



Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | August 19, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Linda Leaf Bolin, Daniel Carter, Cheryl Cohenour, Waynetta Lawrie, Winnie Guess Perdue, Patsy Powell, Joyce Roberts, Teresa Runnels, Dorcas Williams, Shari Williams

Commissioners Absent: David Bible, Joe Deere, Warren Harjo, Stacy Laskey, Warren Queton, Matt Roberts, Kim Teehee, Mark Vancuren, Erica Waeltz-Carter

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.
- b. Roll Call
- c. Land Acknowledgment

II. Approve Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to approve June meeting minutes.
 - i. Vice Chair Carter made a motion, Commissioner Lawrie seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, June meeting minutes approved.

III. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour noted this past weekend was the Tulsa Indian Club Pow Wow, during which Commissioner Guess Perdue was the honored elder.
- b. Working hard on Native American Day.
- c. Vice Chair Carter shared the Supreme Court of Oklahoma in the Oklahoma Tax Commission case.
 - i. Argued that an individual who lives on the Muscogee reservation and works for the Muscogee Nation should have been exempt from state personal income tax.
 - ii. Ruled that the Muscogee Nation's reservation isn't a reservation for civil purposes, only criminal under McGirt. This is the first time a body has ruled that the reservation can be designated as such for one purpose and not another.
 - iii. Education about tribal sovereignty is still needed for municipal and state partners.

IV. Director of Tribal Policy and Partnerships Report

- a. Amanda Swope provided City Council updates. There was not much action regarding tribes.
 - i. Joyce Roberts appointed to the Human Rights Commission.
 - ii. Approving and establishing Pearl and Crutchfield TIF districts.



- b. Muscogee Nation settlement update: Settled the case and submitted to court, held a signing ceremony with Mayor Nichols and Chief Hill. The Judge ruled to allow Creek Freedman to participate. Hasn't ruled on accepting the agreement yet or allowed Oklahoma state of the governor to be parties. Have moved forward with work group (meeting tomorrow) to start discussion points. Working well with Muscogee Nation to address different situations.
- c. The Southern TIF District was passed by the Planning Commission last week. Development meetings will take place to raise awareness of concerns when developing property in that area.
- d. Presented at:
 - i. Muscogee Nation Sovereignty Day
 - ii. Inter-Tribal Council (next one is in Durant, Oct 8 – 10)
 - iii. Indian Health Care Resource Center opening, Mayor also attended.
 - iv. Quarterly tribal meeting with three chiefs in July – Nations get individual time with Mayor Nichols in addition to inter-tribal discussion.
 - v. South Tulsa damn project with Muscogee Nation is about a decade out but thinking about what plans may be for City departments to have an updated quote.
- e. City Council is visiting the Muscogee National Council, replacing Tribal Relations Committee meeting, on Friday.
 - i. Amanda will send information to Chairwoman Cohenour and Vice Chair Carter.
- f. Renaming of Midland Valley Trail to Tuckabatchee Trail – Reopening previous conversation. Currently, there is no opposition. There is an opportunity for GTAIAAC to provide a letter supporting this change.
- g. Council Oak and Stickball Parks: City of Tulsa came to an agreement with the Muscogee Nation; an MOU will accompany the deed that specifies why the City took this action and Nation's intention with it moving forward. Arts Commission conveyed the art on the property. The last step is for PSO tell the City what easements exist. Will probably see this in City Council in next month.
- h. Tulsa Airport has various art projects they want to offer space to the nations, want to highlight Native culture more. Amanda connected them with the nations' cultural secretaries. Encouraged commissioners to elevate this with their contacts. Will send out RFPs this month or next.
- i. Continuing to connect City departments to the correct departments within tribal nations.
- j. National League of Cities – Local Indigenous Leaders subgroup. Could be helpful with co-governance.

V. Nominating Committee: Appoint Chair and Elect Members

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour had asked Commissioner Matt Roberts to chair the Nominating Committee prior to this meeting and he agreed.
- b. Chairwoman Cohenour nominated Commissioner Lawrie to the committee, and she accepted.
- c. Commissioner Guess Perdue nominated Commissioner Leaf Bolin to the committee, and she accepted.
- d. Chairwoman Cohenour made a motion to elect Commissioners Lawrie and Leaf Bolin to serve on the Nominating Committee.



i. Aye: 10, Nay: 0

ii. Motion carried, Commissioners Lawrie and Leaf Bolin will serve on the Nominating Committee.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action: Commission Meeting Time

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour and Lexi shared that TGOV staff have asked commissions that meet in the evenings to consider moving up their meeting times to accommodate staffing constraints.
- b. Commission Discussion:
 - i. Vice Chair Carter: 5pm is not feasible, many jobs end at 5 and meeting at that time won't work.
 - ii. This commission has the extra consideration of County appointees who may be coming from farther away from downtown.
 - iii. Some commissioners commented that it would be nice to not have the meetings so late.
 - iv. Commissioner Guess Perdue asked if it would inhibit anyone to move it up. Commissioner Dorcas Williams couldn't attend at 5pm but could do 5:30.
- c. Vice Chair Carter would like to put off a final decision until next meeting to engage commissioners who aren't present tonight. Chairwoman affirmed that for those in the room, 5:30 works.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Native American Day Committee
 - i. Secured sponsorship from Osage Nation for \$10k. Requests to Muscogee Nation and Cherokee Nation are still out.
 - ii. Making some changes to event layout. Biggest change may be to the parade route due to street maintenance along 18th Street, which is currently scheduled to complete by end of September. Working on an alternate route in case it's needed.
 - 1. Vendors will not be allowed to park on the park in preparation for the renovated Dream Keepers Park renovations.
 - iii. Will need to think about another chair for Native American Day so they can get used to the process. Chairwoman Cohenour would like to support the next person who will take it over and lead them through the process next year before they take over.
 - iv. Posters are complete and available for commissioners to take with them.
 - v. T-shirts are for sale on the website. Vendor, parade, and volunteer signups also available on the website.
 - vi. Receiving videos from Princesses promoting Native American Day has been slow.
 - vii. Chairwoman Cohenour noted some conversations with other commissions at the Title V Commission Retreat, have helped others with Tulsa Community Foundation accounts and spoke with Josh Starks (HRC) about the Veteran's Day parade. Wants to have more communication between commissions.
- b. Dream Keepers Committee
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour gave the report in Commissioner Matt Roberts's absence.
 - ii. Nine nominations received so far, always open to more. Nominate as soon as possible, will vote on awardees after the next commission meeting.



- c. Education Committee
 - i. Commissioner Shari Williams reported that Tulsa Public Schools students return tomorrow. Superintendent Johnson has proposed a policy update to the school board to address mascots, a change that originated with Indian Education Parent Committee. Dr. Johnson has met with students (student leaders across the district as well as Indigenous students at each of the two schools) and tribal chiefs. Students want to be recognized in an appropriate way, and they feel the current mascot imagery of these two schools does not honor Native students.
 - 1. Schools will keep their names but re-brand the mascot imagery with community input.
 - 2. Policy will be voted on by school board in September.
 - ii. Vice Chair Carter asked if a letter from the commission would be helpful. Commissioner Shari Williams can speak with Dr. Johnson about this and provide a copy of the policy to commission to inform if and what the Commission would say. Vice Chair Carter emphasized that the commission's role is to be a voice for the Native American community, and he don't want to sit out on this issue.
 - 1. Commissioner Leaf Bolin reflected on previous times when she has spoken as a commissioner on similar issues.
 - 2. Commissioner Dorcas Williams clarified what the current imagery portrays, as the school sits on Muscogee land, but the imagery is more stereotypical Plains Native Americans. Should honor Creek land.
 - iii. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to have herself and Vice Chair Carter look into the issue and draft a letter supporting students.
 - 1. Vice Chair Carter made a motion, Commissioner Dorcas Williams seconded.
 - a. Aye: 10
 - 2. Motion carried, Chairwoman Cohenour and Vice Chair Carter will look into this issue and draft a letter supporting students.
- d. Public Relations Committee
 - i. Commissioner Joyce Roberts shared that the committee will work on a media release from the City of Tulsa for Native American Day once the agenda is finalized.
 - ii. Ava Rose Johnson will sing at Native American Day. Channel 6 requested her to sing when Native American Day is on air.
- e. Cultural Committee – no report
- f. Parks Committee
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour reported that the committee is waiting for the City Contract to be finalized and signed with TSW, should be early September. Will start meeting with all three tribes' cultural appointees to continue work.
 - ii. Spirit Bank wants to discuss sponsorship.
- g. Bylaws Committee
 - i. Vice Chair Carter reported the committee is still working on the GTAIAC ordinance. Submitted draft to City Legal and they sent back redlines. A few folks met with Legal to discuss their changes. Earlier this week, Lexi received another



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revised version from Legal. The committee reviewed it today and will request some further changes.

- ii. The committee and Legal should come to an agreement next time they discuss. Could possibly have a draft by next commission meeting to show GTAIAC then send to City Council.
- iii. Vice Chair Carter offered to send the draft to everyone interested and reminded commissioners that everyone is invited to committee meetings.

VIII. Old Business – no old business

IX. New Business – no new business

X. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. Welcoming Week Kickoff Event: Welcoming America has selected Tulsa as the national Welcoming Week kickoff location. Event is September 12 from 5 to 8 pm at the Gathering Place.

XI. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Commissioner Leaf Bolin made a motion, Commissioner Lawrie seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 10
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.