

**PEORIA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF OKLAHOMA  
BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**November 2, 2021**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER/INVOCATION:**

Chief Craig Harper called the meeting to order. Carolyn Ritchey gave the Invocation.

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM:**

Secretary Tonya Mathews declared a quorum with all members present, except Treasurer Hank Downum. Mr. Downum called ahead stating he would be absent.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion was made by Isabella Burrell and seconded by Kara North to approve the Minutes of both the Special Meeting, held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the Regular Meeting, held on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Motion passed.

**MONTHLY TRIBAL/PROGRAM REPORTS:**

**Financial Reports**

Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Isabella Burrell to approve the Financial Reports for September 2021 as presented. Motion passed.

**Enterprise Reports**

Patrick Browne, CEO of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, began his report by providing an overview of the financial reports for the last six months - ending in September 2021. Mr. Browne then introduced Milton Hale and Austin Shipman, both with Peoria Ridge Golf Course.

Milton Hale, Superintendent of Peoria Ridge Golf Course, began his report by providing an overview of his maintenance report for Peoria Ridge Golf Course. He stated that planning for winterization had begun, which included the following projects:

- Repairing of the green chain link fence
- Repairing bunkers
- Tree trimming and removal.
- Repairs to equipment to prepare for next season
- Updating paint throughout Course

- Irrigation audit
- Determine the square footage for fairways and greens for winter kill
- Utilize our own sod to repair fairways and greens to plan for Spring
- Clearing select areas for better air flow

Mr. Hale finished his report by thanking his maintenance crew for their hard work and extra hours put in this past season to make the course look so great. He then stated new winter hours would begin the following week. In closing, Mr. Hale introduced Austin Shipman, Manager of Peoria Ridge Golf Course.

Austin Shipman, Manager of Peoria Ridge Golf Course, began his report by informing the Business Committee that the Clubhouse will have new merchandise inventory from a new vendor for the Fall/Winter season. He then stated that there were 26 golf outings and banquets during the months of September and October. He further stated that this time of year can vary with business - as the weather is unpredictable, but that events are already being booked for November and December.

Mr. Shipman then proceeded by giving a list of the winter projects on his agenda as follows:

- Cleaning and detailing of new golf carts. (Very time-consuming and can take up to four hours per cart.)
- New winter hours to start soon meaning that the Golf Course would open at 8:00 a.m. and close at sunset. They will be staffed as usual during the week but slowing down to one employee for a half day to work the greens on the weekends. They will be closed for Thanksgiving and are also considering closing on Mondays throughout the winter season.
- Focusing on booking more events in the banquet room for the winter season as golf rounds will be down because of the cooler weather.

Mr. Shipman then stated that revenue is about the same as 2020. He further stated that a new menu was launched recently and has been very popular. In closing, Mr. Shipman stated that the recently new "Out of Town" promotion generated a very good response, and that they plan on re-launching the promotion again in April of 2022.

Brian Estep, Director of Facilities, began his report by stating that the casino focused on promoting Breast Cancer Awareness throughout the month of October. They changed the new exterior lights of the Casino to pink during the month - an idea that was generated by Secretary Tonya Mathews. Mr. Estep gave an update on the remodel of the boiler room as well as informing the Business Committee that new carpet had been replaced in the administrative area. Mr. Estep then gave an update regarding replacing old lighting with newer and more energy efficient lighting (a project he started 3 years ago) by stating that the Casino is about 90% updated. Mr. Estep then stated that the Casino recently hired a Purchasing Supervisor to help track all expenses. He further stated that the first project of that position is complete, which was to clean/organize the warehouse and that it looks amazing.

Mr. Estep then gave an overview of current/future projects:

- Re-stripping the front parking lot in the VIP parking
- Add new decorative railing at the front entrance (this will also aide in safety issues)

- Remodeling the hotel laundry room and replacing old washer and dryer machines

Following the end of Mr. Estep's report, a question was posed by Councilwoman Isabella Burrell regarding the use of the outdoor area. Mr. Estep stated that the outdoor patio at the Hotel is used daily but the outdoor area at the Trucker's Lounge was rarely utilized. In closing, Mr. Estep introduced Kathryn Vanstavern, Director of Hotel Operations.

Kathryn Vanstavern, Director of Hotel Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, began her report by sharing the most recent updates at Buffalo Run Hotel, as well as, future projects:

- Rooms now equipped with step stools for senior assistance
- Replacement of all old lampshades in the rooms (Set to be done by the end of December)
- The AC/HVAC unit is being cleaned and regularly maintained.
- Hotel laundry room remodeled with new washer/dryer
- Replacement of all door locks
- Added a new 'Onboarding Checklist' for all new hires (This will help speed up training and ensure that nothing is missed.)
- Remodel of North Wall in the lobby
- Re-texture/Re-paint swimming pool to include an epoxy coating (This will aid in safety and reduce the risk of slips/falls.) Following this statement, a question was posed by Councilwoman Isabella Burrell regarding the need to re-paint the pool so soon. Brian Estep answered the question by stating the current color makes the water appear dirty so a new more appealing color will be used to correct that problem.
- Lowering beds in Handicapped rooms (This will make it easier on guests to get in and out.) Following this statement, a question was posed by Councilman Isabella Burrell regarding the plans for getting this improvement out to the public. Ms. Vanstavern stated it would be advertised on the Hotel's website.

Ms. Vanstavern then stated that there was an increase in the Financials as compared to 2020. In closing, Ms. Vanstavern introduced Brian Favreau, Director of Casino Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Brian Favreau, Director of Casino Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, introduced himself and stated that he has worked within the gaming industry since 1993, but was just hired a few weeks prior at Buffalo Run Casino & Resort. Following his introduction, Mr. Favreau highlighted his plans for the Casino. His plans include the following:

- Optimize floor performance by removing less popular games and bringing in games that are highly sought
- Building relationships with staff so they felt comfortable opening up to him with feedback and concerns, which will help with overall improvements
- Training staff on new games
- Fine-tuning what is already in place

Mr. Favreau then stated that there has been a slight decrease in coin-in for slots but that slots were doing quite well overall. In closing, Mr. Favreau introduced Angela Dahl, Director of Finance for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Angela Dahl, Director of Finance for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, began her report by providing an overview of the financials - stating that the trend was still increasing. She then stated that meetings are being held with Directors monthly to review budgets and to help keep communication open. In the report given, she mentioned that there was a 20% change. Following this statement, a question was posed from the floor regarding the change and what it meant. Ms. Dahl referred to Patrick Browne, CEO, who then answered, by stating that there were several factors that contributed to the 20% change in revenue. He stated that there had been new staff hired, additional costs in Marketing, and slot play had decreased slightly as well.

### **Administrative Program Reports**

Chief Harper provided a summary of his written report, highlighting the following:

- ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) - The Tribe has been sending out checks daily and now offers an online application for citizens to use, making the process a little bit easier.
- Final walk through of the Community Center.
- New Academy is coming along and expected to open after the first of the year.
- Meeting with Directors monthly to brainstorm ideas.
- Children's Christmas Party plans for a sit-down dinner, as done in the past, are underway.
- Office changes -- Cultural Department has been moved to the back; created an official filing room (for all records) with controlled access; HR office moved to new area so as to not be next to Chief Harper's office, making it more comfortable for employees who have concerns.
- Tracy Coach is the new Director of Health and Human Services.
- Jolynn Kaiser is the new Director of Early Childhood.
- Now taking applications for Peoria citizens only for the Academy.
- Back offices (formerly Environmental offices) are now completely renovated and look great.

A request was made by Councilwoman Isabella Burrell regarding the Early Childhood Centers by stating she would like to see a report that includes the following information:

- Hours of operation and basic information
- Class sizes
- Teacher qualifications
- Approximate time of how long the application process takes

Councilwoman Burrell then asked if our centers (specifically Kah-ne) are fully staffed. Jolynn Kaiser, Director of Early Childhood, stated we are fully staffed and now only need to enroll children.

Councilwoman Burrell posed another question regarding social media and asked if the quarterly newsletter could be accessed digitally and if discussions during the Business Committee meetings could be added to social media for citizens to access. A question from the floor was asked if the new benefits for citizens could be advertised on social media as well? Chief Harper answered all questions by stating it was being addressed and that it would be discussed as listed on the agenda in line item J.

Courtney McCartney, a member of the Election Committee, commented on line item H. "Discussion/Approval for Business Committee of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma to request the Election Committee to review and make recommendations relating to revision of the Election

Ordinance” in regards to a question posed by a citizen in the audience that asked if election ballots could be mailed out. Mrs. McCartney stated that at this time, there are no current procedures in place to allow this. She further stated that this question had come up before and legal advice given previously was that because the word “shall” remains in place, it determines that voting must be done in person due to how the constitution is written. Therefore, it remains a constitutional issue. Mrs. McCartney stated that new procedures would need to be written in order to make changes, but due to the steps and time that it takes to make changes, that this would not happen before the next General Election. Mrs. McCartney further stated that a request would need to be made from the Business Committee that the Election Committee has the authority to create a procedure to submit a change in how elections take place.

Patrick Browne, CEO of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, spoke on line item J. “Discussion/Approval Tribal Citizen Benefit” and proposed the following:

- Free golf for Tribal citizens to include spouse
- \$59.00 hotel rate for all King and Double sized rooms any day with availability
- 25% discount at all restaurants
- 25% discount on show tickets (must be purchased in person with Tribal ID at the gift shop). No limit to the number of tickets purchased.
- 25% discount off items at the gift shop

Citizen tribal ID must be shown at time of purchase.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

There was no unfinished business.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**New Members Recommended for Approval by the Enrollment Committee on 10/21/2021 Tentatively to be Approved by the Business Committee on 11/02/2021 or at the Next Regularly Scheduled or Special Meeting:** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve new members recommended for approval by the Enrollment Committee on 11/02/2021. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-A, “Approval for Changes to the Peoria Tribal Membership Roll”:** Motion was made by Isabella Burrell and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-A as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-B, “Resolution Supporting Submittal of The Housing Authority of The Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma Fiscal Year 2021 Indian Housing Block Grant – Competitive Grant”:** Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-B as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-C, “BIA Higher Education Grant Program Application”:** Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-C as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-D, “Authorization for Issuance of Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma Vehicle License Plates and Appointment of Peoria Tax Commission as Tag Agent”:** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Isabella Burrell to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-D as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-E, “Authorization and Signatures with Security Bank & Trust of Miami, Oklahoma for a New Account Entitled Peoria Tribal Tags”:** Motion was made by Isabella Burrell and seconded by Kara North to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-E as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-11-02-21-F, “Resolution Approving the General Welfare Exclusion Policy and Tribal Citizen Disbursement as Approved on October 5, 2021”:** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve Resolution R-11-02-21-F as presented. Motion passed.

**Discussion/Approval for Business Committee of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma to request the Election Committee to review and make recommendations relating to revision of the Election Ordinance:** Motion was made by Isabella Burrell and seconded by Kara North to request the Election Committee to Review and Develop procedures for a possible General or Special Election Candidate Discussion Panel and to provide recommendations to the Business Committee. Motion passed.

**Reappointments to Peoria Tribal Election Committee (Kristen Gillman, Bud Ellis, Courtney McCartney, Shelley Mitchell, Cassie McCoy):** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to reappoint the Peoria Tribal Election Committee as presented. Motion Passed.

**Discussion/Approval Tribal Citizen Benefit:** Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve the Tribal Citizen Benefits as presented by Patrick Browne, adding “with availability” to the hotel room discount and to include spouses for free golf. Motion passed.

**Discussion/Approval of Employee wage change recommendations:** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve the employee wage changes as presented in Executive Session. Motion passed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chief Harper began public comments by announcing that his Administrative Assistant, Syd Colombe, is resigning her position to take a new position with the Inter-Tribal Ag Council. He thanked Syd for her help over the years and allowed her time to speak. Ms. Colombe thanked everyone for their well wishes and was applauded by everyone. She stated she would still be in “Indian Country” and hopes to still work with the Tribe through her new role. Chief Harper then stated that he would like to go around the room, so each citizen has the opportunity to address the Business Committee or ask questions. Tribal citizen Peery White thanked the Tribe and Business Committee for the scholarships she received. Tribal citizen Tanisa Brashear asked if IT could be contacted regarding email issues at Peoria Housing Authority and the Tribe. Ms. Colombe stated she was unaware of issues but would reach out to IT the following day. Ms. Brashear then asked what the latest news is with the Zoom! platform. Korie Payton, Marketing Assistant/Graphics Designer, stated she was working with Zoom! and is currently awaiting bids for hardware and software needed as well as bids on subscriptions. Tribal citizen Courtney McCartney asked who the point of contact would be for the upcoming Special Election now that Syd is leaving before that date. Chief Harper stated that we have a backup plan and a person delegated to handle this responsibility, also mentioning that Ms. Colombe would still be available if necessary. Tribal citizen Tabitha Sixkiller asked for the “truth” on how ARPA is processed and if it really will take 8 weeks. Ms. Colombe walked through the whole process from start to finish, stating it shouldn’t take 8 weeks. Tribal citizen and employee, Wes Farliss, thanked

Ms. Colombe for a job well done and continued by thanking Korie Payton for her hard work regarding the Zoom! platform and for the positive changes to the website. He then thanked the Business Committee for pushing through with the ARPA funds. Tribal citizen Nick Hargrove thanked the Business Committee for working hard on the ARPA funding.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to move into Executive Session at 7:40 pm.

Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to come out of Executive Session at 9:03 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Isabella Burrell. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

  
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Authorized Signature

12-07-21  
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Date Approved