



## Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | January 20, 2026 | 5:30 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

### Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: David Bible, Linda Leaf Bolin, Daniel Carter, Cheryl Cohenour, Joe Deere, Stacy Laskey, Winnie Guess Perdue, Pat Powell, Warren Queton, Joyce Roberts, Matt Roberts, Teresa Runnels, Mark Vancuren, Dorcas Williams, Shari Williams

Alternate Present: Brandi Payton

Commissioners Absent: Warren Harjo, Kim Teehee, Erica Waeltz-Carter

#### I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.
- b. Roll Call
- c. Land Acknowledgment

#### II. Approve Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to approve November meeting minutes.
  - i. Commissioner Powell made a motion, Commissioner Dorcas Williams seconded.
    1. Aye: 10, Nay: 0
      - a. Commissioners Leaf Bolin, Vancuren, Queton, and Deere and Alternate Brandi Payton were not yet present in the meeting.
  - ii. Motion carried, November meeting minutes approved.

#### III. Guest Speaker: Caleb McDaniel, Indigenous Class

- a. Caleb McDaniel distributed flyers about Indigenous Class.
- b. Caleb shared about himself and his personal journey to launching Indigenous Class. Inspired by the platform MasterClass and wanted to create something specifically for Indian Country. It is an opportunity for Natives to teach skills and share personal stories.
- c. Commissioner Leaf Bolin arrived at 3:35 and Commissioner Vancuren arrived at 5:37.
- d. Currently working with nine tribes in Oklahoma and schools Riverside Indian School, Jones Academy, and Muscogee Creek College.
- e. Looking for opportunities to plug in and reach the Native community.
- f. Indigenous Class is a subscription-based service and a new class is uploaded every month.



- g. Teachers of classes include individuals like Secretary Deb Halland and Attorney Billy Sheperd.
- h. Commissioner Queton arrived at 5:46 pm.
- i. Caleb: Exposure matters, and Indigenous Class can give young people access to information that might not otherwise have.
- j. Commission Discussion
  - i. Chairwoman Cohenour: Do you sell to organizations to offer free access to students? Caleb: Yes, that's the goal for students to be the end user. Jill: We need Natives leading other young Natives in Indian Country, so want to get the platform out there as much as possible.
- k. The platform has quizzes and discussion prompts that can be used in a class.

#### **IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report**

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour did not have a Chair Report.
- b. Vice Chair Carter reflected that there has been a lot of development with Tribal relations on state and federal levels. City of Tulsa conveyed Stickball and Council Oak parks and litigation with Muscogee Creek Nation was settled—both of which show positive developments. Tribes have entered litigation against the state of Oklahoma for hunting and fishing rights, a new chapter of defending tribal rights.
- c. Brandi Payton, alternate for Commissioner Waynetta Lawrie, arrived at 5:57 pm.
- d. New tribe on list of federally recognized tribes list: Lumbee Tribe
- e. Chairwoman Cohenour and Vice Chair Carter filed GTAAC's annual report for 2025.

#### **V. Director of Tribal Policy and Partnerships Report**

- a. Amanda Swope shared updates from the end of 2025 through beginning of 2026.
- b. Mayor Nichols spoke at the Executive Committee of Intertribal Council and was featured speaker for an American Indian Chamber of Commerce event.
- c. Attended Muscogee Nation inauguration for new council members with some City of Tulsa elected officials.
- d. Meeting with the Muscogee Nation Planning Office to discuss on projects and proposals that are given to the City, some directly and others indirectly
- e. Tulsa Fire Department established an MOU with Osage Nation for a shared program. Hit a snag with internal City policy with the procurement process that certifies businesses and looking into ways businesses can avoid being dual certified with the City and Osage Nation if they don't want to be.
- f. The Midland Valley Trail renaming to Tuckabatchee Trail is moving forward, going before City Council next week.
- g. Commissioner Deere arrived at 6:03 pm.
- h. The Muscogee Nation settlement work group met in December & January.
- i. Meeting about City of Tulsa opioid abatement response grant to have info in case nations want to apply to be partners.
- j. Met with some City Councilors about how to continue with the Tribal Relations. Decided they will try to have that group be a space for legislative to legislative communication, with GTAAC reserved for citizens to engage.
- k. Chairwoman Cohenour highlighted that Amanda Swope won a Pinnacle Award.



## VI. Committee Reports

- a. Native American Day Committee
  - i. Chairwoman Cohenour shared the committee will start meeting again in February. Looking at Guthrie Green as an alternate location if Dream Keepers Park is under construction.
- b. Dream Keepers Committee
  - i. Commissioner Matt Roberts reflected that GTAIAAC's last meeting was the Dream Keepers Awards Ceremony and all 11 awards had an honoree.
  - ii. City of Tulsa received a call from OETA to interview some recipients for Native American Heritage Month.
  - iii. Will have an updated list of recipients with 2025 honorees to reference as folks begin thinking about who to nominate for 2026.
- c. Education Committee
  - i. Commissioner Matt Roberts shared that Owasso Public Schools had a Native American Youth Summit, NSU at Broken Arrow will host a summit for the first time this spring.
  - ii. Commissioner Shari Williams reported that TPS Indian Education staff are gearing up for events to acknowledge and provide leadership for students. Preparing to honor graduating seniors.
- d. Public Relations Committee – no report
- e. Cultural Committee
  - i. Commissioner Dorcas Williams: Finished winter encampments and had 3k+ in attendance with representation from all Oklahoma tribes. All tribes were involved with Christmas giving.
- f. Parks Committee
  - i. Chairwoman Cohenour: Formed project management advisory committee with Parks Department, herself, and some members of TSW (landscaping company). Meeting every other week and determining who from different tribes need to be involved.
  - ii. Will be doing additional fundraising for art and interpretive signs and other elements that aren't covered by the grant. Will work with the City's Communications team to create a packet that can be used to fundraise.
  - iii. Will formalize which commissioners want to stay on the Parks Committee.
  - iv. Amanda: Mayor Nichols mentioned need for more funders at his Intertribal Executive Committee speech. Brut Hotel is very interested in being a partner with area tribes.
- g. Bylaws Committee
  - i. Vice Chair Carter directed commissioners to the current draft ordinance governing the GTAIAAC, approved by City of Tulsa Legal department.
  - ii. Changes since last version:
    1. Added resolution title.
    2. Eligibility for commissioners, American Indian ancestry traceable to a tribe ancestry as demonstrated by a tribal enrollment or CDIB card.



RESILIENCE AND EQUITY

- iii. No action tonight, only an opportunity for feedback. Can connect directly with Vice Chair Carter. The formal action will be to move this version forward for consideration to City Council.
- iv. After the ordinance changes are finalized, the committee will review the bylaws and begin work on revising those.
- v. Chairwoman Cohenour: GTAAC is one of the oldest commissions for City of Tulsa, Vice Chair Carter has done an exemplary job leading this process. Two other commissions have approached her to learn how GTAAC has approached this work.

**VII. Nomination Committee Presents 2026–2027 Officer Slate**

- a. Commissioner Matt Roberts shared that the Nominating Committee (including Commissioners Leaf Bolin and Lawrie) called everyone on the commission to form this slate, which was presented in November.
- b. 2026 – 2027 Officer Slate:
  - i. Chair
    - 1. Matt Roberts
    - 2. Joe Deere
  - ii. Vice Chair
    - 1. Daniel Carter
    - 2. Erica Waeltz-Carter
    - 3. Warren Harjo
- c. Commissioner Deere withdrew his name for Chair from consideration.

**VIII. Action: Elect 2026 – 2027 Officers**

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to elect Matt Roberts as the 2026 – 2027 Chair.
  - i. Commissioner Deere made a motion, Commissioner Laskey seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 16, Nay: 0
- b. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to reelect Vice Chair Carter as the 2026 – 2027 Vice Chair.
  - i. Commissioner Deere made a motion, Commissioner Laskey seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 15, Nay: 0, Abstain: 1 (Vice Chair Carter)

**IX. Old Business – no old business**

**X. New Business**

- a. Muscogee Nation in London today accepting historical documents from a baroness that were being reviewed for the Chickasaw Nation and Muscogee documents were found. Repatriation is very important to tribal nations.

**XI. Announcements / Public Comments**

- a. NCAI Update: Commissioner Deere was elected president, 106+ resolutions passed, working on tiered voting to equalize across the country.
- b. State of Indian Nations by NCAI: Feb 9, 2026
- c. The Human Rights Commission recognized Commissioner Guess Perdue as a Humanitarian of the Year on December 11, 2025.
- d. North Tulsa Cherokee Community Center Grand Opening: February 19 at 1pm



RESILIENCE AND EQUITY

- e. Next North Tulsa Cherokee meeting: Feb 3 at Tulsa Dream Center
- f. Public Comment:
  - i. Aaron Griffith addressed commission eligibility defined in GTAAC's bylaws and proposed using the definition of "Indian" established by Congress and federal courts. Also voiced concerns about the trail renaming and suggested naming it Lochapoka (Locv Pokv) to more inclusively recognize the community or using Muscogee spelling of Tuckabatchee. Tulsa School of Arts and Sciences will have their Title VI in-service meeting at Riverspirit Casino on 1/22. Aaron believes the Dream Keepers Park and Maple Ridge neighborhood could be the next destination district and be able to tie to Council Oak Park. Encouraged Tulsa to lead where state level is failing to work with tribes and adopt a hunting, fishing, and foraging agreement similar to the McGirt agreement.

## **XII. Adjournment**

- a. Chairwoman Cohenour entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
  - i. Commissioner Deere made a motion, Commissioner Dorcas Williams seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 16
  - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 6:44 pm.