



**LITTLE RIVER BAND OF OTTAWA INDIANS  
TRIBAL COUNCIL  
EMERGENCY MEETING  
THURSDAY MAY 15, 2025  
LITTLE RIVER BAND  
VIA ZOOM  
GOVERNMENT CENTER**

**OPEN SESSION  
MINUTES**

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians held a meeting at the Little River Band Government Center on May 15, 2025. Following are the minutes of that meeting.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Good afternoon, everyone, we are here for an emergency meeting on Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 3pm. Um in accordance with Article IV, Section 6(C) of the Tribal Constitution, the business to be transacted at this emergency open meeting shall be limited to the specific purposes stated below.

**I. Call to Order**

so, I call this meeting to order at three o'clock. Three on the dot.

**II. Roll Call**

Uh Recorder. Recorder to DiPiazza, can you do roll call, please.

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Tammy Burmeister is acting Ogema so that would be absent.

**Roll Call #**

T. Burmeister- Absent	G. DiPiazza - Present	M. Silvis - Present
R. Wittenberg - Present	J. Wolfe - Present	A. Metzger - Present
S. Crampton- Absent	P. Johnson - Present	S. Wever- Present

Quorum established.

Shirely Wever

Acting Ogema Burmeister: Oh, she's raising her hand.

Acting Speaker Johnson: She might be having a problem

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Ok I take that as you're here. Yes, Okay

Acting Speaker Johnson: Go ahead Shirley

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Oh, no she muted herself

Acting Speaker Johnson: Yeah, she did

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: I don't know what happened

Acting Speaker Johnson: Me either. Um ok onto

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Anyways. Oops, I'm sorry.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Sorry

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Seven present two absent we do have a quorum

Acting Speaker Johnson: Thank you. Sorry about that. I was like totally was skipping you. So, moving on to section three. Open session. Go ahead Councilor Metzger.

Councilor Metzger: Uh yeah just for uh...uh clarity is that Chantel sitting to your left

Acting Speaker Johnson: Yes

Councilor Metzger: All right. Thank you.

Councilor Silvis: And me

Acting Speaker Johnson: And there's also uh Chantel is on the cushion next to the wall. And then Misty is the one sitting actually next to me on the left

Councilor Metzger: All right. Thank you.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Yep. So, uh Shirley can you. Are you there Shirley at all? That's Ron. Okay. I guess we're going to have to go with it. Number

**III. Open Session**

**Acceptance of contract funds from the Department of Health and Human Services- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)  
And approving a modification to the Operating Budget MB2025-\_\_  
In the amount of \$19,823.00**

Um let me get right to you in a second. Jul- Councilor Wolfe go ahead.

Councilor Wolfe: I'm uncomfortable with counting Shirley's vote. If she's not able to respond.

Acting Speaker Johnson: She actually just dropped off the call. So, we are still at six.

Councilor Wittenberg: Oh

Acting Speaker Johnson: so, I'm going to assume she's going to call back in and try again.

Councilor Wolfe: Thank you

Acting Speaker Johnson: Yep. So, uh Janeen or Gina

Janeen Codden: Yes

Acting Speaker Johnson: I don't know who wants to

Janeen Codden: I will go first and then if you can if there are any issues. So, um yesterday we were on the agenda. Um for um the acceptance and approval of this amount of \$19,823. This is the remainder of the LIHEAP block grant. Um for the LIHEAP or low income uh home energy assistance program. Um right now. Um I believe it was last month. We X, we ended. We exceeded. Uh and spent the money that we have. And that was. \$226 or \$226,111. Was what we already had. That has been accepted. This \$19,000 that's on the table right now. Um would be that total of \$245,000. Um but. When I was, um was unable to uh finish. I wanted to be able to explain. That. Since. We depleted the...the funds, that money, the 226. We had to go. We went right from taking the applications on LIHEAP. And going ahead and taking it out of members assistance budget. Because we had quite a few applications. That were sitting there. Um this \$19,000. I added to, I believe there's 400 left. Um added to that that's what we would be able to put back into the LIHEAP. So, we're able to um assess what the applications that we have now sitting in our office. Or in Gina's office. Um and that is why we're, we had asked for an emergency. Just so we're able to. Get that back into the LIHEAP. So, we don't have to spend any, any. Money right now. For our out of members assistance and we can keep that where, you know, where it should be on for the outreach.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Thank you.

Gina Crotteau: Um as far as according to DTE. We've had 74 interventions. That means when I go in the portal. We are pulling bills. We're pulling shutoff notices and everything. So, we have our total of 74 since April 1st. Um I don't have the total for consumers energy. Um those are the only two portals that we have. So, we have a very high need. Uh we have two shutoffs scheduled for tomorrow that we have had to use non-LIHEAP funds. So, these tribal members will not be shut off tomorrow. Um those two are in accounting right now. And there are going to be overnighted. Also, at our expense. Um uh we have just received about 30 applications. On Monday alone. New ones. Um not all of them are for LIHEAP. Um the applications are coming in at a furious rate because of the high need. So, these funds are desperately needed. Um our budget of uh with the low-income energy program is goes up to \$600. And in some cases that is not enough to prevent a shutoff. Um even though we refer them to the state emergency um program. A lot of them are um denied. Um we do use other resources that family services has. Um you know that and assist in any way we can. But these funds are desperately needed at this time. Um until our new amount gets renewed October 1st.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Is that it?

Gina Crotteau: Yes

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay. Is anybody going to abstain from this item? Uh Julie or Councilor Wolfe and Metzger I'm assuming you have a question, correct?

Councilor Metzger: That's correct

Acting Speaker Johnson: Julie. Are you. Julie, are you going to abstain, or do you have a question? You're not coming through Councilor Wolfe.

Councilor Wolfe: I have a question

Acting Speaker Johnson: Thank you. Um go ahead Councilor Wolfe

Councilor Wolfe: When did we receive the notice that this award dollars were available?

Janeen Codden: The... the funds that we already, that we already spent?

Councilor Wolfe: No. When did we receive the notice that this \$19,000 was available?

Janeen Codden: When did you get notice email from-

Gina Crotteau: *inaudible*

Janeen Codden: April 30th. We got the, that was the notice of award.

Councilor Wolfe: And is it dropped in the account? And this is just a ministerial duty of accepting it.

Janeen Codden: Yes. It's just to accept it. We just need it to be accepted. And then we're able to. To access those funds. Because the whole block grant itself was already approved this part of it was not accepted.

Councilor Wolfe: Why can't you use them if they're in the budget?

Janeen Codden: Because it's, it's the way the. It's the way the grant. Or the way it was set up. I think I attached it.

Councilor Wolfe: They dropped the 19,000 in our account, but you can't use it.

Janeen Codden: No, I, we don't have an in our account right now.

Councilor Wolfe: When will we receive it?

Janeen Codden: We just were notified that it's there. The last part of the award is there.

Councilor Wolfe: That's very confusing. Can you clear that up?

Acting Speaker Johnson: Kathleen is on do you want me to-

Councilor Wolfe: The award became available on April 31st. April 1st, what date did you say?

Acting Speaker Johnson: April 30th. Um, hold on Julie, Kathleen is on so she might be able to answer that a little better

Janeen Codden: Yeah

Acting Speaker Johnson: A little clearer.

Kathleen Bowers: Thank you. Uh so, the award letter is dated April 30th. We did not actually get a letter until May 1st. Um, these funds are not funds that we expend necessarily. Um, they're put in an account, but you don't, we do drawdowns on it. So, it's not like they put \$19,000 in our account. We draw down those funds as would they are spent. We have... The council has to accept them. And then as the expenses go through, drawdowns are done every month for those accounts.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Does that answer your question, Julie? Councilor Wolfe.

Councilor Wolfe: So, the funding is sitting there and you're using tribal dollars at this point. Because why? Why aren't those people placed on hold? Or why aren't we accessing the dollars? Why aren't we drawing down? We had several months in January where the dollars were received, and we continued to spend them before they were accepted. So why is this case different?

Gina Crotteau: It was all accepted. We used it, it was all accepted and we spent every penny which we should spend.

Councilor Wolfe: I can't hear what you're saying.

Gina Crotteau: We should not be sending one penny back to the federal government ever. And so, this money was used, and we did have it.

Councilor Wolfe: That doesn't answer the question.

Gina Crotteau: The drawdown.

Councilor Wolfe: That doesn't answer the question.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Oh, hold on. Kathleen, can you answer that uh maybe better?

Kathleen Bowers: Yeah, we can only- um we can only spend the money once the council has accepted it into the budget. I... We cannot spend \$19,000 until the council accepts it into the budget. And that is a process that you have to get it the Tuesday before to the

Wednesday meeting and um it takes a little bit. So, we did it I did it the day I received it and... and went through the process.

Councilor Wolfe: But you have on self-governance dollars spent those before we accepted them.

Kathleen Bowers: I don't know what you're speaking about.

Councilor Wolfe: You've brought those items before, and they've had expenditures out of them, and it was just ministerial for tribal council to accept them. But I'm glad you're finally following the rules on this case. But again, I won't be supporting the item because we have no financial reporting for the month for the year of 2025. So we shouldn't continue to be doing budget modifications. I do understand the need of the tribal membership and the concern from the department, but there is a process. There's a constitutional mandate for reporting to be done, which has not been done. Thank you.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Councilor Metzger go ahead

Councilor Metzger: Uh yeah, I'll withdraw at this time. Mine was a totally different uh scenario. Thank you.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay. Uh any other questions for- Recorder DiPiazza

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Well, I was just going to make a motion on the item

Acting Speaker Johnson: Go ahead

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Motion approved **resolution 25-0515-109 acceptance of contract funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, low-income home energy assistance LIHEAP and approving modification operating budget MB 2025-21 in the amount of \$19,823.**

Councilor Wever: Support

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay, so we have sup- motion by Recorder DiPiazza, support by Shirley Wever. She's on the phone um listening to us. I do have one question though. Um you kind of already answered my questions for me, but you don't... do you have any more coming in for this particular thing for LIHEAP or is it just you're waiting until September now to get uh well, actually it'd be October for the new cycle?

Janeen Cadden: Yeah, once... once that \$19,000 plus that \$400, once that's depleted, then we will have to wait until um October.

Acting Speaker Johnson: So, with what you have right now, and you said you have 30, about 30, but they're not all LIHEAP, how soon is, do you think this money will run out and will you have to make another budget mod? I guess I'm curious in that sense, because

yes, we're coming into summer, it's warmer, so heating bills hopefully we won't have, um we're still going to have the electricity bills and what not especially that heat. So how soon are you expecting for this to run out, the way it's been going?

Gina Crotteau: With the need that it will run out soon, but what we will do that's different is be giving what is needed, what is the amount that's needed. If someone's getting to shut off for \$100, that's what the check request would be made out for

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay

Gina Crotteau: That's what they'll be approved for. So, we're giving the bare minimums so that more people can access the program and make it last as long as we possibly can.

Janeen Coddien: Because with the LIHEAP funds that she that we were doing before, we were giving that full amount, um so like \$1,200, \$1,800, so it was the, so we were able to help them get a little bit, uh just a few inches ahead um for that so.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay, go ahead Councilor Wolfe

Councilor Wolfe: Are you not bringing forward a supplemental appropriation to take care of this?

Acting Speaker Johnson: What do you mean?

Councilor Wolfe: Well, we have ARPA CFL dollars that are available, they could bring a supplemental appropriation to continue to fund this program so they can give the maximum amount. There's no reason to go to the minimum amount. We have plenty of funding and historically they're not getting all of their gross gaming revenue to fund programs. So, it would be no, they should be preparing and bringing forward a supplemental appropriation, so members don't have to do without. Yes, it is appropriate to use grant dollars first, but if we have tribal dollars that can support our members, definitely we should be using them. We shouldn't go for the first four months of the year and give everyone the maximum and then say, oh well we made a mistake, now your sister got \$1,200 but you only get the \$200 that you need. That's not fair. Should be equal distribution to all members. So, they should be preparing, the department, the staff should be preparing supplemental appropriation so they can continue. That's my comment.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Thank you. Any other comments? Recorder DiPiazza, can you take roll call please?

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza:

**Roll Call # 1**

R. Wittenberg- No	J. Wolfe – No	A. Metzger - No
S. Crampton - Absent	P. Johnson – Yes	S. Wever - Yes
G. DiPiazza - Yes	M. Silvis - Yes	T. Burmeister- Absent

Motion carried (4-3-0-2)

Four in favor, three against two absent. Resolution 25-0515-109 pass.

Councilor Wever: Uh thank you.

#### IV. Adjourn

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: I'll make a **motion to adjourn this emergency meeting.**

Acting Speaker Johnson: We do have a hand up and then you can.

Councilor Wolfe: Support

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay, she supported you.

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza: Oh

Councilor Wolfe: My hand was up to adjourn the meeting.

Acting Speaker Johnson: Okay. Once you're ready, Recorder DiPiazza, can you please do roll call?

Recorder Pro Temp DiPiazza:

##### **Roll Call # 2**

S. Crampton - Absent	P. Johnson- Yes	S. Wever - Yes
G. DiPiazza - Yes	M. Silvis - Yes	T. Burmeister- Absent
J. Wolfe- Yes	A. Metzger - Yes	R. Wittenberg- Yes

Motion carried (7-0-0-2)

Okay seven in favor, two are absent we've adjourned at 3:20pm



Chantel Gamelin,  
Transcribing Assistant



Gary DiPiazza,  
Tribal Council Recorder Pro Tempore