

**PEORIA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF OKLAHOMA  
BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING  
August 2, 2022**

**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.

**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 Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting, held on July 5, 2022. Motion passed.

**MONTHLY TRIBAL/PROGRAM REPORTS:**

**Financial Reports**

Motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Kara North to approve the Financial Reports for June 2022 as presented. Motion passed.

**Enterprise Reports**

Patrick Browne, CEO of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, introduced himself and also introduced the new Senior Director of Marketing for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, Mary Jewett. Ms. Jewett has over thirty years of experience in Indian gaming and has previously worked in all different roles within the casino. She stated that she is excited to be here, and that she is open to ideas from the staff. Mr. Browne then introduced Milton Hale and Jeremy Weiss with Peoria Ridge Golf Course to give their reports.

Mr. Hale began his report by giving an overview of the *Golf Course Beautification*, which included:

- Final application of June fertilizer was completed
- June fairway and tee aerification was completed
- June pre-emergent herbicide application was complete
- Full attention is working on keeping the greens alive during the high temperatures
- Spiked bare spots in fairways due to high temperatures, these are shrinking due to the efforts of the team

Mr. Hale then introduced Jeremy Weiss, Golf Course Manager for Peoria Ridge Golf Course.

Mr. Weiss began his report, which included:

### ***Golf Accomplishments***

- June 2022 is the second month ever with 3,000 or more rounds
- Best June ever in sales and rounds
- First time topping \$100,000 in consecutive months
- Highest average rounds per day ever: 104 per day, previous high was 103

### ***Golf Initiatives***

- Currently working on a joint tournament with Shangri-La
- Looking to partner with a vendor for a parent/child tournament in 2023
- Would like to increase the number of tournaments from 2-3 to 4-5
- High focus is on improving the golfers experience, and the brand of Peoria Ridge
- Member count increased from 280 in July 2021 to 361 in July 2022

### ***Golf Financials***

- 6% increase in revenue (\$6,630) from June last year to June of this year
- 27% increase in golf rounds (851) from June last year to June of this year

Mr. Weiss ended his report by asking the Business Committee if there were any questions. He then introduced Katherine VanStavern, Manager of Buffalo Run Hotel.

Ms. VanStavern began her report, which included:

### ***Hotel Accomplishments***

- New locking RFID system is in place on doors and working great
- New luggage carts, going from two to four for the guests
- Faster check-in at the front desk for the guests
- Improved Wi-Fi service throughout the hotel on all three floors
- Humidifier in the pool and fitness have been fixed, condensation levels have decreased

### ***Hotel Initiatives***

- “Going Green” initiative in the hotel with the goal to conserve laundry chemicals, water, and electricity. Great feedback from the guests
- Currently working on other cost saving opportunities
- Looking in to changing the suite bedding for an updated look
- Laundry carts have been ordered for the floor hallways; this will help housekeeping perform their duties much faster
- Added a hotel key drop in the lobby area

### ***Hotel Financials***

- 5% increase in hotel revenue (\$22,766) YTD
- 5% increase in room revenue (\$22,844) YTD
- No change in Grab-n-Go revenue YTD, but saw an increase of 39% (\$2,718) from June of last year to June of this year

Ms. VanStavern showed pictures of the initiatives and updates mentioned in her report then introduced David Murphy, Director of Food, Beverage, and Golf Operations.

Mr. Murphy began his report by reviewing the ***Guest Focus Group Report for June 2022***, which included:

- Thirty-eight (38) players attended four meetings for feedback
- Key positives and negatives about Buffalo Run Casino plus top four competitors
- Feedback on what matters the most to our guests and why
- Feedback shows leadership is listening & making improvements

- VIP players proved to be responsible for approximately 80% of revenue from the floor

Mr. Murphy then gave the Business Committee a copy of the study group results to review. He then introduced Brian Estep, Director of Facilities for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Mr. Estep began his report by reviewing the following, which included:

***Facilities Accomplishments***

- Finished repairing all potholes and cracks in the parking lot
- Added lighting to the back patio at the Hotel - the guests really enjoy it

***Facilities Initiatives***

- Guest Services has new paint on the walls, trim and new lighting
- Security/Box Office space will be remodeled with new paint and flooring
- Repairing duct work in the Coal Creek kitchen
- Starting a project to replace all lighting in the Pro Shop to LED

Mr. Estep ended his report and introduced Angela Gosney, Director of Finance for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Ms. Gosney began her report, which included:

***Financials***

- Financials are reported for Quarter 1, covering April, May, and June 2022
- Slot Financials showed a -22% decrease (\$29,527,960) YTD for Coin-In
- Slot Wins were also down by -22% YTD

***2023 Casino Distribution***

- Casino Distribution showed a YTD decrease of \$593,022
- Patrick Browne spoke to this stating that there is still time to increase this, that July and August are the most profitable months.
- August will be better, and there are still nine months to go in this FY

***First Fiscal Quarter 2023 Summary***

- Coin-In was much softer over prior year
- Confident in our position despite high inflation challenges
- Focusing on growing our player data base with increased mailers
- Continue to improve the slot product variety, best in the market
- Focus Group Report
- Increasing our marketing cost effective initiatives
- Recruited Mary Jewett as the Senior Marketing Director
- Management team continues to receive leadership development

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

Chief Harper gave a recap of his written report, highlighting the following:

- Holding meetings with Architects, will choose one firm for a 2 year contract
- Continuing to hold bi-weekly Director's meetings, as well as, one-on-one meetings with each Director
- Accepted into 'Leadership Oklahoma Class 36'
- Prepared for and sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rt. 66 Heritage Fest
- Attended NTHS Board Meeting
- Attended Intertribal Council Meeting
- Attended Rotary in Grove

- Spoke at the Peoria Housing Authority Meeting
- 2022 Ottawa County Heifer Show

Chief Harper asked Darin Abernathy, Director of Construction for the Tribe, to give a brief explanation of the four architectural firms that came and presented. Mr. Abernathy gave a handout to the Business Committee with highlights of each firm as well as why one was chosen over the others. It was stated that ‘Blue River Architects’ out of Tulsa was the firm chosen to proceed with.

Chief Harper ended his report by introducing Erin Barnes, Director of Natural Resources for the Tribe.

Ms. Barnes began her report with a slideshow that included:

**Where We Were, Last Quarter (Natural Resources):**

- Completed the 120 fence project
- Aquatic Facility completed Spring Cleanup
- Controlled Burns were conducted
- NRCS Tree planting project completed, with 580 trees planted
- Erin, Buddy, and Regina traveled to the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society National Conference in Florida. Peoria is at the top level of mussels, one of the few in the nation!
- 172 calves were born on the ranch this Spring
- The freshwater mussel lab inoculated its first set for OSU toxicology, Regina now has the tribe doing contract work for toxicology

**Where We Are, This Quarter (Natural Resources):**

- Several outreach events were conducted late Spring and early Summer, including a field trip to the Aquatic Center for children
- An archaeological survey was conducted on five tribal properties
- First cutting of hay yielded 1023 bales for the ranch. Last year 2,500 bales were cut, and still had to buy. Working on purchasing now.
- The ranch is looking for additional hay sources due to the drought
- 3,000 new mussels were the result of two inoculations
- For the first time, blue green algae was discovered blooming in two holding ponds, this can be very detrimental to the fish. The staff acted quickly and performed a “flush” which pumped fresh water in, preventing the loss of fish.

**Where We Are Going, Next Quarter (Natural Resources):**

- The focus will be focusing on the drought and preparing for what’s to come
- Fall hay harvest and fall calving season
- Buffalo fence options and budgets
- Invasive species program will pick back up
- Bass will be sorted and moved, once the weather cools off
- The freshwater mussel program hopes to gain more toxicology contracts that will help build this program

Ms. Barnes ended her report by introducing Jason Dollarhide, Director of Peoria Housing Authority. Mr. Dollarhide began his report with a slideshow that included:

**Where We Were, Last Quarter (Peoria Housing Authority):**

- Emergency Rental Assistance Program was completed helping 545 households – with 45 of those being tribal members

- Audit completed with zero findings
- Hosted a “Spring Fling” for tenant families – partnered with BIA, Quapaw Nation, and the Tribe’s Environmental department for activities for the kids

**Where We Are, This Quarter (Peoria Housing Authority):**

- Current Housing Programs: Low Rent Program, Fair Market Rental Program, Mutual Help Homeownership Program,
- Current Grant Programs: Housing Improvement Grant Program, Down Payment Assistance Grant Program, Tribal American Rescue Plan Act Grant Program, Resident Opportunities & Self Sufficiency Grant Program, Drug Elimination Grant Program

**Where We Are Going, Next Quarter (Peoria Housing Authority):**

- Competitive NAHASDA Block Grant opportunity – Plan to build 16 (8 one bedroom/8 two bedroom) low rent units in Miami
- HAF Housing Assistance Program – Payment assistance to prevent mortgage delinquencies and defaults/foreclosures/loss of utilities/displacement of homeowners experiencing financial hardship
- Imminent Threat Grant – Remove and replace existing infrastructure and add additional water drainage

Mr. Dollarhide ended his report by introducing Tonya Mathews, Executive Director of the Peoria Tribal Gaming Commission.

Ms. Mathews began her report with a slideshow that included:

**Where We Were, Last Quarter (Gaming Commission):**

- Implemented new licensing regulations for all employees at Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, Buffalo Run Hotel, and Peoria Ridge Golf Course
- Revised and Implemented new Policies and Procedures regarding new licensing regulations
- Revised Forms and Applications regarding new licensing regulations
- Successfully completed new NIGC Requirements for licensing employees
- Completed yearly audits (which included Verification audits from the previous fiscal year) in all Departments of the Casino
- Began External Audit requests/Organized Audit interviews
- Reviewed/Processed two Tort Claims
- Held hearings for Voluntary & Involuntary Exclusion Requests
- Reviewed and approved 36 new promotions

**Where We Are, This Quarter (Gaming Commission):**

- Continuing to process Employee Licenses
- Continuing to create badges for various departments
- Completing large machine moves on the floor to create new “Themed” areas
- Continuing department audits for this fiscal year
- Continuing revisions to Policies & Procedures for all departments of the Casino as a result of Internal Audit discoveries
- Completed all requests for External Audits
- Ensured external audits were reported to the State of Oklahoma and the National Indian Gaming Commission on time

- Completed a successful audit with the State of Oklahoma regarding full compliance of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort – no findings were reported

**Where We Are Going, Next Quarter (Gaming Commission):**

- Implementation of new Licensing Database
- Continue to improve communication between the Casino & Gaming Commission
- Training for staff this Fall

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

There was no unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Committee reviewed the documents presented for “New Members Recommended for Approval by the Enrollment Committee on 07/14/22 Tentatively to be Approved by the Business Committee on 08/02/22 or at the Next Regularly Scheduled or Special Meeting”. No questions were asked from the Committee. Motion to approve the recommendations was made by Hank Downum and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-08-02-22-A, “Approval for Changes to the Peoria Tribal Membership Roll”:** Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Kara North to approve Resolution R-08-02-22-A as presented. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-08-02-22-B, “Authorization and Signatures with Grand Savings Bank for a new Account Entitled Grants Account”:** Motion was made by Isabella Clifford and seconded by Kara North to approve Resolution R-08-02-22-B as presented. Motion passed.

**Discussion/Approval of SSBCI (State Small Business Credit Initiative Program):** After the presentation of the SSBCI program, discussion was held to explain the benefits of the program for the Tribe. Following questions from the Business Committee, motion was made by Hank Downum and seconded by Rosanna Dobbs to approve the SSBCI for the Tribe. Motion passed.

**Resolution R-08-02-22-C, “Resolution Approving and Authorizing a Request for Twenty Buffalo from the Intertribal Buffalo Council Surplus Buffalo FY2022 Program”:** Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Isabella Clifford to approve Resolution R-08-02-22-C as presented. Motion passed.

**Discussion of School Supply Reimbursement policy review/amendments – Second Chief Rosanna Dobbs:** Following discussion of this program, motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Kara North to amend the policy to add Pre-K to the reimbursement eligibility list. Motion passed.

**Discussion/Approval to Select Architects for Two-year, on-call Services:** Following discussion and questions from the Business Committee, motion was made by Hank Downum and seconded by Kara North to approve “Blue River Architects” for a 2 year contract for on-call services. Motion passed.

**Discussion/Approval for Annual Employee wage change recommendations:** Following discussion in Executive Session, motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve the recommendations as discussed – with a retroactive date back to July 5, 2022. Tonya Mathews abstained. Motion passed.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Chief Harper began “Public Comments” by asking if there were any questions so that each Tribal Citizen had the opportunity to address the Business Committee or ask questions.

Citizen & Employee Charla Echohawk mentioned the Stomp Dance being held on Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and stated this is in conjunction with the Miami Nation. She then invited everyone to attend and stated there would be more events like this to come.

Citizen Jeanne Burgess stated she had completed Season 1 of her new podcast titled “Blood Lines” – which contains interviews with successful indigenous women. She thanked everyone for their support and stated it would be released on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Citizen Tabitha Sixkiller complimented the Business Committee and Tribal staff for their hard work. She stated everyone was doing a great job and she was proud to be Peoria. She thanked everyone for their time and effort.

Citizen & Employee Wess Farless stated he was excited and glad we are getting ready to hold our first Language class. He stated that although the first class is full, another class will be offered later and recommends everyone signing up then.

Citizen Nick Hargrove stated that he thought the idea of giving Tribal flags flown at the Tribal office to citizens who request them is a cool idea. He then asked if there had been any updates regarding Zoom. Chief Harper stated that there had not been any new updates.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**


Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Rosanna Dobbs to move into Executive Session at 8:59 pm. Motion passed.

Motion was made Kara North and seconded by Rosanna Dobbs to come out of Executive Session at 10:35 pm. Motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey. Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 pm.

  
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*Authorized Signature*

  
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*Date Approved*