

2020 has been a challenging year for all of us. Our last “regular”, “in-person” meeting was held at the Black Bear Casino on February 21, 2020. Since then, we were on hiatus until August, 2020 at which time we began to reconnect and restore our delegate work as a group. September 11, 2020 was our monthly full delegation Zoom meeting. It has been working well for our group as we continue to work in this way.

As delegates, we are discussing items that we have listed as priority items at each meeting. We have developed committees to work on the smaller projects that are necessary. They are: Survey, Finance, Education/Engagement, Drafting, Facilitation and TEC. Much of our work is done in the large group setting and delegates are doing their homework at home and in local group discussions between large group meetings.

We respectfully submit this Request for Action:

1. Line item the remaining \$9,589 (after 16K line item to the survey committee) to the MCT Constitution Reform Delegation. The MCT Constitution Reform Finance Committee shall make requests to the disbursement of the \$9,589 for the following uses 1) marketing/printing 2) Travel Stipends up to \$100 per person for one meeting (this is particular for the people who are not already being financed to travel by their Band Councils), and 3) Reimbursement for office supplies to individual delegates.
2. When the MCT seeks COVID relief funds to seek funds for the MCT programs to also seek funds for the MCT Constitution Reform Delegation.



Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution Reform Project



Representing the Six
Recognized Reservations
2019/2020 Status Update



Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution Reform Project 2019/2020 STATUS UPDATE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution Reform Project, consisting of delegate representatives from all six reservations, will review current MCT Constitution, present citizen/member priorities and recommendations for change, broadly engage, educate, and obtain input from the citizen members

of each of the reservations, our Tribal Executive Committee and Reservation elected officials of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

PRIORITIES OF OUR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES / GOALS

Each of our tribal communities continue to support the following top five priorities:

- 1) Treaties/Governance
- 2) Enrollment/Membership
- 3) Culture
- 4) Education
- 5) Natural Resources



Delegate Representatives will continue to present the current Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Constitution to all members of their communities/bands to educate and engage MCT Band members on each article element of the Constitution, receive and share with our Tribal elected official the input, voice, and priorities of our people. To create and recommend a relevant Constitutional document representative of a structure that will serve all its' members.

ROLE OF EACH DELEGATION

- To seek and engage our Tribal members.
- Education of our people on all elements of our current MCT Constitution.
- To gather designated delegates from each reservation on a monthly or as needed basis to share input from our home reservations, to collectively build and recommend a revised/amended Constitution document.

OUR GOALS
PROGRESS TO DATE
2019/2020

Due to COVID19 Pandemic, engagement limited

TREATIES/GOVERNANCE



Treaties are the ultimate law of the land

Opportunities / Challenges / Questions facing our efforts

- Do we remain under the current governing structure, six bands, one Tribal Executive Committee? What is the value, do we continue to see value in this governance structure?
- Do we create a Confederacy/Federation of Bands / Sovereign – independent yet aligned?
- Consider a formal Charter document / Proclamation of Sovereignty

ENROLLMENT / MEMBERSHIP

The Bands continue to discuss / debate position on enrollment

No presented solutions nor agreements as of this date

- Presentation by Red Lake on their enrollment efforts, where are things today?
- Wilder Research Population Projections / Impact on Enrollment
- MCT Resolutions/Restore Full Blood Status

CULTURE

Invocation always

Clan system (also utilized in census building process)

Seven Traditional Teachings

Language

EDUCATION

Current Engagement at each reservation / urban area

Social Media / Zoom / Facebook / Tribal webpages

Create Band specific, core, foundational information

MLBO / creating curriculum / sharable documents

What is our Constitution? What is Sovereignty?



Zaagibagaang uses Facebook, web to educate tribal members on MCT Constitution

NATURAL RESOURCES

We speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

**COMMITTEE WORK
DISCUSSIONS / ACTIONS
2019/2020**

ESTABLISHED COMMITTEES (see attached progress documents)

Survey Committee	Organized / Initial draft
Finance Committee	Established / Organized See requested action
Education / Engagement Committee	Established / Solid Direction
Drafting Committee (See CONSTITUTION REFORM BELOW)	Established / Presented
Facilitation Committee	Leadership / Agenda Setting
TEC Committee	Liaison to TEC Bridging Communication / collaboration/ Cooperation / agreement / support

CONSTITUTION REFORM (see attached documents)

MCT CONSTITUTION PROCLAMATION	Drafted
PREAMBLE	Organized / Draft Presented thru committee to Delegation
ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION / PURPOSE	February 2021 Agenda
ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP / ENROLLMENT	Ongoing Discussion

DELEGATION PROCESSES / AGREED UPON PROCEDURES

- Rotating meeting locations
- Delegation meets one day/month and two days/quarter (flexible on days of week)
- Use Consensus Building and process document, see attached
- Self-determination / each Band decide for itself
- Constitution should Include: Economic, Legal, Cultural Integrity, Education of process to community;
Traditional leadership base

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- Education - Tools for Successful Community Engagement
 - Delegation may use Zaagiibagong as a resource
 - Education - Red Lake Constitution Reform Committee
 - Education -Value of MCT meetings, social platforms, limited person to person
 - Education – Indinawemaaganidog (How do we consider who is MCT?)
 - What is Sovereignty?
 - Education Committee will develop a timeline to bring to the full Delegation for ratification, then bring to the people
 - Communication
-
- Appoint one Delegate from each of the 6 Reservations to attend all TEC meetings for a period of four months, then new appointees for four months
 - Send Delegates; Speak only as directed on issues agreed upon by Delegates
 - Constitution Reform Delegates shall be standard TEC Agenda item
 - Delegation will consult with TEC on a reasonable, appropriate timeline for this work
 - Lines of communication must be clearly defined

Recent Discussion and Recommendations

ENROLLMENT

Goal that TEC agrees to consult with Delegates on enrollment

Fully collaborate on action

Set timeline ballot date for this action

Request for Action

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Line item the remaining \$9,589 (after 16K line item to the survey committee) dedicate to the MCT Constitution Reform Delegation for 2020/2021.

The MCT Constitution Reform Finance Committee shall make requests to the MCT for the disbursement of the \$9,589 for the following uses:

- 1) Marketing/printing
- 2) Travel Stipends up to \$100 per person for one meeting (this is particular for the people who are not already being financed to travel by their Band Councils), and
- 3) Reimbursement for office supplies to individual delegates.

When the MCT seeks COVID relief funds to seek funds for the MCT programs to **also seek funds for the MCT Constitution Reform Delegation.**

Title:

Minnesota Chippewa Tribe CONSTITUTION Proclamation of Tribal/Indigenous Sovereignty

Reasoning Statement:

It is the inherent right and the power to govern ourselves.

A sovereign government supported by its citizen members is the only maker of laws in the land, water, or air.

It is having the freedom without any interference or controlling influence from outside sources or other external bodies dictating our values, what we should believe in, and how we move forward in our lives.

“Indigenous Sovereignty” is what is referred to as a term of art. It is distinguishable from Tribal Sovereignty in that it is not a nation-state recognition of inherent sovereignty under nation-state dominion.

Rather, it arises from Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, belonging to each Indigenous nation, tribe, first nation, community, etc. It consists of spiritual ways, culture, language, social and legal systems, political structures, and inherent relationships with lands, waters, and all upon them. Indigenous sovereignty exists regardless of what the nation-state does or does not do. It continues as long as the People that are a part of it continue.

WHEREAS, (some language from shared themes of our preamble)

We speak for the people and for those who cannot speak for themselves. We will protect and secure our lands, water, air, mahnoomin, natural resources, archeological sites, and all things that we hold sacred above and below the surface, and we will follow our traditional laws of nature.

WHEREAS,

We will review, engage, revise, and recommend a constitution document which represents all, protect the health, happiness, and common welfare of our people and our descendants. To protect the rights of our citizens, our land, and natural resources. We will govern ourselves under our own tribal laws free from injustice and ensure that our people remain sovereign through our actions and decisions.

NOW THEREFORE,

Our Minnesota Chippewa Tribe constitution will preserve, secure, and exercise all the inherent sovereign rights and powers, protecting our Creator rights, our treaty rights, and our natural rights, further develop, preserve, and conserve our land, traditions, language, culture, ceremonies, customs, and history.

MCT Drafting Subcommittee – December 4, 2020 meeting

Topic: The Preamble

We discussed the purpose of a preamble:

- The preamble is an introduction.
- The preamble explains who we are.
- The preamble sets forth the intent and purpose of the constitution.

We discussed what weight is given to a preamble. [Example: The preamble to the US constitution is called “the enacting clause” because it declares who is enacting the constitution. But it does not have any substantive legal provisions and does not expand the terms of the constitution.]

We analyzed the different versions of the preamble that each Band put together. Most drafts included similar themes on who we are, the purpose of the constitution, and our inherent rights. But there are also some differences that cannot be resolved by the subcommittee. We identified the similarities and differences below.

The subcommittee recommends that we revisit the preamble after we draft the other sections of the constitution.

Themes included in all (or nearly all) drafts of the Preamble:

- We, the Anishinaabe of the Aanishinaabe Akiin – Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and White Earth reservations of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe do hereby adopt this revised constitution.
- We speak for the people and for those who cannot speak for themselves. We will protect and secure our lands, water, air, manoomin, natural resources, archeological sites, and all things that we hold sacred above and below the surface, and we will follow our traditional laws of nature.
- We adopt this revised constitution for the governance, protection, health, happiness, and common welfare of our people and our descendants. We will protect the rights of our citizens and our land and natural resources. We will govern ourselves under our own tribal laws free from injustice, and ensure that our people will always remain sovereign as we have always been.
- Our constitution will preserve, secure, and exercise all the inherent sovereign rights and powers of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. We will protect our Creator rights, our treaty rights, and our natural rights, and develop, preserve, and conserve our land, traditions, language, culture, ceremonies, customs, and history.

Themes to Revisit (included in only some drafts of the Preamble)

Structure of the MCT (conflicts in different drafts)

- We, the Anishinaabe of the Aanishinaabe Akiin comprised of six bands: White Earth, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage do hereby adopt this revised constitution. We are all of one mind with each other. We are coming together for the shared love for our ancestry, our people, and our children.
- We, the Anishinaabe people of the sovereign nations of Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, White Earth, and the Nonremoval Mille Lacs bands recognized under the treaties with the United States government of 1854, 1855, 1863, 1866, and 1867 hereby form a government for Anishinaabe Akiing.
- We, the Anishinaabe people comprised of Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, White Earth, and Sandy Lake reservations come together this day.

Mino Bimadiziwin (included by two Bands)

- We the original people pledge to honor mino bimadiziwin (“the good life”) for all generations.

Our History

- We are Anishinaabe who throughout history have powerful alliances with other nations and we may continue to align ourselves.
- Our ancestors faithfully followed the megis shell here, to the place where the food grows on water. Our ancestors wisely knew when to fight and with to sign with the Great White Father to Keep us here.
- Our ancestors honored the freedom to choose our own paths, which also honoring all of creation. Therefore, we will always hold space for the sacred ways of our ancestors, while also holding space for those who wish to follow other paths. We honor this balanced way, so that when hard times come, we have many ways to flourish.
- We are the first people of this land, we have survived, and we will remain here forever.
- Brief history of our treaties with the US government (not in any drafts, but discussed by the subcommittee)
- Brief history of the constitutional convention (not in any drafts, but discussed by the subcommittee)

Enrollment

- We welcome all of our descendants, regardless of race or ethnicity, to participate in our lifestyle here in the Anishinaabe lands.

Other (please write answer)

How often would you like to receive updates? (please circle one)

Weekly monthly quarterly
not interested

Grand Portage

What do you stion ie MCT feel is most important to our people?

Should each band of the MCT have their own constitution?

Should each band of the MCT be able to determine their own memberhip?

Fond du Lac

What is the purpose of the constitution?

How do we shape our efforts to reflect our culture?

Bois Forte

What will be the name? ie Anishinabe, Ojibwe, Chippewa

Should we remain within the MCT?

Yes

no

Should the current requirement of one quarter MCT blood quantum be abolished?

Leech Lake

Do you live on the reservation/urban areas/district

Are you aware of Constitutional Convention

Group Questions

Group 1

Should the role of the MCT remain the same?

We came to the understanding among our group that we have confusion about the TEC and MCT So we cannot ask that question outright without refinement.

Currently we are recognized as both MCT and our own individual bands. Should this structure of recognition remain the same?

Group 2

Do you have enough information to make an informed decision?

When we speak tour people we need to let them know why we are going to contact them. Explain why we are doing the survey and what we are going to do with the results.

Ask who, what, why and work on the format of survey document. Find out respondents' geographical location.

Have you read and understood the constitution?

How can we help you understand the constitution?

Can you make informed decision?

There is a need for committees from each band to receive the surveys. There is a multitude of logistical and internal issues to figure out.

Group 3

What do you expect from the MCT?

What do you expect from government in general?

What should your government do for you?

Group 4

What do you expect from the MCT?

The constitution is a governing document. The tribal members have to read the constitution.

Have you read the constitution?

Yes no

Are you familiar with the constitution?

No knowledge somewhat knowledgeable very knowledgeable

Do you feel the constitution should be rewritten/reformed?

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

How much do you know about the MCT Constitution?

1. None
2. Some
3. Knowledgeable
4. Very knowledgeable
5. Expert

Discussion

Sidra we're trying to figure out how much people know?

Do we really need to find out how knowledgeable people are? We already know people need more information. So we need to do more education first. We could start education and outreach process and then do the survey. The survey results may elicit how well we are engaging with the tribal members.

Teresa

We're the ones writing the survey. So we need to get information to the people.

We have to improve our communication and outreach skills.

Today we have discussed culture, education, structure. The extensive list of ideas on the "post its" on the wall can be put into the survey.

Carrie

The technical questions should direct agendas and delegate meetings back home. Engagement with people ust be accomplished.

Liz Jaakola

Other native nations have gone through the same process of writing a constitution. They have probably asked survey questions which are applicable to us. The cultural milieu will be the most difficult to work on.

How are we communicating with each other? The actual words aren't as important as the way in which we are doing it.

Brandy Fraser

Can we get the information out in chapters so people don't have to read everything all at once.

Beth

Information has to be disseminated in multiple ways.

April

If the constitution is submitted to a secretarial election, will you come out and vote?

Louie

A lot of people aren't aware constitutional change is even being attempted. The survey will show how much we're doing

Doug

Put information online and teach people at the same time.

Discuss for ten minutes what you have learned today.

Discussion about the money for mailing the survey and what fund it is coming from.

Motion passed to create a survey subcommittee.

Passed 5 – 1

More discussion about survey. There are organizations such as Native Nations Institute experienced in survey design. The survey must be done according to the established norms to make the survey results accurate. Tribal members have participated in surveys before.

Motion to create education subcommittee.

Passed 6 -0

discussion about contracting with Zaagi-bagaang to provide professional facilitator to run our meetings and keep the agenda moving.