



AIANEA National Council Teleconference Minutes

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

Respect, Harmony and Beauty

Council Members & Guests Attending:

President

Dr. Carol, Crouch, Oklahoma

Secretary

Melissa Sturdivant, Texas

Treasurer

Bill Parrish, Pennsylvania

Southeast Regional Representative

Melissa Allen, Virginia

on behalf of Debbie Henry, Georgia

West Region Representative

Susan Looper, Nevada

South Central Region Representative

Derek Kelso, Oklahoma

Midwest Region Representative

Deb Walchuk, Minnesota

Guests Attending

None

Past Presidents Attending

Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Iowa

Meeting Minutes:

- a. Meeting was called to order at 12:15 pm by Dr. Carol Crouch, President.
- b. Welcome, introductions & roll call
A roll call of those in attendance was taken by Carol and Melissa.
- c. Treasurer Report
Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch
Bill provided a report on the financials. Bill indicated that the audit was completed, but Pam would have to discuss that. Bill reported that the 990 form was filed with the IRS.
Motion to approve the financial report.
1st motion: Deb Walchuk
2nd motion: Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen
With no objections, the financial reports were accepted and recorded as presented.
- d. Minutes for Review
Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch
Carol asked if everyone reviewed the minutes distributed by Melissa. With there being no changes noted in the minutes, a motion was made to approve the June minutes as presented.
1st motion: Derek Kelso
2nd motion: Susan Looper
With no objections, the minutes were accepted and recorded as presented.
- e. National AIAN SEPM Report
Facilitator: Deborah Clairmont, NAIANSEPM

Deborah was not able to be on the teleconference as she is traveling and providing training this week. Information provided previously by Deborah is as follows:

FY17 AIAN Heritage Month Poster

1. Title: "Big Water of Life"
2. Theme: "Water is the Essential Element" (Ockeechobee means 'Big Water' in the Seminole Language). Contest ended in June and a section has been made.
3. Hopes to have the posters distributed to all states by the end of September.

f. National Tribal Liaison Officer Report

Facilitator: Barry Hamilton, National Tribal Liaison Officer

Barry was not able to be on the teleconference as he is traveling and providing training this week.

g. Regional Representatives' Reports

Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Regional Representatives

1. South Central Region Representative, Derek Kelso

| Upcoming Events | |
|--|--------------|
| • Cherokee NRCS Application & FSA Eligibility Workshop | August 2 |
| • Soil Health Workshop at Choctaw nation | August 10 |
| • Seminole Nation USDA programs workshop | August 15 |
| • Cheyenne & Arapaho Soil Health workshop – Phase III | August 9 |
| • 5 th Annual 2017 USDA Leadership and Nation to Nation Tribal Consultation Meeting | August 21-22 |

2. Southeast Region Representative, Melissa Allen

Melissa had no report for this meeting as she was an invited guest.

3. West Region Representative, Susan Looper

Susan commented on the vast wildfires occurring in her region. The Truckee Fire has impacted the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation and the Truckee River. Fires and flooding are widespread and she reported more than 100,000+ acres have burned in this region.

4. Midwest Region Representative, Deb Walchuk

a) Deb reported that her supervisor Nick Vira will be relocating to Washington for ASTC for Partnerships in August.

b) Deb reported that the National Food Sovereignty Summit is scheduled for October 2-5, 2017. The [First Nations Development Institute](#) and the [Oneida Nation of Wisconsin](#) will host the national [Food Sovereignty Summit](#) October 2-5, 2017, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This is an annual forum for sharing and collaboration to build healthy food systems within our communities. Go to www.firstnations.org/summit for info or to register.

h. Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (RTCAC) Updates

Susan commented that the West Region's RTCAC is planning their face-to-face meeting in Wyoming.

Carol commented that she heard from David Elliott and the East RTCAC has a meeting planned in the near future but does not know the details.

Carol added that she is working with the Regional Conservationist's office to help plan the Central Region's RTCAC meeting. Melissa asked about the details of what had been decided as she was not aware of any recent decisions. Melissa shared that she had attended the teleconference call for the Central Region's RTCAC, but no decisions were made on the call. Melissa added that she and Elder Ted Herrera (for Elder Loretta Metoxen) were on the call and the meeting lasted about five minutes. She added that both she and Elder Ted were disappointed as there were no minutes from the last meeting, the face-to-face, and so no action could be taken on the work from the last meeting. Carol shared that she is working with her State Conservationist and the Regional Conservationist and they are working to plan the face-to-face meeting in conjunction with the Intertribal Ag Council meeting planned in December. Melissa asked Carol if she would cc her in any future correspondence

regarding the planned RTCAC meeting for the Central Region so that she knows what's going on with the RTCAC. *Note:* Melissa serves as the AIANEA's Primary Representative to the Central RTCAC. Susan commented about the work underway with the West Region's RTCAC, and comments collectively stressed that our level of support has not been the same.

i. Committee Updates

Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Committee Chairs

1. Elder's Committee – Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen

- a) *AISES Sequoyah Fellow.* Tanya reported that all Elders have received the AISES Sequoyah Fellow honor. She has double-checked with the Elders and it appears that they have.
- b) *Elders Travel Scholarship Fund Policy.* Tanya indicated that she has been working on developing a budget to assist with travel of our Elders in support of AIANEA work. The draft policy was forwarded to the Council for review, and Tanya reviewed these guidelines. Attached at *Attachment A*. Susan asked if we will have a line item on the budget set aside for Elder Travel. Discussions followed. Tanya asked if we had planned to use the Frost Bank funds. Tanya added that if we have a max allotment of \$750 and project potentially three occurrences for a need to have this as a line item on the budget. Discussions followed.

Motion to approve the policy as presented for handling Elder Travel in support of AIANEA business.

1st motion: Susan Looper

2nd motion: Derek Kelso

With no objections, the Elder Travel Scholarship Fund Policy was accepted and recorded as presented.

- c) *Elders in the 21st Century book.* Tanya reported that recently Melissa reached out to the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation to seek funds and involvement of Lenardo DiCaprio in the book project.

Tanya shared that Melissa did an amazing job telling the story of our Association, Agency and our Elders and *their* story, and especially about the work underway with the book project. Tanya went on the share that immediately, Melissa heard back from the Foundation and they are very interested in our work, our Elders and their stories, and want to plan a meeting in the near future.

Tanya added that she is working to prepare a letter to the Elders to let them know of this progress and that the Foundation wants to meet with them. The Foundation has specific questions about climate change and food sovereignty and how this is affecting tribes, and both Tanya and Melissa have shared with them the work we do across Indian Country to help our communities address these concerns. But, they shared with LDF that our greatest teachers are our Elders. Melissa shared some of the work accomplished by our Elders such as the Climate Summit that Elder Ted attended and food sovereignty initiatives with Elder Loretta.

Tanya and Melissa hope that this will lead to bigger conversations and get our Elders' voices heard. Melissa added some background information about the Foundation and their work in support of Indigenous communities around the world. She discussed some of the grants they award, and she added that she initially asked about their helping with the publication of the book so that the book is affordable and not limited in its scope. Both Tanya and Melissa shared that the structure of the book has led to limiting page numbers just to keep the book affordable, and this is not something they want to do necessarily. Melissa added that if we can get grant money to help with offsetting the end costs, then we can get the book to a wider audience at a more affordable cost.

Susan added that she has found on tribal pages an opportunity to give a donation on tribe's webpages. She suggested that we include information like this on our webpage. Discussions followed.

2. Scholarship Committee – Susan Looper

AIANEA Scholarship Application. Susan shared that we are not ready to submit the application form at present, but are working on this. Susan has researched some of the other employee's association websites and their scholarship forms. Melissa and Susan feel that how some of the questions are posed, we can target the audience we are looking to reach and involve.

Susan and Melissa are working on each of the award categories and developing some guidelines for each to ensure we are compliant with IRS rules for these

j. New Business.

1. *IRS Filing Status.* Bill reported that the appropriate forms have been filed with the IRS. Carol added that she had met with Pam recently, and Pam reported that all the forms required by the IRS have been submitted. Carol also reported that the audit was completed in April. Carol relayed that Pam stated that because we are not a "charitable organization" nor a "foundation," some items are not required for 501(c)3 organizations. As we stand today, Carol stated that we are in good standing, and we have submitted the presently known items required by the IRS.
2. *Audit.* Related to the Bylaws, an audit was conducted. Melissa was the only person present at the audit but two other people did review the ledgers. Carol indicated that Pam will prepare a written report regarding the audit.
3. *Seeking an Outside CPA.* Carol met with Pam and stated that we have not had a formal audit in years and this is something that Pam needs to take place. We can have an audit conducted by a CPA, but we can go with their findings and recommendations. Susan asked about clarification regarding our status not being a charity or a foundation when the IRS puts us in one or the other categories. Susan also stated that we have a public webpage, and we have a tab accepting donations from the public. She is unsure how this is interpreted. Simply because it is a public webpage and anyone can join, this is soliciting donations and a "public charity." Carol stated that this is what Pam reported. Carol added that we need action by the National Council to take action on this: to consult with an outside CPA, to determine 1) are we filing correctly; 2) are we in compliance; 3) to provide us the rules for working based on our filing status; 4) what specific action is needed in order to award scholarships and be in compliance. Bill stated that he hopes that a CPA will do this *pro bono* or cheaply. Melissa stated that it may be costly initially because we have not had an audit in more than six years so there may be a lot of books to look through, but this should not be a huge expense in the long run, and it needs to be done. Tanya shared that we have never hired a CPA, and it is probably time that we did. Discussions followed. Tanya suggested that we keep it as general as possible to give you the flexibility to get this done. Susan suggested that Melissa and Pam find someone locally to them.

Motion to have the Audit Committee hire a CPA for the Association, to audit our financial records, and to determine 1) are we filing correctly; 2) are we in compliance with IRS rules; 3) to provide us specific rules for working based on our filing status; 4) and to determine what specific action is needed in order to award scholarships and be in compliance.

1st motion: Susan Looper

2nd motion: Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen

4. *Committees.* Carol asked Melissa if she had heard back from anyone regarding this and any standing committee versus ad hoc work. Melissa had sent this information to the committees but did not hear back. Discussions followed. Melissa will re-send this information to see about input.
5. *Budget.* Carol reported that there is a need for a budget to be developed. Bill provided a financial report. We have all of these financial accounts. Are these accounts needed or can we reconcile these and combine some of these which are not used? Carol asked where the Harold Bryant monies are located, and Bill was not sure of where these are located. Bill explained the breakdown of funds and income from last year, and we need to keep in mind that we do not have income from conferences right now.

Carol suggested that we need to consider aligning some of these accounts into a working checking account. This would help us manage our accounts and to have a working budget. Tanya added that when these endowment funds were initially established, they were intended to facilitate earning more interest and that we had planned to use only the interest earned to fund our scholarships, and we would retain the principal. Tanya shared that because this has not happened as intended then we need to look at this and see how we can better use our resources. Discussions followed. Carol added that for the last few years, the interest earned has not been able to fund one scholarship and we have had to go into the general account to do this. Susan commented that we need to be spending these monies, and be creative in raising funds and using donations received to help fund the scholarship program instead of relying on interest earned. Carol discussed options to sustain ourselves and she feels this budget will help us do this. Bill suggested that once we find an accountant, possibly this person can help us better manage these monies and our financial structure. Discussions followed and it was decided to table this for right now until we meet with a CPA before we take action on consolidating funds.

6. *National Council Vacancies.* Carol asked Melissa to discuss this. Melissa shared that we have two vacancies on the National Council at present if we follow the guidelines in the Bylaws. Melissa stated that the Council can appoint someone to fill these vacancies for the remainder of the terms. The SE position will end in 2018, so the person appointed for the remainder of the term would be in this position until December 2018.

Southeast Regional Rep – This position is currently filled by David Elliott but David feels that he cannot continue in this capacity. He had asked Debbie Henry to sit on his behalf and Debbie had been able to do this in the interim, but she asked that we seek out someone to permanently fill this position. Melissa Allen sat in for Debbie on this teleconference. The SE position will end in 2018, so the person appointed for the remainder of the term would be in this position until December 2018.

Northern Plains Regional Rep – This position was vacated when Cameron Clark took on the leadership role as 2nd Vice President.

Elections for regional representative positions for this year will occur for Northern Plains, Northeast and South Central positions. If elections are held, candidates would be nominated, and elections held by December and they would take office in January 2018. It is a two-year commitment for these positions.

Discussions followed. Melissa Allen asked questions about the regional rep positions. Melissa Sturdivant provided guidance in regard to the structure of what is expected and the informational flow to and from the states and the Association in each region. All members contributed to the discussion. Melissa Allen was asked if she would be interested in filling the Southeast position and she agreed to do this. Discussions followed regarding the schedule for the monthly teleconference. There is some flexibility in scheduling so this will be looked at in the future.

7. *AISES Sequoyah Fellowship Award.* Carol asked if we have met the vision by honoring our Elders with the award of the AISES Sequoyah Fellow, or do we want to continue this donation to the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) possibly to honor one of our members. Tanya stated that with the concerns about income and sustainability, she feels that we have met the vision, and we should continue with this initiative at present. Tanya added that in the future, we will have new Elders join us, so we will have this opportunity to contribute and honor them. But, at present, we forego these contributions. Susan asked about this award and Carol explained that it is an honor and a Lifetime pledge for the Elders membership as part of AISES.

Carol motioned that we have met the vision of honoring our Elders for a Sequoyah Fellow, and in the future, we will

1st motion: Susan Looper

2nd motion: Deb Walchuk

8. *Bylaws.* Melissa reported that she had provided an initial reading and review of the Bylaws. She extracted areas which were duplicates. She removed items which were not needed. She sent this out for review, but had only heard back from Susan to date. Melissa shared that the Preamble is in good shape. The Articles repeat a lot of what is in the Preamble so it was removed. Melissa plans to incorporate the suggestions from Susan and will send this out the Council.
9. *Articles of Incorporation.* Carol reported that the changes were made to the Articles and Pam sent this to Arizona. The state requires that someone resides in Arizona, and we will need to find someone to take over this role at the beginning of 2018. Millie has offered to continue in this capacity until the end of the year.
10. Carol extended her appreciation to those members and guests attending and with no further business, she asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting at 1:40 pm, Central.

1st motion: Susan Looper

2nd motion: Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen

Next scheduled meetings are planned for August 16 at 1 pm, Central.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Melissa Sturdivant, AIANEA National Council Secretary. Please respond to melissa.sturdivant@tx.usda.gov with questions or comments.

Elder Travel Expenses Policy (Draft)

At times, AIANEA Elders travel to events related to AIANEA, NRCS and/or AIANEA Elder responsibilities (excluding the AIANEA National Conferences). AIANEA covers travel expenses for the Elders to participate in the AIANEA National Conferences, although other Elder travel may be at a cost to the Elder. The following provides a proposed process and reimbursement parameters for travel that includes a cost to the Elder, if not reimbursed by their tribe or other organization.

Request Process

If an Elder would like to travel on AIANEA expense for events related to AIANEA, NRCS, and/or AIANEA Elder responsibilities, they will submit a request to the Elder Committee Chair one month or more prior to the event (a shorter timeframe may be considered in unique circumstances). The submitted request will describe the event and location and any responsibilities the Elder has related to the event. The request will show the round trip miles to be traveled and the number of days (full days and travel days) for the trip. If the Elder is seeking an advance payment (in part or in full) rather than reimbursement, that will be noted in the request submission. Flights may be considered for travel, although vehicle travel is preferred since these requests will typically be to locations near an Elder's residence. Approved reimbursement will be based on current NRCS allowable personal vehicle mileage, lodging at specific location at the federal government rate, and M&IE (food and incidental expenses). The Elder Chair will present the request with the cost estimate to the AIANEA National Council either at the next monthly teleconference or by email to the AIANEA President. The AIANEA National Council will approve or deny the request and the Elder will be notified accordingly.

Reimbursement (or advance payment) Allowed

If approved by the AIANEA National Council, the Elder will receive the approved NRCS mileage for use of a personal vehicle, lodging at the federal government rate for the specific location (or actual expense if less), M&IE at the current NRCS rate (travel days are paid at 75% and full days at 100%). The National Council will determine if an advance payment will be made, at what percentage and the process to submit that payment to the Elder prior to travel. The maximum reimbursement rate will be \$750.

**Elders and their families may choose to present a gift from them personally (ie: funeral situation) without AIANEA reimbursement.