

*Little River Band of Ottawa Indians
Biskaabiyang Committee*

Open Meeting Minutes for Friday, June 25th, 2021 at 11:00am EST via Zoom

I. Opening Prayer

II. General Business

A. Call to Order

This open meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m by vice-chairperson, Nikki Nelson.

B. Roll Call

Nikki Nelson - present	Chelsea Densmore - present	Al Metzger - present	Vicki Wells - present
Delia Ross - present	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Attendees: None.

C. Approval of Agenda

Vicki Wells, made a motion to approve the agenda and Secretary, Chelsea Densmore, seconded that motion.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Agenda approved 5 in favor and 0 against.

D. Meeting Minutes

Secretary, Chelsea Densmore, made a motion to approve the minutes from 05/28/21 and Vicki Wells, seconded that motion.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Minutes approved 5 in favor and 0 against.

E. Reports

None submitted

III. Old Business

A. Vote for Temporary Chairs

DISCUSSION

Vice-Chairperson, Nikki Nelson, introduced the topic and explained that this item has been on the agenda and postponed in the past. This was due to our two vacant seats on the committee, and wanting to wait for a full board to vote. Nikki acknowledged that she is acting Chair (current Vice-Chair), but that there is no current Chair. Nikki asked what the committee wanted to do, as she hadn't heard of any requests for appointment to the committee.

Vicki Wells asked if we should be reaching out and encouraging people to apply, and Nikki agreed. Nikki also stated that she hasn't seen any advertisements or postings for the open vacancies, and that someone could make a facebook post on the multiple sites to notify people of the vacancies. Nikki offered to reach out to Rebecca Groh to have the vacancy posted on the rapid river news, because if people don't know there are open seats, they won't apply.

Vicki commented that she couldn't find it online and Chelsea agreed that she hasn't seen it as well, and that it's not in the currents, as the currents haven't been printed in a few months. Chelsea recalled previous discussions on this, and commented that it could have been missed due to the changes in Council. Chelsea offered to email the Tribal Council Recorder to ask for the vacancies to be posted.

Nikki asked what the committee wanted to do. Did they want to vote on new chairs or postpone the item again.

Delia suggested postponing again and waiting for advertisements, and voting at the next open meeting if there were no additional participants. Vicki agreed.

Al stated that the sooner we get it done, the better off we are as a committee. Al explained that he didn't see much changing in the next month, or two weeks, and that if the committee wanted to vote on it today, he was good with that.

Vicki agreed that Al had a good point, and that if we wanted to vote today, she was open.

Nikki stated that she was indifferent.

Delia stated that things have been going well, and she was good with voting for at least the chair and the secretary to have that done, and we could always pick up a vice chair later. Nikki reported that she thought we had to vote on all three.

Elder Committee Member, Al Metzger, made a motion to vote for placement of officers and Secretary, Chelsea Densmore, seconded that motion.

VOTE CHAIR

Al Metzger, made a motion to nominate Nikki Nelson as Chair and Chelsea Densmore seconded that motion.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Motion passes 5 in favor and 0 against.

VOTE VICE-CHAIR

Al Metzger, made a motion to nominate Chelsea Densmore as Vice-Chair, and Nikki Nelson seconded that motion.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Motion passes 5 in favor and 0 against.

VOTE RECORDER

Delia Ross, made a motion to nominate Vicki Wells as Secretary, and Al Metzger seconded that motion.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	

Motion passes 5 in favor and 0 against.

IV. New Business

A. Sacred Medicines Mailing

DISCUSSION

Nikki opened the topic and stated that there was a spreadsheet online showing the budget for this item. (Chelsea Densmore screenshared the budget) Nikki recalled that there was previously a work session on this item with Council and that they had advised us to create a solid plan for this mailing, to not send it out to the entire membership (as it would be a huge cost and some might not want to participate), and to send it upon request. We had previously discussed 50 citizens to start with that can request a kit full of our four sacred medicines (semaa, sweetgrass, cedar, sage) in a little mesh drawstring bag with a card attached that discusses what the medicine is for, the color coordination (it’s place on the medicine wheel), and the anishinaabemowin language (name) of that medicine. During discussions, it had been mentioned (maybe Vicki) that it would be cool to send a medicine bag with it. NOCBAY has kits already cut out and easy for people to put together, and it comes with cones and things to personalize it. We priced out in the spreadsheet to do 50 of those. Two of the medicines are able to be gathered by the committee, and a tribal citizen, Wyatt, donated the other two medicines that we needed, so there was a zero cost for medicine. Even with postage, we are probably looking at a maximum of \$300. Nikki explained that we would have a zoom workshop to go with the kit, and we could start with increments of 50 to keep it manageable.

Vicki stated that she sent a link for amazon to some cheaper bags. Nikki reported that she wasn’t sure if amazon was a vendor, but that she would look into it, and that was why she put the oriental trading cost on the spreadsheet (because oriental trading is a vendor).

Chelsea screenshared the bags and discussed the cost savings of using amazon (and buying in bulk) and the long term benefit, as we are doing 50 now, but it’s very likely that we will be making more soon.

Nikki and Vicki both agreed. Chelsea reported that with the Amazon cost, it would only be \$3.75 per group of 50 which would be a huge savings compared to the \$60 for oriental trading. Chelsea also discussed liking the idea of it just being a small amount of each medicine, as it allows for an introductory kit and the perfect amount to create the medicine bags.

Nikki asked if there were any additional comments. Nikki also mentioned that there isn’t a current date for purchasing yet, and asked if a vote was needed with a specific number attached (to use the budget) or if it could be stated to approve under a certain amount.

Chelsea stated that it seems reasonable to vote on a capped budget, so that it’s approved up to a certain amount. Nikki agreed, and explained the different choices for the NOCBAY bags, and the

benefits of the one chosen. Such as the personalization, size, and quality. Nikki also acknowledged that the medicine bags would be the only recurring cost, as the bags and paper would be purchased once in bulk and saved for future orders, and stated that the budget had not been utilized much yet this year.

Chelsea screenshared the medicine pouch.

Nikki explained that when you're first starting to seek out things, it's nice to have something you want to wear and you're proud of. So this would give them a great medicine pouch and one they're proud to wear, because the other one is a more simple design.

Al asked what they would price out for 100 and Nikki stated that she wasn't sure, but that contacting them might be a good idea. Vicki agreed and stated that it would be beneficial to call because after you explain who you are and where you're from and what you're doing, they might be willing to offer a discount to buy it in bulk. Vicki also suggested a talking and teaching via zoom to put them together. Chelsea agreed.

Nikki stated that she was comfortable doing 100, as she feels we would definitely get that kind of response.

Vicki commented that NOCBAY has nice kits because she purchased stuff from them before.

Al stated that they are very open to tribal members, especially coming from a committee, and that we should contact them. Al also stated that we might need our federal ID number.

Nikki stated that she could call, and also asked when Wyatt was planning to drop off the donations. Vicki stated that he was dropping it off soon to historic preservation.

Nikki asked when we were planning to gather the medicines, and stated that Chelsea had just stepped away (as said in a comment via zoom) but that she was hoping to gather the medicines too, and was coming up soon. Nikki stated that she assumed Vicki and Al may want to come as well.

Chelsea asked if Nikki took a vote for the budget and Nikki stated that everyone has stated they are on board and supportive, but that we would have to wait to vote to get the finalized number for the purchase, because we would be increasing the quantity (50 - 100).

B. Summer Workshops and Teachings

DISCUSSION

Nikki opened the topic for discussion and asked if anyone had any ideas in mind, or requests.

Delia mentioned recalling a discussion about recognizing the boarding school children that have been found, and asked if we could do something to recognize those children.

Nikki agreed and mentioned that some other tribes have been doing some virtual discussions, and educational/awareness. Nikki then reported that the department of interior is now investigating all boarding schools and sites and records, which means that it's going to bring a lot of stuff up for people and she'd like to do an online platform of healing. Nikki discussed having spoken with Susan Cross, who works helping with boarding school survivors and has helped with a lot of exhibits at the ziibiwing center. She is also a tribal member at Saginaw Chippewa tribe and her children are tribal members here

at Little River, so she has that connection with our community. She says that she is willing to do something online. Nikki discussed wanting to do something with boarding school survivors, and family members, and those who were affected by boarding schools, and seek out participants who may be interested in sharing their knowledge and stories. Nikki stated that she wanted someone who can lead it, and had the education and experience to help answer questions and lead the discussion. Nikki opened the floor for comments.

Delia stated that she thought this was a good idea because they are going to find more children, and it's going to be hard and bring up bad memories, so having a forum where we can talk and discuss and have our feelings known would be something good for our spirits.

Nikki stated that she would work on figuring out a date and reported that Susan Cross is very willing to do this, and Nikki didn't feel that this would have much budgetary issues.

Nikki asked if anyone else had any ideas, or if she should continue, as she had some other ideas.

Chelsea asked if Nikki knew anything about Noelle Cross's work with the elders and how the committee could help, as this had been brought up in previous a previous work session.

Nikki stated that she had spoken to Noelle and that she is organizing a similar medicine pouch program, but that it would come from her budget and not ours. Because Noelle wanted her program to participate in the medicine pouch teaching, but that she would obtain all the resources, and we could partner during the teaching. Chelsea reported understanding that they might participate or be involved in the zoom teaching, but Noelle would purchase her own resources, and Nikki agreed.

Nikki also discussed that the service is bad at the community center, but that we could possibly do the teaching from there, and use their big screen to connect the online citizens with the elders, so that the elders can see everyone and feel more together.

Chelsea mentioned that she recalled Noelle had mentioned doing ribbon skirts or a beading class, and she would love to partner with Noelle's program, because trying to zoom the elders teaching so that we can share their stories and connect the elders on online citizens would be very cool.

Vicki agreed. Nikki also mentioned that Noelle was hoping to have a featured traditional meal for the elders on occasion and she told Noelle to contact Vicki, who was very supportive. Vicki also mentioned wanting to do a teaching on how to traditionally smoke a fish at home, and on a small scale.

Nikki agreed and mentioned wanting to do a video showing how to harvest sumac and make a sumac and strawberry drink, but stated that these don't always have to be a live zoom, but can be recorded and posted online to be viewed when it's convenient to members. Nikki also mentioned that she (and some other committee members) have indigenous children's books, and a good idea would be to partner with Noelle and the elders, to record them reading the books to children. Nikki stated that she could include pictures in the video so the children can see the pages, and it would be great to record the elders and make that connection between the elders and children. Nikki went on to state that a good idea would be to have an indigenous adult book club, and maybe meet every two weeks and discuss the book. Nikki stated that the Firekeepers Daughter book would be an awesome one to start with.

Vicki agreed that this sounded great. Nikki went on to explain that we could have people sign up and be sent a copy of the book. Chelsea screenshared Amazon, and Nikki discussed the low cost of \$10.23 per book and free shipping with Amazon, and it would be a low cost, low effort, good idea.

Chelsea stated that she loved the idea of an adult indigenous book club, because its a way for people to engage and connect, which is something we so need in our tribe. With covid right now and trying to connect the citizens, nine-county and outlying, and to remember that we are all a tribe. Firekeepers Daughter just came out and is really popular right now, and we could do a chapter a week or however often, to discuss the different chapters and make those connections. With it being only \$10, it would be a low cost, and with prime shipping, i'm not sure how that would work with council, because we're not able to make the purchases, but she did really like the idea of sending it to those who don't already have it or can't afford it; she thought it was a really good idea.

Chelsea asked with the changeover, how that worked with liaisons. Did they re-vote all or just the ones that have left. Nikki reported that they normally revote all spots and that they can stay on if they wanted. Chelsea asked if they wait to do that until everything is done, and Nikki stated yes, but that we didn't have much going on so it shouldn't affect us much. Nikki also stated that we're not spending much and it's from preferred vendors, so that should be ok.

Chelsea summarized the list; boarding schools virtual discussion, medicine bag zoom with the elders, vicki smoking fish, elders reading to children, and an indigenous adult book club. Chelsea asked if anything was missed from the list.

Nikki thanked Chelsea and stated that if no one else had any discussions for this topic we could move on to concluding business.

V. Concluding Business

A. Items of information

No items of information.

B. Council Liaison – updates

No Liaison's in attendance.

C. Public Comment Period

No public in attendance.

VI. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn this open meeting of the Biskaabiiyang Committee was made by Vice-Chair, Chelsea Densmore, and seconded by Recorder, Vicki Wells, and Chair, Nikki Nelson, adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m. EST, which passed 5 in favor and 0 against.

Nikki Nelson - yes	Chelsea Densmore - yes	Al Metzger - yes	Vicki Wells - yes
Delia Ross - yes	<i>Vacant Elder Seat</i>	<i>Vacant Seat</i>	