Olson (GP), Sybil Gund (WE), Carol Janick (FDL), Julie H-C (MLB), Birdie Roberts (MLB), Billy Blackwell (GP), Danielle Smith (MLB), Patty Straub WE, Cheryl Edwards (FDL), Char Ellis (WE), Ja Annette, Maureen Jones (WE), Nechiwaakwaang indizhnikaaaz, Ray Bellecore (WE), Jean Shinaway (SLB), Sally Fineday (LL), Wally (LL), Nookomis Debra.

9:15 am Welcome by Michele Hakala-Beeksma (Host, GP)

Invocation by Billy Blackwell (Elder, GP, adopted by Walter Caribou)- he included in his invocation a history of our bands and people.

Housekeeping announcements- Note takers asked that when you speak that you give your name and band. Bands present were GP, FDL, MLB, WE, SL, LL. Those missing were BF.

9:20 am Youth Involvement- Input from each Band

LL has discussed it but has no plan. FDL is involving Youth in everything that they are doing. GP is trying to involve High Schoolers and needs to work on the logistics for Youths to attend meetings during the school day and other issues. Perhaps they could be part of the Public Relations Subcommittee. GP still has questions about the status of the Youth membership; for example, do they have a vote. MLB has not talked a lot about it and see the same logistics issues as GP. W.E. is considering involving Youth as part of the discussions without a vote and hopefully the Youth could get their families involved. Perhaps when we think of Youth, we could reach out to our tribal colleges instead of High Schoolers.

9:35 am Project Plan Update by Birdie Roberts

MLB- Birdie is going to try to get it to the 75% level and identify start times and deadlines. Then she will send it to the Education Subcommittee. She is hoping to get it out next week. Patty asked when she can send updates to Birdie. Per Birdie, "anytime." The Project Plan sections are Committee Roles and Responsibilities, Secretary of the Interior, Enrollments, MCT Organization, Constitution Work by Band.

10:35 am Referendum Report Update by Gary Frazier (MCT) (Gary was not present. The group had the following discussion.)

Michele is concerned with the Next Steps after the Referendum. Note that we did not meet the required number of voters which may have been the problem of inadequate voter lists.

Cheryl said the TEC is working on a recommendation for October meeting. FDL is working on a flyer on "Please Update Your Address" and she is willing to share with other bands. She does not know if Gary has a report ready. Next Thursday is the next meeting for the TEC Subcommittee.

Jason had a question on blood quantum related to how we administer the enrollment and need a study about the impacts. (Wilder Report).

Carol Janick: one path that we could take is to remove the Secretary of Interior and blood quantum first before doing the whole change. The second option would change the whole constitution which would be much harder. She led a discussion of the process. Culture competency is one potential requirement.

Michele Hakala-Beeksma: Changing the blood quantum requirement triggers enrollment issues. What would be the criteria for enrollment per current constitution?

Birdie: At the next TEC meeting we should explain our role in the enrollment process, e.g., our independence from the TEC.

Cheryl: MCT has not done a study on future enrollment; the Wilder Report did not address enrollment impact. How many of you have been surveyed about your dependents. On the referendum both questions would have passed in a general election. The TEC Subcommittee would like a secretarial election by 2024 if not sooner. We need to do the education so people can decide.

Michele: We want to be part of the process.

Marcie: Grand Portage did a study (Mr. Sanders, an actuary) during our drafting of a constitution in 2005. GP does not have too small a gene pool; therefore, we went with descendants.

Jason: The goal of this idea is to change our Constitution regarding membership so that it will work in perpetuity. We need to invite Gary to our next meeting to follow up about a study on the impacts on changes in membership requirement. MCT has begun issuing letters to applicants are not members, but they are descendants. Jason will contact Gary.

Michele: Most of us are part of fractionalized land. There was a survey on relatives related to the land.

Sandra: Her family have been survey for probate by Bureau of Indian Affairs and has about 30 pieces of land.

Carol: Those records are official and important.

Jason: Both blood quantum and land ownership use similar methods in diminishing tribal membership and land ownership.

Patty: She would like access to the information from Carol's future attendance at a seminar on membership.

Carol: She will post the information on FDL website.

Michele: The Bush grant could be used to support these training activities.

Cheryl: First, the potential use of Bush grant needs to be discussed in the MCT Constitution Reform Committee and if approved send to the Finance Subcommittee.

Break 10: 20 am

10:37 AM Alliance Document presentation and Discussion led by Carol Janick

Her slides will be posted to the FDL website. There is a Preamble that provides the purpose of the Constitution and contains all the necessary items of a good preamble. There is a description of who we are and what we want to accomplish.

Some of the Articles are: Article I Rights of Nature, Article II is Origin, Article III Treaty Rights, Article IV Relations with Federal Government, Article V Relation with States, Article VI Jurisdiction...Sovereign Rights of Constituents Reservations... Councils....

Next steps: Establish a General Assembly with 6 members from each band. Delineate roles and responsibilities of Councils (Elders, Women, Men, Youth, Off-Reservation Citizen). Review our Treaties. Bands enact policies, procedures, etc. to support the Alliance Document, including updating Band Constitutions.

Michele asked about the relationship of the General Assembly and the Councils. The General Assembly is the over arching governing body.

Rita asked questions regarding petitions. She is concerned with communication and wants the right to have a midewiwin lodge.

Marcie said that what we need is "due process" especially at the band level. Historically, members who had band issues went to the TEC who sent the issue back to the band. One example is the bear hunt where the symbol of our clan is being killed.

Jason wants a clarification on whether the Alliance Document will replace the MCT Constitutions.

Carol states the Alliance Document is the oversight document for the Councils and Band Constitutions and its preamble states who we are.

Jason: will the MCT still be in existence? How will it impact the employees? What is the role of the Appellate court? (Carol: to resolve dispute.)

Carol: There will be new structure that is not a business structure.

Ray: There should be more on Treaty Rights (recognized and confirmed rights). The US government did not confer rights.

Birdie: This document will revise the structure; the MCT is not a tribe.

Cheryl: If you want to attend a Drafting Subcommittee meeting on Tuesday nights at 6pm, send your name to Cheryl to get the email invitation.

11:30 pm Subcommittee Reports

- TEC- meeting every other Thursday at noon, next meeting is next week. We are getting ready for the Secretarial Election by 2024 or sooner and want it at the same time as the general election to get more people. Three items for the election: remove BQ, remove Secretary of Interior from Constitution, and address the second question of the recent referendum.
- Education- no meeting took place and there is no set date for meetings.
- Finance- final revision was approved by the MCT Subcommittee and the MCT Delegation Committee and it has been submitted to Bush who has some ideas to improve the document. There will a subcommittee meeting in about two weeks.
- Survey- no meeting held awaiting input from the Education Subcommittee.
- Press Release- an email was sent about when people can meet. Awaiting response.
- Drafting- Have been reviewing a lot of documents that will be useful to drafting the document. Next meeting Tuesday September 20 at 6 pm.

12:30 pm Open Comments- discussion of Federal government representatives and how they react with us. Also, there were concerns with reaching 30% vote requirement and the impacts.

Next Meeting October 27 (to coincide with TEC meeting) hosted by LL

Adjourned