

Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs

August 9, 2021

Quarterly Board Meeting

**Attendance:**

Commissioners Present

**Georgianna Ausan, (Member At Large)**

**Gabriel Bruguier, City of Lincoln Rep**

**Dr. Rudi Mitchell, City of Omaha Rep**

**Stuart Redwing, Santee Sioux Nation (Vice Chairman, Tribal Rep.)**

**Kyle Taylor, Ponca Tribe**

**Thelma Whitewater, Winnebago Tribe**

**Kirby Williams, City of Omaha Rep (Urban Rep.)**

**Darren Wolfe, Omaha Tribe (Tribal Rep.)**

**Larry Wright, Jr., Ponca Tribe (Chairman)**

Commissioners Absent

**Arthur Harvey, Northern Panhandle Rep**

**Gwendolyn Porter, Omaha Tribe**

**Sidney Tuttle, Santee Sioux Nation**

Ex-Officio Present

Commission Staff Present

**Judi M. gaiashkibos, Executive Director**

**Scott Shafer, Administrative Programs Officer**

**Alicia Rodrigues, Administrative Secretary**

Commission Staff Absent

**Call to Order:**

A.) The August 9th, 2021 quarterly meeting of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs at the Ponca Tribe's Recruiting & Training building in Ralston Omaha was called to order by Chairman Larry Wright, Jr. at 10:09a.m. CST.

B.) The invocation was given by Dr. Rudi Mitchell.

C.) Roll call indicated nine of twelve current commissioners in attendance constituting a quorum.

**Introduction:**

Chairman Wright welcomed and introduced new commissioners Kyle Taylor, Gwendolyn Porter, and Sidney Tuttle.

Chairman Wright also welcomed speakers present and asked for introductions.

**Motion #1** Commissioner Whitewater motioned to approve the August 9, 2021 agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruguier.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Taylor Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** None

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

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**Old Business:**

**Motion #2** Commissioner Williams motioned to approve the April 23, 2021 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruguier.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** Taylor

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

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

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** Taylor

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

**New Business:**

**A. Budget Status Report -**

1. NCIA staff member Scott Shafer summarized this report noting highlighted areas of budget and percentage amounts approved for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

**B. Presentation of Possible 2022 Legislation [Sen. Megan Hunt]**

1. Senator Megan Hunt gave an introduction of herself and asked for the Board's thoughts regarding legislation to ban tribal mascots.

2. Commissioner Whitewater described meeting of DeCora, Iowa school supervisors in which they agreed to change mascot in an attempt to also limit degradation of native community.

3. Senator Hunt reported there are at least 22 schools in Nebraska with tribal mascots and the reason they haven't changed is often cited as cost. Senator Hunt suggested offering incentives for schools to change their mascots.

NOTE: At a later point in the meeting, Chairman Wright suggested that NDE help with costs associated with mascot changes.

4. Commissioner Wolfe reminded the Senator that mascots are often disrespectful in portrayals. He also compared predominantly white schools with disrespectful native mascots to schools such as in Macy and Walthill, Nebraska that attempt to infuse native culture back into curriculum for students.

5. Commissioner Williams requested very specific language be used.

6. Commissioner Mitchell shared his experience at Creighton University and that even foreign students did not seem to understand why Natives would like to be represented as some mascots do.

7. Chairman Wright spoke in support of Senator Hunt's efforts and shared his experience in a small town.

8. Executive Director gaiashkibos requested that tribal and county/regional health departments be made equal as well. Senator Hunt agreed that legislation related to this would great as well.

9. Commissioner Redwing suggested that HIPPA has become a common claim from the State regarding the publishing of COVID19 numbers.

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10. Senator Hunt spoke of possible strategies for introduction and passage by legislature. She also agreed to maintain open communication and assured that she would draft something in the near future to share with the board.

**Motion #5** Commissioner Wolfe motioned to support Senator Hunt's effort to introduce legislation to ban native mascots in 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whitewater.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Taylor Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** None

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

**C. Director's Report -**

1. Executive Director gaiashkibos referenced the previous board meeting at UNL's Memorial Stadium & Chancellor Green's Native American initiative.

2. Executive Director gaiashkibos also spoke of current plans for October 11<sup>th</sup> Indigenous Peoples Day 2021 Celebration.

a. Chairman Wright clarified that the flag processional and other plans stood as tentative plans for the day and asked for assistance from all Board Members in contacting tribal Chair-people regarding their involvement.

3. Executive Director gaiashkibos spoke about Genoa Indian Industrial School and outlook of beginning to heal rather than focus on finding remains.

**D. NDE Contract -**

1. Executive Director gaiashkibos summarized grant opportunity from the Nebraska Department of Education.

a. This one-year contract is for \$49,500 to be broken into three installments.

b. Executive Director gaiashkibos reported that NCIA and the Nebraska Department of Education understand that ultimately \$150,000 total will be paid to NCIA over the course of three years through separate contracts.

c. The goal of this grant would be to provide support for educational outreach and completion of strategic planning by NCIA.

d. NCIA would also be tasked with defining, hiring, and co-managing a liaison position.

**Motion #4** Commissioner Bruguier motioned to approve NCIA's Contract with the Nebraska Department of Education. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ausan.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Taylor Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** None

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

**E. Presentation by Legal Aid of Nebraska [Kirby Williams, Jonathan Seagrass, & Milo Mumgaard]**

1. Commissioner Williams, in her capacity at Legal Aid of Nebraska introduced Milo Mumgaard (Executive Director) and Johnathon Seagrass (Native American Program Managing Attorney) to the Board and expressed interest in forming a strong and dynamic partnership between the two present agencies. She also shared Legal Aid's drafted Land Acknowledgement.

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2. Mr. Mumgaard shared that Legal Aid's main goal is to provide legal services to low and middle income families.

3. Mr. Seagrass described some example cases that the organization focuses on including domestic violence, child support, housing, wills, and others.

4. Commissioner Whitewater inquired about assistance with wills to which Mrs. Williams shared with the rest of the Board that Winnebago was hosting an event at their senior center for such a cause.

**F. Presentation by U.S. Census Bureau [Shadana Sultan]**

1. Shadana Sultan gave a brief introduction of herself. She prides herself in her own personal diversity and strives to educate other upper-level management with internal Census trainings.

2. Federal dollars come from self identification which is why Mrs. Sultan stressed the need for checking every group that you identify with when filling out Census paperwork.

a. Tribes are able to challenge that data to receive more funding.

3. Boundary Annexation Surveys (BAS) are extremely important to complete. Mrs. Sultan suggested that each tribe appoint/designate one liaison person to account for all Census related affairs.

4. September 30<sup>th</sup> is the date that updated information and numbers will be published

**G. Presentation by UNMC [Dr. Siobhan Wescott]**

NOTE: Dr. Siobhan Wescott is the inaugural holder of the Dr. Susan and Susette (Inshata Theumba) La Flesche Professorship in Public Health as well as the Director of the American Indian Health Department at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

1. Dr. Wescott shared that her mother was a boarding school survivor and that she [Dr. Wescott] is excited to be part of the healing to come in Nebraska.

2. Dr. Wescott also shared that she has part of a grant to work on a diabetes app for smart phones. She intends this app to have comedic voice work added.

3. Executive Director gaiashkibos assured she would share Dr. Wescott's contact information with the Board.

**H. Presentation by Joslyn Art Museum [Annika Johnson]**

1. Intern Alexandra Walker, a senior at UNO from the Winnebago tribe, will be presenting her own exhibit at the museum starting around November?

2. Curator Annika Johnson shared that Joslyn plans to expand available space and pivot traditional curator roles.

3. Johnson also shared that the Karl Bodmer collection will be focal point of upcoming movie to be filmed utilizing tribal storytelling. There is a showing of this film on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

4. Commissioner Wolfe suggested more depiction of a timeline of native art. Rather than simply displaying Bodmer's collection, also show current native artists' work and how styles have progress/changed.

**I. Presentation by Omaha Mayor's Office [Keith Station]**

1. Keith Station shared with the Board that he has about 1 year of experience in his new position as Chief Diversity Officer (one of the fast and highest growing jobs in the U.S. right now).

a. He was tasked with creating diversity and inclusion in all areas of Omaha's leadership and reports directly to the Mayor.

2. Mr. Station has also recently taken on the duties of Marty Bilek, who retired, related to the Mayor's Native American Advisory Board.

a. He is currently looking at dates to schedule another meeting and get those onto a regular schedule.

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**J. Presentation by ServeNebraska [Katherine Lacy]**

1. Katherine Lacy shared that there is an AmeriCore service group in every U.S. state and territory.
2. Grant awards are available and depend on how many members you apply for. Different types of workers can be selected as well.
3. Commissioner Wolfe showed interest with Macy's planned trade school and any type of partnership that might be possible. The two agreed to correspond outside of the Board regarding this.

**K. Miscellaneous Business -**

1. Discussion of proposed resolution by University of Nebraska Board of Regents re: Critical Race Theory
  - a. Commissioner Wolfe introduced idea of supporting students opposed to Jim Pillen's resolution
  - b. Executive Director gaiashkibos updated group that Board of Regents is scheduled to vote soon (on August 13<sup>th</sup>) and she believes that the resolution is unlikely to pass.
    - bb. Commissioner Mitchell request meeting details to attend.
  - c. Chairman Wright suggested waiting until the Board of Regents voted to decide whether or not to take further action. Commissioner Wolfe and the Board agreed.

**Adjourn:**

Chairman Wright proposed November 5<sup>th</sup> (alternatively the 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>) at 10a.m. to be the date and time of the next Board Meeting. The location was left To Be Determined. However, Commissioner Redwing assured the board that he would report about availability of Santee Sioux Nation's Ohiya Casino & Resort.

Chairman Wright also thanked Commissioner Whitewater for her service on the Board and wished her well on her future endeavors as she plans to retire from NCIA.

**Motion #6** Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve date & time of next meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Taylor Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** None

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

**Motion #7** Commissioner Redwing motioned to adjourn meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bruguier.

**For:** Ausan Bruguier Mitchell Redwing Taylor Whitewater Williams Wolfe

**Opposed:** None

**Abstain:** None

*Motion carried by roll-call vote. Chair did not vote.*

**Quarterly Meeting of the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs adjourned Monday, August 9, 2021 at 2:15p.m. CST.**