

## MCT CONSTITUTION REFORM MEETING MINUTES

Friday, October 15, 2021, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm CDT

Hosted by Leech Lake via Zoom

**Attendees:** Sally Fineday LL host, Michael Smith Jr. LL, Sandra Borden GP, Cheryl Edwards FDL, Sybil Gund, Char Ellis WE, Wally LL, John, Maureen Jones Urban, Alanna Sherman BF, Tracey Dagen, John Roterman FDL, Wayne Dupuis FDL, Joy Annette WE, iPhone, Nanci Glenn Stone, Bernadine Roberts, Michaa Aubid Sandy Lake/ Rice Lake (also, Niib and Veronica), Perry Skinaway, Olson Skinaway, Tashina Perry Sandy Lake, Ray Bellecourt WE

9:00 am **Invocation** by Michael Smith Jr. asking the Spirits to be with us...our long descendants will be impacted by our decisions....

9:05 am **Welcome and Housekeeping/voting protocol** by Sally Fineday, facilitator: reminder of rules on voting.

**Roll Call:** Bois Forte present, Fond du Lac present, Grand Portage present, Leech Lake present, Mille Lacs absent, White Earth present. Note: Urban present, Sandy Lake present

9:15 am Strategic Planning- Report on Resolution by TEC Committee by Cheryl Edwards to be presented to the TEC on October 29th:

The document has been retitled to Minnesota Chippewa Reform Citizen Movement. It has the same pictures, same current priorities. The Quarterly Progress has been updated. There is an assignment to take a referendum to community. The need for a department for demographics and a need to discuss frameworks for the ballot is in the document. Education and exercise on Structure of government is in the document.

Recommendations- Do not hold a referendum election prior to the Secretarial Election; hire a demographer.

Wayne: Currently it is written that the TEC representatives serve for 4 months which does not allow for the learning curve to do the job. Cheryl: Originally there was supposed to be one representative and one back up from each delegation group. Joy: Best to let it be up to each delegation group. Sally: We will leave it up to each reservation: (1) the selection of the delegate and the alternative, (2) the rotation (term of office), and (3) the resolution of any issues with delegates and alternates. Wally: Strike 4-month timeline as length of job term.

Wayne: Please clarify the need for a demographer or an accountant. Answer- It is to project population. A demographer or accountant will have data and will be able to calculate statistics. Wayne has calculated FDL's collective blood quantum which is 3/8ths.

Cheryl: If we go to linear descent, we need to do planning to be able to handle the work load; e.g., recording death certificates, updating records.

Sandra: Let's look at the macro level. Grand Portage feels that the two most important issues are removal of Secretary of Interior from the constitution and to decide how to do/determine membership enrollment.

Sally: Do we need a vote on removing the Secretary of Interior? (yes) We are going to be held to the 30% vote which I (Sally) agree.

Cheryl: Agrees that both Secretary of Department of Interior and membership needs to be voted on. And we need to discuss government structure.

John Roterman: We cannot remove the Secretary of Interior without having a replacement.

Wally: The issue is a need for checks and balance. The Secretary hasn't actually served that purpose.

John: The problem is Education. People do not know how to go to the Secretary of Interior. And we need to change the Constitution to reflect who we are.

Sally: Each band is working on its own Constitution.

Birdie: ML has looked at the legal aspects on Enrollment and will present at the TEC meeting. I agree that we need to look at the macro level.

Wally: I do not recall anyone going to the Secretary. Do we need to take the Secretary out? We need to take out the Secretary election out and perhaps leave the Secretary out in other areas,

Cheryl: It might work taking the Secretarial Election out.

Sally: I also agree.

Wayne: FDL has never gone over 20% in any election.

Wally: 1<sup>st</sup> amendment was in 1972 (vote only in your enrolled reservation).

Sally: Currently most citizens are not engaged; they want us to make the decisions. When we have a vote, we want only 30% of "registered" voters. We need to use the same standard as before.

Wayne: the TEC has interpreted the Constitution such that the TEC can interpret the Constitution.

Cheryl: Our recommendations to TEC are (1) hold Secretarial Election (no referendum and

(2) hire a demographer. Will add Sally's recommendation regarding 30%.

Wayne: add the removal of the Secretary of Interior (Secretarial Election).

Sally: We will have another meeting and will **send out the Recommendations on a second page**. We need an **educational piece about the Constitution and Secretary of the Interior's role**.

Break 10: 32

10:57am **Education- Ray Bellecourt presented the White Earth Constitution Proposed Government Form with options**

Power Point file name: White Earth Model

Purpose: Ensure inherent sovereign rights; work for common good; govern ourselves; preserve native language; history, culture and identity; protect homeland and resources; ensure treaty rights

Membership- all currently enrolled members plus options include:

- All WE lineal descendants
- WE lineal descendants  $\frac{1}{4}$  Anishinaabe
- WE lineal descendants  $\frac{1}{4}$  Anishinaabe with  $\frac{1}{8}$  WE blood
- Children of enrolled MCT member or are  $\frac{1}{4}$  MCT blood

Grand Council- All member over 18 years of age; sessions (annually and Special meetings as needed; receives annual reports...)

Powers- regulate own meetings, approve annual budget, review annual audit, review decisions of Central Council, submit initiatives and referendums from District Councils, advisory recommendations to Central Council, remove President and VP, establish rules, procedures to issue tribal pardons, advise

Central Council- 21 members (16 on Reservation & 5 off reservation); quorum is 15.

District Councils/Community councils- Act on Petitions for removal of Central Council Members, submit proposed ordinances, manage local affairs within boundaries, advise Central council through Representative/Delegative

President/Chief Executive

Judiciary- Supreme Court, Tribal Court, Court of Tradition and Custom Dispute; 6-year terms

Election Board and Election- 8 members, two-year terms, elected at Grand Council

Joy- Wants to get away from a colonial approach/mindset but we still need a business entity/mechanism to deal with the Federal government.

Noon Lunch

**Action item:** send White Earth power point to everyone and the Drafting Committee. Request that the Drafting Committee to start on Section 2, Membership.

1:00 pm Wally started as Facilitator.

Wally: Comments on Ray's White Earth proposed Constitution- it is rather complicated to educate the people. In 2002, there was a constitution meeting at Mille Lacs. In 2003, I developed a constitution for the entire Anishinaabe Nation, based on the Cherokee Constitution. Each reservation would have their own constitution to manage local matters. The 6 reservations would be the founding groups for the Anishinaabe Nation and that other tribes may petition to become members.

### **Committee Reports**

Education (John Roterman-) There was no meeting last month, but we will have a meeting soon.

Finance (Cheryl)- There was no meeting. Each committee please submit cost estimates for the grant application.

Survey (Wayne)- FDL has sent out their own survey. We have a draft survey. Need feedback.

Drafting- Michaa Aubid, and Wayne Dupuis are members. **Jean Skinaway LL wants to be on the committee.**

1:22 pm Structure of Government- review prior to the Convention - <https://nativegov.org/rebuilders>

In the past John Roterman has presented a document before on traditional Ojibwe structure.

Michaa- prefers to do what is traditional. I also like Ray's document because of its pictures and imagery.

Wally passed the facilitation to Cheryl.

Cheryl: We need a picture with labels, especially showing what will be given back to the local level.

**Action:** add Jean Skinaway-Lawrence to our email distribution: [J\\_m\\_skinaway@hotmail.com](mailto:J_m_skinaway@hotmail.com)

There was a discussion on how to simplify the structure through the use of a strategic visual. Wally\_ could the Drafting committee do it. **John Roterman's previous presentation** is another possibility (Potential Government Structures- Last Modified August 20). Note: The Federal government has divided Indians into 10 districts. The Ojibwe Anishinaabe Nation = 15 bands and 200 plus reservations.

Michael Smith shared a presentation on visualizing. He has volunteered to polish presentation. For example, it is better to have more slides with less words.

**Action-** add Michael Smith Jr. LL 's email [happyeggs200@yahoo.com](mailto:happyeggs200@yahoo.com)

Wally asked if anyone is an expert on treaties.

**Action:** Drafting and Education Committees have been assigned to work on developing a visual: Tribe, A Government Structure. Due date November 19.

Michaa Aubid: Sandy Lake operates under traditional organization/structure.

Next Meeting is November 19<sup>th</sup> via Zoom hosted by Boise Forte.

2:08 pm Adjourned