

**PEORIA TRIBE OF INDIANS OF OKLAHOMA
BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING
December 6, 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 Hank Downum to approve the agenda with the addition of line item I, "Discussion of ARPA Funds". Motion died for lack of a second. A new Motion was raised by Kara North to add to the agenda, line item I, "Discussion and Approval of ARPA Funds". A second motion was not made. Chief Harper told the Committee that during the amendment of the agenda, Kara North made the motion, but we failed to get a second motion, and this is needed in order to proceed with adding the line item. Carolyn Ritchey seconded the motion to add line item I: "Discussion and Approval of ARPA Funds" to the agenda. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve the Minutes of the regular meeting held on November 1, 2022. Motion passed.

MONTHLY TRIBAL/PROGRAM REPORTS:

Financial Reports

Motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Isabella Clifford to approve the Financial Reports for October 2022 as presented. Motion passed.

Enterprise Reports

Patrick Browne, CEO of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, introduced himself and began his report by informing the Committee that the Casino recently conducted an employee survey, of which 85% of the employees participated in. The survey was focused on employee satisfaction and engagement. He further stated that Buffalo Run Casino & Resort was awarded the '2022 Winter Winner's Packet' and is now listed as one of the top companies to work for nationwide. Mr. Browne then introduced Nate Dowling, Director of Non-Gaming Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Mr. Dowling began his report by giving an overview of "*Info Technology*", which included:

- Technology Updates:
 - New phone system upgrade in the hotel – now integrated with the Casino which will improve guest satisfaction, as prior system was very problematic.

- Installed an IP TV management system in the Casino – which now allows for all televisions to be managed remotely, rather than individually with separate remotes.
- Installed a Marketing TV digital signage system in the Casino – which now allows for all marketing signage solutions to be managed under the same system.
- Installed Network and Security systems for DHHS at their new facility.
- Switched phone service at the Casino to Bolt – which results in saving over \$18K a year.
- Buffalo Run Hotel switched to Dish Network - which results in saving over \$7K. Future plans include switching the Casino over as well and will be done in March 2023 at the end of current contract.

Mr. Dowling then introduced Brian Favreau, Director of Casino Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Mr. Favreau began his report, which included:

Slot News

- The Casino reported on the Secret Shopper scores. Employees are scored secretly on various skills. Top-rated employees are given a ‘shout out’ on the floor for recognition as well as earning a monetary prize. The overall property goal is 93%, the last score in November was 90.92%.
- Slots continue to bring new games to the floor. The newest game that is the #1 theme in the country for five weeks in a row is “Devil’s Lock”. Currently, the Casino has 40 out of the 50 top-themed games on the floor.
- The Casino has cut down on the jackpot wait time for guests. There is a new kiosk that attendants use that allows them to pay out the jackpot immediately. It now only takes 2 minutes and 14 seconds to pay the guest.
- Looking at purchasing existing games instead of leasing, to cut down on paying lease fees to the vendors.

Slot Financials

- Coin-in for October 2022 versus 2021 showed a *decrease* of 7% and an overall *decrease* of 12% YTD
- Slots for October 2022 versus 2021 showed a *decrease* of 5% and an overall *decrease* of 15% YTD

Mr. Favreau ended his report by asking the Business Committee if there were any questions. Hearing none, he then introduced David Murphy, Director of Food & Beverage and Golf Operations for Buffalo Run Casino & Resort.

Mr. Murphy began his report, which included:

Food and Beverage Updates

- *Holiday Buffets:*
 - Served 552 guests during Thanksgiving (the most served since Mother’s Day 2019 - which had a total of 563);
 - There was a wait list from the moment of opening at noon until closing at 7:00 pm;
 - Discussed areas to improve the buffet execution, which includes adding more tables to serve more guests at once;
 - Projecting close to 600 guests for the Christmas buffet.

Event & Concert Execution

- Based on guests' feedback, the Special Events menus at Coal Creek and Backwoods Grill have been expanded to offer more options.
- Based on guests' feedback, steaks will now be offered after the concert/event starts – due to some guests not attending the event but still wanting to eat dinner at Coal Creek.
- Now offering frozen drink specials in the Showplace during events.
- Bistro remodel is approximately 3 weeks out from the Grand Opening.

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

Ms. Gosney began her report, which included:

A quick highlight of the Miami Christmas Parade that the Casino participated in. The float was themed as the 'Polar Express'. Approximately 30 staff participated and the float was placed in the parade contest. Winners are to be announced the following week.

Hotel Financials

- Hotel revenue showed an increase of 3% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 6% increase YTD
- Room revenue showed an increase of 3% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 6% increase YTD
- Grab-n-Go revenue showed an increase of 1% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 9% increase YTD

2023 Hotel Distribution

- Seven months into the new fiscal year - as of October. Buffalo Run Hotel showed an increase of 43% from FY 2022 to FY 2023 (nearly doubled from last year).

Golf Financials

- Golf revenue showed an increase of 19% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 12% increase YTD
- Golf rounds showed 0% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 17% increase YTD

2023 Casino Distribution

- Casino distribution showed a slight *decrease* of 1% from October 2021 to October 2022, with a 80% decrease YTD – however, it was noted that the distribution is better than the previous month and is continuing to trend up

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Chief Harper gave a recap of his written report, the highlights included:

- Voting in the Mid-Term Elections
- Veteran's Day Events - Cemetery and Social Dance
- Attended the NTHS Board Meeting
- Attended the ITC Board Meeting
- Leadership Oklahoma Class in Tulsa
- Hired a Wellness Project Manager – to start Dec. 19th
- Held an all-staff Thanksgiving Luncheon at the Community Center

- Presented to Native American students at the OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa. Chief Harper mentioned that there is a housing need for students to do their residency. Jason Dollarhide will visit with OSU COM and work on the housing issue.
- Attended the White House Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, DC

Chief Harper then introduced the first Director, Jolynn Kaiser, to begin the Director's Reports.

Ms. Jolynn Kaiser, Director of Early Childhood, began her report with a slideshow that included:

Where We Were, Last Quarter (Early Childhood):

- 4th of July Extravaganza
- Backpack Giveaway - gave away 1,000 backpacks in 47 minutes!
- Wrapped up the summer program for school-age children with activities
- Enrollment was at 78%
 - 50% are Peoria Citizens
 - Remaining spots open are in the preschool classrooms, awaiting two-year-olds who will turn three this school year

Where We Are, This Quarter (Early Childhood):

- Woodland and Kahne were awarded 5-star level
- Fall Festivities included bringing a pumpkin patch to the children and a Trunk-or-Treat event (held by staff/departments of the Tribe) in the parking lot
- Purchased new relay devices for the staff – which improves communication & response time
- Enrollment is at 87%, with 50% of those children being Peoria Citizens. The current wait-list is at 115
- Launching Early Childhood Quarterly Newsletter
- Subsidy/CCDF
- Staff Professional Development
 - Two teachers earned CDA
 - Teaching Standardized teaching practices
 - First Aid and CPR
 - CACFP and Civil Rights
 - Formed a Parent Committee
 - Third Councilman Isabella Clifford asked how long the individual training courses were? Ms. Kaiser replied that they are approximately six hours and that the minimum training requirement is thirty hours per year and stated that that amount is only what is required and does not allow for any additional growth or curriculum training. She then stated that she asked parents about the quality of care that their children receive with us versus past childcare centers they've attended, and the parents all agreed that the overall quality & teaching are much better at Woodland. She further stated that the parents stated that they would not want their children to return to their previous childcare center.
 - Held family meetings which included learning about and playing stickball with Wes Farless in the Cultural Department; hosting a Family Feast; and Christmas tree ornament decorating

Where We Are Going, Next Quarter (Early Childhood):

- Submitting the pre-print for the children's book, due 1/31/23
- Complete TPOT/TPITOS assessments
- Launch coaching

- School age program planning: Spring Break and begin to lay plans for Summer Break

Ms. Kaiser then introduced the next Director, Erin Barnes, Director of Natural Resources, to continue the Director's Reports.

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

Where We Were, Last Quarter (Natural Resources):

- Have been in a drought, however, the staff at the Fish Hatchery worked hard to keep the fish and mussels safe & healthy
- The staff at the Ranch also worked hard to keep the cattle and land healthy due to the drought
- Tried new hay options, such as corn silage
- Heritage Fest
- Finalized EPA and BIA grants
- Team members attended trainings and Zoom calls
- Mussel survey with GRDA
- HUD Healthy Homes courses and orientation
- Pond at the hatchery was rebuilt and lined
- Participated in several outreach and education opportunities
- Cleaned the large pond at the campus site, the extra soil was used in numerous landscaping projects around the campus

Where We Are, This Quarter (Natural Resources):

- Fall calving season started in early August. The current head of cattle on the ranch is 852. The Tribe has 15 bulls, 387 cows, and 450 calves.
- Attending or participating in training
- Tri-State Mining District conference
- Outreach and Education opportunities
- Large pond cleanouts
- TCTC tour of the Hatchery and the Superfund sites
- Mussel Surveys on the Neosho and Spring Rivers
- Training on Grant requirement software

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

- Starting new grant cycles and continuing to work with our current grants
- HUD Healthy Homes Tier 1 Environmental Review
- Radon training
- Feral Hog traps will be deployed
- Working existing ponds at the Fish Hatchery
- Education outreach: Local schools are reaching out to the Peoria Tribe for STEM education and outreach opportunities
- Maintaining a healthy herd throughout the winter
- Starting the Mussel Recon project funded through TCTC

Ms. Barnes then introduced the next Director, Tracy Coach, Director of Health and Human Services, to continue the Director's Reports.

Ms. Coach began her presentation with a slideshow that included:

Where We Were, Last Quarter (Health and Human Services):

- Participated in several community outreach events including BRC 4th of July, Heritage Festival, Washington Watermelon Social, Woodland Family Night, and others
- PRSS is now certified to provide the Medicine Wheel 12 steps for adults as well as Warrior Down (a re-entry program for adults coming out of incarceration)
- Created a partnership with the Indian Health Board to implement the Texting Tree Project
- The Domestic Violence Program provided emergency services for five new survivors
- CHR provided thirteen patients with home visits and access to healthcare. Shelby Betsey is now certified as a Health Educator with the Johns Hopkins Family Spirit Program

Where We Are, This Quarter (Health and Human Services):

- Held a flu shot drive
- Now have two certified Wellness Coaches to provide wellness support to those in need
- Several outreach opportunities
- PRSS Mending Broken Hearts Certification
- Trunk-or-Treat at Woodland Academy
- Domestic Violence walk with the Shawnee Tribe
- Continue building informational programs to spread awareness of our programs, along with promoting via social media

Where We Are Going, Next Quarter (Health and Human Services):

- Family Spirit home visitation program implementation starts
- Peoria Advantage begins the third session of its parenting support series
- Narcan training for first responders in our community
- Moving to the Academy building

Ms. Coach then introduced the next Director, Jason Dollarhide, Executive Director of the Peoria Housing Authority.

Mr. Dollarhide began his report with a slideshow that included:

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

- Completed the Emergency Rental Assistance Program: Provided assistance to 558 households (\$1.9 million) with 55 Peoria tribal members receiving assistance locally and nationwide
- Homeownership Assistance Fund Program that started 9/7/22: Provided assistance to 39 households (\$97,000), with 39 Peoria tribal members receiving assistance locally and nationwide
- Back to school supply drive
- Halloween party
- Disney on Ice

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

- Low Rent Program
- Fair Market Rental Program
- Mutual Help Homeownership Program
- Housing Improvement Program
- Down Payment Assistance Housing Program

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

- Christmas Program

- New Years' Eve Stomp Dance
- Competitive NAHASDA Block Grant opportunity: Building low-rent units in Miami (3.1 million to build 16 new low-rent units, it has been 5-6 years since new units have been built); Construction to begin in Spring 2023.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution R-12-06-22-A, “Establishing NIGA Tribal Membership for 2023”: Motion was made by Isabella Clifford and seconded by Kara North to approve Resolution R-12-06-22-A as presented. Motion passed.

Resolution R-12-06-22-B, “Request for Transfer of Funds from Peoria Tribal Tax Commission Account to Tribal Enterprises Account”: Motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Rosanna Dobbs to approve Resolution R-12-06-22-B as presented. Motion passed.

Resolution R-12-06-22-C, “Resolution Supporting the Naming and Dedication of Stone Eater Park in Lebanon, Indiana”: Motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Isabella Clifford to approve Resolution R-12-06-22-C as presented. Motion passed.

Introduce and Discuss: Zach Turley, Ottawa County 911 Board: Chief Harper introduced Zach Turley, with the Ottawa County 911 Board, to the Committee. Mr. Turley stated that they had just finished consolidating the 911 Calling Board to improve service and lead time for the community. A new 911 Dispatch Center was built using the FEMA grant. This center needs funds to purchase items, specifically a new CAD (computer automated dispatch) system. This would allow the center to have one system for all dispatchers and locations. Mr. Turley is asking for funding support from local tribes, and stated that the amount still needed is approximately \$300,000.00. The Committee thanked Mr. Turley for his presentation and will discuss it. No action was taken.

Reappointments to the Election Committee, (Kristen Gillman, Shelley Mitchell, Bud Ellis, Courtney McCartney, and Cassie McCoy): A motion was made by Isabella Clifford and seconded by Kara North to reappoint the Election Committee as presented. Motion passed.

Reappointment to the Peoria Tribal Gaming Commission, (Jonas Rabel): A motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to reappoint Jonas Rabel to the Peoria Tribal Gaming Commission. Motion passed with one abstention: Tonya Mathews.

Discussion/Approval to Proceed with Christmas Bonuses to the Tribal Department Staff: Following the discussion in Executive Session, a motion was made by Kara North and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey to approve paying a Christmas Bonus of \$500.00 for full-time employees and \$250.00 to part-time employees and interns as discussed. Motion passed with one abstention: Tonya Mathews.

Discussion/Approval of Employee Wage Change Recommendations: Following the discussion in Executive Session, a motion was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Isabella Clifford to approve the wage change recommendations as presented. Motion passed.

Discussion of ARPA Funds: Chief Harper offered the floor to Hank Downum who originally mentioned adding this new line item to the agenda. Mr. Downum asked what the tribe planned on doing with the ARPA money that is left in the program. Kara North agreed with the question. Kara North stated that she would like to discuss this in Executive Session, following the same route in which prior discussions regarding the same topic were held. Chief Harper asked for public comment. Citizen

Wes Farless questioned why this topic would need to be discussed in Executive Session and not in Open Session. Chief Harper agreed to the question raised by Mr. Farless. Citizen Charla EchoHawk also posed the same question. Citizen Brian Mitchell also expressed the same question as Mr. Farless and Ms. EchoHawk. Chief Harper stated he was unaware of why it would need to be a discussion in Executive Session and stated it could be discussed at this time in Open Session. Chief Harper then asked each member of the Business Committee for their thoughts/opinions/recommendations on what they would like to see done with the remaining ARPA funds. The following were noted:

- Isabella Clifford - A request had previously been made by Isabella asking for the total figures on what had been distributed thus far. She questioned the balance between helping the citizens now and sowing into the future.
- Kara North - Food Distribution
- Carolyn Ritchey - Help the citizens
- Hank Downum - Citizen Distribution and Food Distribution
- Rosanna Dobbs - Food Distribution
- Tonya Mathews - Citizen Distribution and Food Distribution

Chief Harper then stated that the CARES ACT funding was \$7.7 million dollars and that approximately half of that amount was given as a distribution to the citizens. He would like to take the remaining ARPA funds and split them between short and long-term projects to benefit the citizens and not proceed with another monetary distribution. By following the same model as the CARES Act funding, the distribution amount has been met. Isabella stated that we should sow past ‘the next paycheck’ but that she could see possibly another smaller scaled distribution to the citizens. She strongly advocated sowing for the long term while balancing the immediate needs of the citizens.

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 Wes Farless stated that he was very excited about the new pizza ovens coming to the Bistro and that the food at the Casino is delicious.

Citizen Tabitha Sixkiller mentioned that with the pandemic and high cost of goods she would like to ask for a “hand up” and not a “hand out” from the Tribe to the citizens with the remaining ARPA funds.


EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The motion was made by Hank Downum and seconded by Kara North to move into Executive Session at 8:24 pm. Motion passed.


The motion was made by Carolyn Ritchey and seconded by Hank Downum to come out of Executive Session at 9:29 pm. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

The motion to adjourn was made by Rosanna Dobbs and seconded by Carolyn Ritchey. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 pm.



Authorized Signature



Date Approved