

Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs
May 29, 2020
Quarterly Board Meeting

Larry Wright, Jr., *Acting Chairman*

Judi M. gaiashkibos, *Executive Director*

Commissioners Present

Georgiana Ausan, *At Large*
Gabriel Bruguier, *City of Lincoln*
Arthur Harvey, *Northern Panhandle*
Steve Laravie, *Ponca Tribe*
Dr. Rudi Mitchell, *City of Omaha Rep*
Kirby Williams, *City of Omaha Rep.*
Darren Wolfe, *Omaha Tribe*
Larry Wright, Jr., *Ponca Tribe*

Commissioners Absent

Derek LaPointe, *Santee Sioux*
Stuart Red Wing, *Santee Sioux Tribe*
Jason Sheridan, *Omaha Tribe*
Roland Warner, *Winnebago Tribe*
Thelma Whitewater, *Winnebago Tribe*

Ex-Officio Present

Commission Staff Present

Judi M. gaiashkibos, *Executive Director*
Scott Shafer, *Administrative Assistant II*

Commission Staff Absent

Call to Order

The May 29, 2020 quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs hosted as a teleconference call at Nebraska State Capitol, 6th floor, East, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509 was called to order by acting Chairman Larry Wright, Jr. at 10:05 a.m. CST.

The invocation was given by Chairman Wright.

Roll call indicated seven of 13 current commissioners in attendance and constituting a quorum. Commissioner Laravie joined the meeting at 10:17 making a total of eight of 13 commissioners attending.

Motion #1 Commissioner Wolfe motioned to approve the agenda for the May 29, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ausan.

For: Ausan Bruguier Harvey Mitchell Williams
Wolfe

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried. Chair did not vote.

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Old Business

Motion #2 Commissioner Wolfe motioned to approve the December 6, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruguier.

For: Ausan Bruguier Harvey Mitchell Williams
Wolfe

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried. Chair did not vote.

Motion #3 Commissioner Bruguier motioned to approve the General Ledger Detail Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfe.

For: Ausan Bruguier Harvey Mitchell Williams
Wolfe

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried. Chair did not vote.

New Business

- a. NCIA Executive Director 2.3% pay raise:** NCIA Executive Director gaiashkibos informed the board that per DAS rules a motion was necessary in order to allow the agency payroll processors to increase the pay rate for the director in the state payroll system effective July 1, 2020. The rate of pay increase matches the union bargaining rate of 2.3% for state employees inclusive of a .3% rate for satisfactory or above performance.

Motion #4 Commissioner Bruguier motioned to approve Executive Director's pay raise of 2.3% to take effect July 1, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wolfe.

For: Ausan Bruguier Harvey Mitchell Williams
Wolfe

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried. Chair did not vote.

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- b. **LB 154 Report:** Executive Director gaiashkibos shared a copy of the LB 154 report submitted by the Nebraska State Patrol. She informed the board that her highest priority is to create an NCIA led task force to continue to address the issue focusing on the underlying causes rather than through a law enforcement focus. In order to effectively administer this task force she will be requesting funding for an additional position at NCIA. This will be challenging due to possible budget limitations due to the COVID-19 economic impact to the state. gaiashkibos will also work with the Nebraska Crime Commission to ensure that the use of NamUS, a national missing person's database be universally required in Nebraska. Commissioner Wolfe urged the board to issue its own, separate public statement about the LB 154 report emphasizing NCIA's view that emphasis and greater effort be focused on addressing causation and underlying risk factors. Commissioner Wright also stated that he felt that this was necessary. Director gaiashkibos agreed to put together a statement with assistance from Commissioners Williams.
- c. **Agency Audit:** Executive Director gaiashkibos informed the board that the agency was audited by the State Auditor's office in April through May. She stated that the full audit report can be found on the State Auditor's webpage. The audit found no major problems, but gaiashkibos stated that per the auditors' recommendations the agency will be putting together a formal sick leave policy and computer use policy for review by the board. The audit findings also requested that Indigenous People's license plate funds be moved back from the endowed scholarship fund at Lincoln Community Foundation and back into the agency's budget for greater state oversight of the funds. This transfer will be executed in the near future.
- d. **Biennium Budget Submission:** Executive Director gaiashkibos informed the board that state agencies will be tasked with completing and submitting their biennium budget submissions by this September. gaiashkibos has some concern about the impact of lost state revenue due to the COVID-19 epidemic and will be keeping a close watch on any news of any possible budget reductions.
- e. **Suicide Task Force:** Executive Director gaiashkibos gave a short review of the origin of the multiagency Suicide Task Force formed to address the suicide issue on the Omaha Reservation. The initial meeting was a very well attended primarily in-person meeting with representatives of many agencies and organizations. Due to the COVID epidemic and for greater efficiencies the meetings have moved to video and teleconferences. Commissioner Wolfe stated that the COVID problem has added challenges to addressing the problem and has concerns that if the number of cases on the reservation increases, the tribe will be forced to impose a shutdown which could lead to greater social isolation of at-risk individuals.
- f. **Standing Bear Scholarship Awards:** Executive Director gaiashkibos announced the two 2020 \$2,500 scholarship recipients are Caden Simon and Dominic Smith. Gaiashkibos stated that due to the changes requested by the State Auditor, the scholarships will probably be split next year with one awarded from the LCF scholarship endowment and two or perhaps more awarded from agency license plate sales funds.
- g. **COVID-19:** Executive Director gaiashkibos gave a recap on her work with the tribes concerning the COVID-19 epidemic. gaiashkibos informed the board that she has participated in many conference calls with governmental leaders and tribal leaders. There were some initial communications issues with the state about state funds being available to the tribes for COVID related relief, with the tribes subsequently being told that they needed to request Federal relief funds instead. gaiashkibos will continue to attend meetings and facilitate communications between the state and the tribes. Gaiashkibos informed the board of a National Science Foundation Grant

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awarded to the University of Nebraska to create educational materials related to COVID. There will be a tribal section to the materials featuring Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte. gaiashkibos also reported that a total of \$23,500 of private donations have been made directly to schools and tribal organizations in support of COVID related relief efforts. gaiashkibos will also be working with the Nebraska Legislature to explore the possibility of legislation giving tribal health departments status equal to existing multi-county health departments which were created in 2001 through the Nebraska Health Care Funding Act.

- h. **Tribal Education Summit:** Executive Director gaiashkibos informed that the Nebraska Department of Education will be hosting a Tribal Education Summit via Zoom meeting on June 10. She will send meeting information to any commissioners that are interested in participating.
- i. **Status of Pending Legislation:** Executive Director reviewed the status of LB 849 Bridge to Independence, LB 1076 CCPE- Gap Assistance Financial Aid Bill, LB 937 Tribal Flags, LB 848 Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day. gaiashkibos is hopeful that these bills can move forward if the Legislation convenes in July to finish business before the end of the session. Bills with any fiscal note associated with them are especially at risk due to state budget concerns and uncertainty.
- j. **Election of Officers:** Executive Director gaiashkibos informed the board that executive officer elections are overdue and should be put on the agenda and take place at the next board meeting.
- k. **Miscellaneous Business:** Commissioner Bruguier gave an update on the status of the yearly Sovereign Native Youth Leadership Academy. Due to the COVID epidemic they have decided to cancel the in-person academy and are currently looking at ways to deliver the programming to youth via some sort of distance education utilizing social media.

Motion #5 Commissioner Bruguier motioned for the next meeting to be held on September 18, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at a location to be determined. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams.

For: Ausan Wolfe Bruguier Harvey Laravie Mitchell Williams

Opposed: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried. Chair did not vote.

Quarterly Meeting of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs adjourned Friday, May 29, 2020 at 11:20 a.m.