



Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | September 16, 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, Joe Deere, Stacy Laskey, Winnie Guess Perdue, Joyce Roberts, Matt Roberts, Teresa Runnels, Erica Waeltz-Carter, Dorcas Williams, Shari Williams

Commissioners Absent: David Bible, Warren Harjo, Waynetta Lawrie, Pat Powell, Warren Queton, Kim Teehee, Mark Vancuren

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
- b. Roll Call
- c. Land Acknowledgment

II. Approve Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to approve August meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Deere made a motion, Commissioner Waeltz-Carter seconded.
 - 1. Aye: 12, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, August meeting minutes approved.

III. Guest Speaker: Amber Masters, Vice President of Statewide Initiatives at Teach for America

- a. Potential is equally distributed across all students, but opportunity is not.
- b. Nearly 10% of Oklahoma teachers leave the profession every year.
- c. Native American experience in education:
 - i. 4% of educators identify as Native in Oklahoma, and 12% of public school students are Native (approximately 74,000).
 - ii. 9% of Native students are proficient by the time they graduate high school.
 - iii. This does not have to be our reality, can work for all students to have access to an excellent education.
- d. Teach for America (TFA) finds promising leaders and supports them through teach for two years while learning about systems-wide challenges and opportunities. TFA teaches them to be systems thinkers. TFA wants to partner with the next generation of Native leaders to ensure we meet students' needs.
- e. Ignite Fellowship – Virtual tutoring from college students.
- f. Tribal nations partnerships – Cherokee, Osage, and Rosebud Sioux



- g. As of last year, TFA is the largest pipeline of Native American teachers in the country. In Oklahoma, over 700 scholars are engaging in opportunities provided by TFA.
- h. Opportunities for the Commission to work with TFA:
 - i. Share your vision for education and how TFA can support.
 - ii. Help us identify Native scholars and leaders.
 - iii. Collaborate on mentorship and resources.
- i. Commission Discussion
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour encouraged Amber to sign TFA up for a booth at Native American Day, as it's a big opportunity to connect with students.
 - ii. Commissioner Matt Roberts: When you talk about Native students and those entering TFA, how do you get the word out?
 - 1. Amber: Met with Cherokee Nation, asked what their vision for education is and how TFA can support. They have a list of scholars in Oklahoma and across nation with whom they share information about the Ignite Fellowship and other professional development opportunities. Also provide scholarship students with incentives to join Ignite.
 - 2. Commissioner Matt Roberts: Where are the students?
 - 3. Amber: There are six regions across the country where TFA serves Native students. Incoming corps members select where they go to teach, so TFA strives to inspire more corps to come to Oklahoma.

IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour shared that the Human Rights Commission selected Winnie Guess Perdue as one of two Humanitarian of the Year Award recipients for 2025. The ceremony is on December 11 at 6pm in the City Council Chambers.

V. Director of Tribal Policy and Partnerships Report

- a. Amanda Swope shared that the City had their first two public safety work group meetings with Muscogee Nation.
- b. The meeting between the Tulsa City Council and Muscogee Nation Council took place in August. Moving forward, councilors with overlapping areas will meet in small groups.
- c. Council Oak & Stickball Park: Paperwork is making its way through Muscogee Nation National Council, should be complete next month.
- d. City of Bixby has taken steps to fly the Muscogee Nation flag at their city hall, and Broken Arrow may be as well.
- e. Gilcrease Museum wants to be active and engaged in returning art pieces to nations under NAGPRA.
- f. The inaugural Tribal Municipal Partnerships Award was given to Mayor Nichols.
- g. Working on housing collaboration opportunities with Cherokee Nation.
- h. City Council item: Approved public hearing date for Southern Villa TIF district.
- i. The Midland Valley Trail renaming is going before the Park Board. They will likely continue to circle back to this commission for a letter of support.
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour stated that they've been down this road. She understands them following up, and if a formal request comes through will bring it as an item for discussion. Other commissioners echoed that this has been discussed in the past.

VI. Discussion and Possible Action: Commission Meeting Time



- a. Chairwoman Cohenour reminded commissioners of last month's discussion.
- b. Commissioner Waeltz-Carter: Has TGOV proposed a time? Lexi shared that 5 or 5:30 would be appreciated.
- c. Commissioner Deere expressed that 5:30 is reasonable. Commissioner Waeltz-Carter noted that at that time, heading into downtown you are going against most traffic.
- d. Vice Chair Carter stated that 5:30 would be the earliest time to move the meeting to, as an earlier time could prohibit future commissioners from joining. There are too many people who work until 5 and it's difficult to leave work early.
- e. Commissioner Waeltz-Carter remarked that GTAIAC is good at keeping meetings short.
- f. Commissioner Laskey motioned to change time the meeting time to 5:30, Commissioner Deere seconded.
 - i. Aye: 12, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, GTAIAC meeting times will change to 5:30 starting in October.
- g. Lexi will take care of paperwork and change the calendar invite.

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Native American Day Committee
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour reported that Native American Day is in good shape.
 - ii. The Muscogee Lighthouse will support with security by bringing their mobile command unit and armored vehicle.
 - iii. The Sunday before event (October 12), meet at noon at Dream Keepers Park to receive deliveries and set up tents.
 - iv. Will borrow the Parks Department's stage one last time, offered financial support from the commission to help with repairs to hydraulic system.
 - v. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to have commission financially support stage repairs.
 - 1. Commissioner Waeltz-Carter made a motion, Commissioner Deere seconded.
 - a. Aye: 12, Nay: 0
 - 2. Motion carried, GTAIAC will financially support stage repairs.
 - vi. The committee meets every Wednesday between now and the event.
- b. Dream Keepers Committee
 - i. Cheryl reminded everyone we will stay for executive session immediately following this meeting to select Dream Keepers awardees.
- c. Education Committee
 - i. Commissioner Matt Roberts: 51 parade entries for Native American Day, 19 of which are schools.
 - ii. Commissioner Matt Roberts shared that many factors go into education rankings across the nation, such as per pupil spending. Oklahoma has the best Indian Education programs in the nation. We have selfless, dedicated educators.
 - 1. Commissioner Dorcas Williams appreciated this information.
 - iii. Commissioner Shari Williams followed up on last month's discussion about Tulsa Public School's new policy about school branding. The TPS Board approved the new policy and revising Webster and Central's mascots to comply with the new policy. Moving forward to planning and community and student input. Thanked commissioners who sent letters of support to the TPS board.



1. Community meeting on Sept 30th, including tribal representation.
- d. Public Relations Committee
 - i. Commissioner Laskey: Channel 6 will promote Native American Day on October 7 at 8:45.
 - ii. Expecting press release from City soon.
- e. Cultural Committee
 - i. Commissioner Waeltz-Carter: Broke Arrow Intertribal Veterans Pow Wow next month on October 4.
 - ii. Commissioner Dorcas Williams: Burning Cedar is starting a language club, which they're calling a speaking practice. Next one on October 12.
 1. Amanda noted Mayor Nichols will be stopping there for 918 Day.
- f. Parks Committee
 - i. Chairwoman Cohenour: Waiting for City to finalize contract with landscape architect.
- g. Bylaws Committee
 - i. Vice Chair Carter reported that they are still working with City Legal to finalize changes to the ordinance, hope to have something next month for the commission to consider.

VIII. Old Business

- a. The Nominating Committee should have slate of officers to present next meeting.

IX. New Business

- a. 918 Day is Thursday, look up all events online.
- b. American Indian Allotments and their Lasting Impact: Event at Zarrow Library on September 18 at 3pm

X. Announcements / Public Comments – none

XI. Adjournment

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - i. Commissioner Deere made a motion, Commissioner Waeltz-Carter seconded.
 1. Aye: 12
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.