



Approved 05/05/21

**LITTLE RIVER BAND OF OTTAWA INDIANS
TRIBAL COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021
LITTLE RIVER BAND
VIA ZOOM
GOVERNMENT CENTER**

**OPEN SESSION
MINUTES**

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians held a meeting via ZOOM at the Little River Band Government Center on Wednesday, April 24, 2021. Following are the minutes of that meeting.

I. Opening Prayer

Gary DiPiazza, Tribal Elder, offered the Opening Prayer.

II. General Business

A. Call to Order

The regularly scheduled Tribal Council meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Speaker Pete.

Pete asked Gary to please do a roll call.

B. Roll Call #1

T. Guenthardt -Present	C. Champagne -Present	D. Corey -	Present
S. Crampton - Present	G. DiPiazza - Present	R. Pete -	Present
R. Wittenberg- Present	D. Lonn - Present	S. Lewis -	Present

Quorum established.

Others Present: Ogema Larry Romanelli, Lyle Door, Lynn Saunders, Kathleen Bowers, Antonio Romanelli, Caitlin Carey, Connie Waitner, Delia Ross, Diane Reeves, Grace Hendler, Kevin Tyler, Laura Echelbarger, Rebecca Liebing, Sandy Mezeske, Sara Agosa, Shelly Memberto, Susan Thull, Kimberly Crampton

C. Approval of Agenda

Councilor Guenthardt said I will make a motion to approve the agenda with the following two adds.

Speaker Pete told Guenthardt to go ahead Tom.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH THE FOLLOWING TWO ADDS: UNDER CONTINUING BUSINESS, GRANTS & CONTRACTS III A.1. AND UNDER IN CLOSED BUSINESS UNDER D.4.; by Guenthardt; supported by Lonn.

Speaker Pete asked is there any further discussion. Pete asked is anyone going to abstain. Pete asked Recorder Di Piazza to do a roll call.

Roll Call #2

T. Guenthardt -Yes	C. Champagne -No	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton - No	G. DiPiazza -	Yes	R. Pete -
R. Wittenberg-Yes	D. Lonn -	Yes	S. Lewis -
			No

Motion carried (6-3-0-0)

Recorder Di Piazza said the agenda for Saturday, April 24, 2021 has been approved.

D. Tribal Council Minutes

Speaker Pete said none were submitted. Right now during the, as I just started a roll call I got Sara Agosa's hand up. Go ahead Sara.

Sara Agosa said hi this is Sara Agosa, #4478. Agosa wondered if the items that were added to the agenda – was the revised agenda posted on-line because I didn't see any revisions and I have concerns with that. Agosa feels that members should be able to look at it to look at the updated agenda. Can you please confirm, thank you.

Recorder DiPiazza said as far as I know it was, it was posted two days ago.

Speaker Pete said okay so we are going to continue, thank you Gary.

III. Continuing Business

A. Grants & Contracts

- 1. Authorization for the Ogema to sign a Supplemental Funding Agreement for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) offered by the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) Office of Community Services (OCS)**

Speaker Pete said Lyle are you here to represent this?

Lyle Dorr responded correct. Jason had personal business he had to attend to today so I said I would cover for him on this topic. Dorr explained what this is, is this is supplemental funding. It's like a lot of the funding that came in last year that would just appear. Dorr said this appeared on Monday and we didn't know it was coming. So the department is good under pressure and they just send these things out. So this is just for public assistance, low-income people. It is available to families across the nation from what Dorr understands. It is not just local here so if someone needed help with something they can, whatever. Dorr said there aren't details to read about this at this point. We don't even know the amount that will be coming through but it is just permission for the Ogema to sign the agreement to participate in the program is essentially what it is and then they will be releasing the funds and Council would have to receive those funds into the Tribe as well. Dorr said that is all we know about it at this point. There is no match on it if that helps but that is about it.

Speaker Pete said okay, thank you Lyle. Is there any questions of Lyle?

Councilor Lonnn said she had a question.

Pete said okay, go ahead Diane.

Lonnn said Lyle when you get all of the information are you going to post this all over so that people out of the state and around will be aware of this>

Dorr responded it is not my program. It would come out of Family Services. Dorr senses it is going to be for everybody and not just like our nine or four county area because LIHEAP he thinks is for heating and thinks that goes across the nation as well. So that is why Dorr is saying what he is saying. Like Dorr said, there is not much detail to this and he doesn't know how to describe it. It is just a hey we got money in here and if you want it you got to sign this agreement and then they will tell you how much you get. We don't have to match it; we don't have to do anything else so it will benefit members regardless of how it comes through. We don't even know how much. It could be anywhere from, you know, \$10,000 or \$20,000 to, for the rental assistance it was over \$300,000, which is amazing; it was like what in the world. Anyway, Dorr said that is the status on it.

Lonnn said okay, thank you.

Pete said okay Lyle. Is there any further questions? Susan Thull.

Susan Thull said thank you, yes. Lyle, you did mention the rental assistance and she knows this doesn't have anything to do with that but asked once this goes to a program such as the rental assistance going to Housing, is that the end of Dorr's participation with that or do you?

Dorr answered correct. Dorr said it would be whatever department is managing that program.

Thull said okay, thank you very much.

Pete said okay, thank you. Is there any further questions?

Lonn said Mr. Speaker if there is no further questions, she will make the motion.

Pete said go ahead and make the motion, you have the floor.

MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 21-0424-104, AUTHORIZATION FOR THE OGEMA TO SIGN A SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR THE LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHWAP) OFFERED BY THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES (ACF) OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (OCS); by Lonn; supported by Tom.

Speaker Pete asked if there is any further discussion? Is anyone going to abstain? Go ahead Gary, do a roll call.

Roll Call #3

T. Guenthardt -Yes	C. Champagne -Yes	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton - Yes	G. DiPiazza - Yes	R. Pete -	Yes
R. Wittenberg- Yes	D. Lonn - Yes	S. Lewis -	Yes

Motion carried (9-0-0-0)

Recorder DiPiazza said Resolution # 21-0424-104 has passed.

Lyle Dorr said thank you everyone.

Pete said okay, thank you Gary, thank you Lyle.

B. Budget Modifications

Pete said there is none shown.

C. Approval of Budgeted Expenditure

Pete said there is none shown.

IV. Acceptance of Reports

A. Report of the Tribal Ogema

- 1. Operations Report** ☐ March 2021

V. Acceptance of Commission Reports

- A. Binojeeuk Commission** ☐ March 2021
B. Enrollment Commission ☐ March 2021-No Meeting (Cancelled)
C. Gaming Commission ☐ March 2021
D. Health Commission ☐ March 2021
E. Housing Commission ☐ March 2021
F. Natural Resource Commission ☐ March 2021

Speaker Pete said the Binojeeuk Commission submitted March 2021; Enrollment Commission March 2021 – no meeting, it was cancelled; Gaming Commission Report for March 2021 has been submitted; Health Commission March 2021 has been submitted; Housing Commission March 2021 has been submitted and the Natural Resource Commission March 2021 has been submitted.

VI. Acceptance of Committee Minutes and Other Entities

- A. Little River Casino Resort Preference Report** ☐ March 2021

Speaker Pete said Little River Casino Preference Report March 2021 has also been submitted.

VII. Old Business

- A. Enrollment Commission** ☐ January 2021

Speaker Pete said Enrollment Commission January 2021 has been submitted.

VIII. New Business

Speaker Pete noted none has been submitted.

IX. Concluding Business

- A. Next Meeting Date(s) - Wednesday, April 28, 2021**
B. Ogema Weekly Status and Business Update

Speaker Pete said this brings us to the Ogema Weekly Status and Business Update, Larry.

Ogema Romanelli said thank you Ron. The only business that I have to report on is last week, I believe it was Thursday, we had a COVID positive in connected with the Next Generation Learning Center so we had to shut down the Learning Center for about 14 days. So, hopefully we can reopen after a couple of weeks but all in all between the Resort and the Government and its entities, we are doing pretty good battling the COVID and doing a great job. I know Lynn Saunders is on here and her and Lee have been giving updates on what is going on with the Resort and I really appreciate everybody's hard work in keeping us safe. So, that's it for my update.

Speaker Pete said thank you Larry. Susan. Susan.

Susan Thull said thank you very much. Yes, Thull said I have a question for the Ogema. Thull said I was on the website and went into the Housing Department and they do have applications now up for what I believe that Lyle was just talking about, the assistance for renters and it does have the COVID relationship to it. There are three forms that are up now and Thull is wondering it looks like that program has been rolled out then. How have our members been notified of this. Thull just happened across it so.

Pete said Larry, before you answer, please, Pete stated he is getting some background noise somebody either has their phone not muted or they are talking in the background. Would you please mute your phone? Go ahead Larry.

Romanelli said okay, thank you. Romanelli said yes, its, people if they can get on the website. That is where a lot of the information comes from. The problem is, as Lyle just said, some of these monies come in very quickly because of the COVID, etc. Romanelli said they have extra monies that they give out to the tribes. There are very short timeframes so when they do come out we immediately try to put it on like Rapid River News and on the website and then we also try to put it in the Currents at the next available time but the Currents takes quite a while because by the time you put it in there and you get it mailed out and the people get it, it can be three or four weeks down the line. So the best way is to look at the website. Romanelli said we also try to post it in the buildings, in the Government buildings any new information on any kind of funding that we have. So the website is the best one. The Rapids River News, etc. and then we try to get it out. Then we also try to make notice of it at meetings, whether it be a Council meeting or whatever, such as this one.

Thull asked if she could follow-up on that please.

Pete said okay please, okay, go ahead.

Thull said okay, thank you. Larry, I appreciate your answer. Could I ask you please send that up to Rebecca and request that it goes out on the email blast and also on the Facebook page. I think that you will be able to reach more members that way and it is, if I remember the discussion about that, it is for all of the country so, you know, that would probably be the best way rather than just posting it in the buildings or on the website. May I ask you to please do that?

Romanelli responded sure, we can have that done.

Thull said thank you so much.

Pete said okay thank you Larry. Sara.

Sara Agosa, #4478, said I also have questions about the website and reports. I just checked and the last financial report that has been posted was in January and it is already April. So I just would like to know why there has been a delay in getting those reports up. Also too I have been waiting for the Operations Report, the newest one, but it is already late April so um, is there a deadline to have these posted. I feel it is really important for the members to have access to the most updated info. Thank you, those are my questions. I would like a response.

Pete said okay, Larry go ahead.

Romanelli said yeah, as we just noted the March 2021 Operations Report was just, was given to the Tribal Council so it should be posted. And the other information I forget which one it was, the Financial Report are posted on a regular basis as well. I think she said the last one was in January. They are posted normally quarterly so if you take January we should be end of April we should be getting another one here shortly.

Pete said okay, thank you. Any more questions? Well, that moves us on to Legislative Affairs update.

C. Legislative Affairs Update

Pete said do you have anything for Legislative Affairs Update? Any Tribal Council.

Recorder DiPiazza said I don't have anything at this time.

Pete said Shannon usually you have something so I am just calling ____ or you don't. Okay, I'm not hearing anything else for Legislative Affairs Update. That brings us to D. Public Comment.

D. Public Comment Period

Speaker Pete said Sara.

Sara Agosa, #4478, said recently the Ogema's reforecast proposal failed in Tribal Council Meeting so a work session was held last week and where we left it was that Tribal Council would have a closed session review of the Casino's budget. Agosa believes it was stated that it was going to be held today. Agosa said I have concerns with that. Agosa feels that members have the right to attend a budget work session whether it is Governmental or the Casino. And Agosa asked can she just get an update what happened today and even the rationale for having this in closed. Agosa did request that it was open as well as Cynthia and I think Shannon also supported it. So I would just like the rationale why this was put in closed and if we will have access to this information and when, thank you.

Pete said okay I will answer that for you. Pete said I got my hand up. Okay, we have never, we have always put the Casino's financial reports and we used to put them in private but we can no longer can it in private so we always . . . because we don't want the Casino's financial report and you know what it would do, it would all go out on the internet and in about four minutes from now it would be posted and I would see it on Facebook. We never do that, other casinos and you know that it would be done that way so it is always done in private. In fact I requested it be done in private so that's . . . that is the only answer I'm going to give you. Sara, go ahead.

Sara Agosa said I have a few other comments as well. But just in response to that there is a difference between putting reports on the website that potentially could be shared although it is secure so I think there is very little risk as opposed to having a work session on a topic that should be open to members. Agosa feels that we do have the right to have access to the Casino's budget. Agosa said so you are saying all of that is private and we don't have access to it at all?

Pete said I am saying that all of that is received by private by Tribal Council. That is what I'm saying to you and you are going to ask me all kinds of questions and I'm still going to give you the same answer. I have never, never, in my years as Assistant AGM or the AGM put that in public conversation, ever did we do that. Now it wants to be done, I don't think, I'm not going to support that. Pete said okay, any further questions before we close. Go ahead Sara.

Sara Agosa, #4478, said her next question is about another agenda item that was posted a couple weeks ago. It's the Little River Casino Resort and the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Services Contract. It was put in closed and the agenda item actually references the Oversight Task of 2010 in the description. Agosa said I would like to request that this is moved to open and also too, rationale or response why this was put in closed to begin with. Agosa feels that any contract with another governmental agency most definitely should be open to begin with. Additionally, why now we are suddenly create a contract with the IRS Commissioner if it was supposed to be in 2010 so Agosa would like a response, thank you.

Pete said okay, the IRS Commissioner . . . we put that in closed because again we have always again put it in closed and the other thing that you asked is the Commissioner because they couldn't get here because of COVID and Pete thinks that is because they couldn't get here and that is the way it is. It is going to stay there. Once again, Sara.

Sara Agosa said well that was another question I had, if this was a renewal or if this was a new contract between Little River Casino and the IRS. So you are stating this is an annual renewal. Agosa just wanted to make sure she is clear and she understands this.

Pete said no, it isn't an annual renewal. This was a continuation of what we have already agreed to with the IRS from the Resort and it was continually, it was going to continue the way it is because they couldn't get here and they can't here on something that they would normally do in person. Okay, Pete said I'm going to take one more from Sara. Go ahead.

Ogema Romanelli said can you take one from the Ogema please?

Pete said absolutely.

Romanelli said from Larry, Larry Romanelli.

Pete said he is going to start with Sara, she had her hand up again. Sara.

Sara Agosa said well I just want to say that does not make sense to her. She does not feel that it adequately answered her question but she will follow up with her Councilors. Agosa said she would like to make another comment and this is just her opinion that she really doesn't feel comfortable having Saturday Tribal Council Meetings. Agosa doesn't feel that it works and she hopes in the future Tribal Council reconsidered the weekend sessions. Thanks. That's Agosa's comment.

Pete said okay, thank you. Larry you have the floor.

Ogema Romanelli said where are we at?

Someone said Larry and laughed.

Romanelli said yes.

Pete said it is your turn Larry.

Romanelli said okay, thanks. As the Ogema, he did submit something to the Tribal Council earlier having to do with invoices to Big Fire whereas there were three different signatures that were, well actually four, one, there were signatures and he is asking this now as a Tribal citizen that there were signatures on the check prep, or the check requests that were signed by the Speaker which was Joe Riley, Speaker Ron Pete and the Recorder which was Gary DiPiazza and then there was a Tribal Councilor Shannon Crampton that signed the check requests. Romanelli said he thought he read that it was only the Speaker or the Recorder and in other times it would be the Speaker and Recorder that has to sign the approvals. Romanelli said he didn't really get a clear answer back. Romanelli just wanted to state it for the record so that it is in the minutes that the question was asked and he will leave it at that for now.

Pete said okay, thank you.

Romanelli said thank you. Yep, thanks Ron.

Pete said alright. I'm not seeing any more hands up so right now.

Councilor Lonn said Ron, I would like to say something.

Pete said go ahead Diane.

Lonn said it is written that the Recorder and the Speaker are the only ones that can sign checks. We Councilors do not have that ability, thank you.

Pete said okay, Sara.

Sara Agosa, #4478, said she just has one additional question that she overlooked on her list. Agosa did not see the agenda and calendar for next week yet and she personally likes to look at it on Fridays just to plan out her week and she just wondered when it will be posted. Thank you.

Pete said okay, so . . .

Recorder DiPiazza said do you want me to answer that.

Pete said just a minute, Pete is going to answer her because . . .

DiPiazza said do you want me to answer that, I am the Recorder.

Pete said okay, go ahead Gary.

Recorder DiPiazza said you can't post the agenda, it didn't get posted yesterday because we are having a meeting today. So, it will be posted later today after the meeting because even in your statement you said you went on the website and you didn't even find the updated agenda for this week. It will be posted later this evening. It would have been too confusing for everybody, which there is your answer.

Pete said okay, thank you Gary.

Agosa said thank you.

Pete said alright Sandy.

Sandy Mezeske said thank you Ron, Sandy Mezeske, #0018. This is a question for the Speaker and the Recorder and Brad. Mezeske said she did request invoices and copies of checks. Do you know if that request has been granted?

Pete answered no, I have not granted that request because he is looking into it if we can even release some of that stuff because have to look over all of it to see if there was any private information in there that I got . . . it is going to take me some time. So that's . . . Pete has to look it all over first Sandy. Pete is the one holding it up because I'm not really holding it up because he needs to look through it and make sure there is no private information between Tribal Council and Big Fire.

Mezeske said she appreciates that Ron and when you have that done just let her know.

Pete said he is going to try. You know what, I don't have a whole lot of time but he is going to try to get that done.

Mezeske said thank you Ron.

Lonn said Ron, she has a correction. Ron.

Pete said Diane.

Lonn noted that she said the Recorder and Speaker can only sign checks, it is really invoices. She made a mistake.

Pete said okay, thank you.

DiPiazza said he will reference people to . . . oh, he wants in the cue Ron, sorry.

Pete said go ahead.

DiPiazza said it is in our Budget & Appropriation Regulations, Chapter 1, Resolution # 20-0930-276, Section 3, 2d. for Tribal Council. Actions of \$1.00 - \$2,500 require authorization for the Speaker or the Recorder; actions of \$2,501-\$25,000 require authorization from the Speaker and the Recorder; actions over \$25,000.01 and above by the Speaker or Recorder after authorization by Tribal Council Resolution, so.

Pete said okay, thank you. Delia.

DiPiazza said who?

Delia Ross said she didn't have her hand up.

The purpose of closed session is to discuss business matters considered privileged or confidential involving consideration of bids/contracts, pending legal issues, and/or personnel matters.

Pete said can I get a motion to move us out of the first open session.

DiPiazza said you aren't even muted.

Guenthardt said sorry.

Pete said am I muted?

Romanelli said no you are not Ron.

Pete said okay, I said I don't see any hands up, can I get a motion to move us out of the first open?

Councilor Lonn said I will make a motion to go out of first open.

MOTION TO GO OUT OF THE FIRST OPEN; by Lonn; supported by Lewis.

Speaker Pete asked if there is any further discussion? Is anyone going to abstain? Gary, do a roll call.

Roll Call #4

T. Guenthardt -Yes	C. Champagne - Yes	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton - Absent	G. DiPiazza -	Yes	R. Pete -
R. Wittenberg- Yes	D. Lonn -	Yes	S. Lewis -

Motion carried (8-0-0-1)

Recorder DiPiazza said we have adjourned first open at 3:30 p.m.

XI. Open Session

Recorder Pete asked if he can get someone to make a motion to move us into our second open.

Councilor Guenthardt said so be it.

Pete said okay Tom.

MOTION TO GO BACK INTO OPEN SESSION AT; by Guenthardt;
supported by DiPiazza.

Roll Call #5

T. Guenthardt -Yes	C. Champagne - Yes	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton - Absent	G. DiPiazza -	Yes	R. Pete -
R. Wittenberg- Yes	D. Lonn -	Yes	S. Lewis -

Motion carried (8-0-0-1)

Recorder DiPiazza said we are in second open at 4:27 p.m.

Pete said okay, thank you Gary.

A. Items moved from Closed to Open Session

Speaker Pete said Gary do we have anything to move from Closed Session into Open?

Recorder DiPiazza said yes we do.

MOTION TO MOVE ITEMS OR RESOLUTION #21-0424-105 AND 106, MOTION AND ROLL CALL ONLY; by DiPiazza.

Recorder DiPiazza said hold on a minute. DiPiazza said he needs to alter that.

Pete said okay.

DiPiazza said anyways.

MOTION TO MOVE RESOLUTION # 21-0424-105 AND 106, RESOLUTION, MOTION AND ROLL CALL; by DiPiazza; supported by Guenthardt.

Speaker Pete asked if there is any further discussion? Is anyone going to abstain? Gary, do a roll call please.

Roll Call #6

T. Guenthardt -Yes	C. Champagne -Yes	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton - Absent	G. DiPiazza - Yes	R. Pete -	Yes
R. Wittenberg- Yes	D. Lonn - Yes	S. Lewis -	Yes

Motion carried (8-0-0-1)

Recorder DiPiazza said those items have been moved.

Pete said okay, thank you Gary.

The following items were moved from Closed to Open Session.

MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 21-0424-105, APPROVING CONTRACT BETWEEN LITTLE RIVER CASINO RESORT AND SPARKS BBQ OF MANISTEE, LLC, LEASING SPACE IN THE RESORT FOODCOURT; by Lonn; supported by Guenthardt.

Roll Call #C-2

R. Wittenberg – No	S. Crampton - Absent	G. DiPiazza –	Yes
D. Lonn - Yes	D. Corey – Yes	C. Champagne –	No
T. Guenthardt - Yes	R. Pete - Yes	S. Lewis -	No

Motion carried (5-3-0-1)

MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 21-0424-106, APPROVING CONTRACT BETWEEN LITTLE RIVER CASNO RESORT AND NEWPORT GROUP, INC RESTATING RESORT – 401K PLAN; by Lewis; supported by Champagne.

Roll Call #C-3

R. Wittenberg – Yes	S. Crampton - Absent	G. DiPiazza –	Yes
D. Lonn - Yes	D. Corey – Yes	C. Champagne –	Yes

T. Guenthardt -	Yes	R. Pete -	Yes	S. Lewis -	Yes
Motion carried (8-0-0-1)					

This concludes the items moved from Closed to Open Session.

XII. Adjourn

Speaker Pete said now I need a motion to move us out of the second open.

Councilor Guenthardt said so be it.

MOTION TO MOVE US OUT OF THE SECOND OPEN; by
Guenthardt; supported by Lonn.

Speaker Pete asked if there is any further discussion? Is anyone going to abstain? Gary, do a roll call.



Roll Call #7

T. Guenthardt -	Yes	C. Champagne -	Yes	D. Corey -	Yes
S. Crampton -	Absent	G. DiPiazza -	No	R. Pete -	Yes
R. Wittenberg -	Yes	D. Lonn -	Yes	S. Lewis -	Yes

Motion carried (7-1-0-1)

Recorder DiPiazza said we have adjourned second open at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

 Kathleen Bowers Executive Assistant	 Gary Di Piazza, Tribal Council Recorder
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