

Meeting Minutes  
Cherokee Nation At-Large Advisory Committee  
June 22, 2021

*The recording of this meeting can be found [here](#).*

Meeting commenced AT 2PM Central

### **Welcome**

Kevin Stretch welcomed Deputy Principal Chief Bryan Warner, who opened us up in prayer.

### **Opening Prayer**

Deputy Warner gave a brief update on the Nation, including the state of educational opportunities in Cherokee Nation. He reflected on the Remember the Removal Riders. Deputy Warner discussed the career opportunities for young Cherokees.

### **Administrative Updates: Deputy Chief Bryan Warner**

Kevin Stretch thanked Deputy Warner for representing the Administration. Deputy Warner noted that it is the work of all the staff throughout the Nation doing a great job with a special note for Frankie Hargis & the Registration Department.

### **Administrative Updates: Delegate Kim Teehee**

Kevin Stretch introduced Delegate Kim Teehee.

Delegate Teehee discussed the benefits for the Gadugi Portal, which is an online location where individuals can stay in communication with the Nation, and particularly to sign up for the \$2000 COVID Check. She underscores the importance of teaching new technologies.

Delegate Teehee mentions that there is incredibly high engagement. HUD Secretary Marsha Fudge. Sec of Interior Deb Halaand gave a pre-recorded commencement speech to Sequoyah High School graduates. CEO of Western Power Administration, who CN has government contracts with, to learn about their capacities. President Biden and Chief Hoskin met to discuss treaties and seating the delegate to Congress. UN Expert on Indigenous Peoples visited and was very impressed with CN's language preservation programs. Delegate Teehee commended the administration on engaging with so many and attracting a wide array of individuals to Indian Country—it is unprecedented.

### **Administrative Updates: Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr.**

Chief Hoskin joined the Zoom Call and Delegate Teehee ceded the floor to him.

Chief Hoskin thanked everyone for attending and for their ongoing efforts with the Advisory Council.

Chief Hoskin noted the importance of improving the healthcare system in the area. The need has become more apparent during the pandemic. Chief Hoskin notes that Behavioral Health is especially important. Chief Hoskin notes that telemedicine is more

prevalent during the pandemic and can become more available to at-large citizens. He says he's excited to consider traveling again. He mentions the new "CWY: Wherever We Are" programming and how it has been helpful in connecting with at large citizens. Chief Hoskin notes that about 31% of residents living on the reservation have received the vaccine; 61% of CN employees have received the vaccine. The Nation is incentivizing vaccines for employees, but unfortunately, sometimes this information is mis-represented on social media.

Approximately 200K Cherokees have applied for the \$2000 Stimulus Checks. He mentions that he must leave the meeting but thanked everyone for their time.

Delegate Teehee thanked Chief Hoskin and continued with updates. She noted that absentee ballots will be mailed out at the end of the month and reminded listeners that election day is July 24<sup>th</sup>. She covered some of the intricacies of the Voting Rights package happening in the US House & Senate and AARPA funds. She mentions that government contracting is very important to the Nation, which helps to make up for the lull in gaming during the pandemic. She mentions that Cherokee Nation is staying active in monitoring gaming, the Buy Indian Act, the legalization of marijuana.

Kevin asked Delegate Teehee to update everyone on McGirt. We continue to expand the tribal system, including judges, prosecutors, etc. What was once less than 250 cases has grown to over 1000 cases annually. All staff involved and collaborative partners are doing their best to keep up.

Kevin thanked Delegate Teehee for her time and reminded viewers that the third Thursday of the month at 11am, CCO holds a legislative update from Government Relations, which is available to watch live or recorded on CCO's YouTube Channel.

Kevin noted that Cherokee Nation is processing 25,000 checks/deposits each day, which is a Herculean task. CN says that it should be 30 days between application and receiving the stimulus check.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Kevin requested a motion for approval of the February Meeting minutes. Patsy Edgar noted that the name "Wade Blevins" was incorrect and should be replaced with "Wade McAlister."

Patsy moved to approve the meeting minutes with Wade's name corrected; Bruce West seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Committee member McAlister was unable to attend the meeting.

### **Introduce Bruce West**

Kevin introduced Bruce West, the new At-Large Committee member. Bruce is retired from the federal prison system, with the Northern Central Valley. He said he was excited to be a part of this group.

### **Cherokees At-Large Website Update**

Kevin gave an update about the [CherokeesAtLarge.org](http://CherokeesAtLarge.org) website. All the committee members' bios are up. Information about how to register for free Cherokee Language classes is also on the website. Additionally, there is information linked on this website, including COVID-19 vaccination info and the Gadugi Portal. One of the most useful things people can do on the Gadugi Portal is to update their mailing address, email address, phone number. This really will be used, especially for CCO, who tries to connect directly with at-large citizens.

### **Gadugi Portal – At-Large groups should organize how they can help citizens sign up**

Kevin noted that many individuals who are trying to register with the Gadugi Portal may have a difficult time doing so because they don't understand technology very well and encouraged members of all communities to help to the greatest extent possible get their fellow community members signed up.

Patsy Edgar noted that she's tried to update her address but it's still listed as "pending." Kevin assured that Patsy that the information has been captured, even if it doesn't look like it on the website, which is continuously being updated.

### **Covid Relief Funds/RRR Updates**

COVID Relief Funds have gone out to all the communities who requested them. The Treasurer's Office would like to ensure that these are all being reported.

### **ARPA Funds for Citizens**

Kevin notes that there may be additional at-large funds that will become available. These funds are separate from the automatic \$2000 that each at-large org will receive. Patsy asked for clarification that it would be \$2000 each year, and Kevin confirmed that yes, the automatic funding will be \$2000 for the foreseeable future. These funds were used for technology and for capacity building.

### **Virtual At-Large event progress**

Kevin noted that CCO has hosted three "CWY: Wherever We Are" program is being aired once a month. The first episode was about Young Leadership in Cherokee Nation; the second was about how CN is tackling COVID; the most recent was about the outdoors; and the upcoming one is about Cherokee women.

### **CCO Conference Update**

The CCO conference will be on August 21<sup>st</sup> and will be held virtually again. Registration emails are being sent out.

### **Annual Reporting**

Each year, at large organizations must self-report. This includes providing the membership list, which requires 60% of the membership needs to be Cherokee; 51% of board membership needs to be Cherokee; and 100% of the officers on the board must be Cherokee. Orgs must also file an ePostcard, noting that the org did not receive more

than \$50,000 in income. Tammy Keeter-Miller can help file those post cards, as can Lindi Conover-Thompson.

### **Status of 501(c)(3)/state non-profit assistance**

Kevin noted that Lindi has been helping at-large organizations to incorporate with their state and with the IRS to receive their 501c3 nonprofit status. He asked Lindi to give an update. Lindi said that we've been working with a handful of nonprofits that have moved through the process of becoming a nonprofit organization.

Kevin noted that Cherokee Nation Elections are coming up and that this will be Councilor Mary Baker Shaw's last term. Councilor Shaw thanked all the At-Large citizens for being so welcoming and for working together with each other.

### **At-Large Travel**

Kevin noted that the Chief wants input regarding at-large travel. The question at hand is, "Considering your local COVID situation, when should travel to your community start up?" Kevin reminds us that October is typically when CCO travels to the LA-area and then in November, CCO travels to Phoenix & Tucson.

Cynthia Ruiz said that it would be great to have CCO visit southern California in October. Bruce West that, in Northern California, things are opening up more. Kevin says that we've got to consider this two-ways: we don't want to bring any virus material to the host community, nor bring any back to the reservation. Cynthia asked if it would be possible to "strongly recommend" or "require" proof of vaccination or testing at the event. Patsy suggested "either vaccination or masks required." Kevin said that Cherokee Nation could bring some masks that the Nation is producing. Cynthia said that she wouldn't expect CN to bring them, people should be responsible and bring their own. Kevin said he agrees, but has had lots of experience where people should have their own, but they don't.

### **New Business**

Cynthia brought up a point about at-large citizens being required to have their absentee ballot notarized. This is a cost to the voter, even though the law states that notaries cannot charge for notarizing ballots. The service costs \$15-\$20 in some place. She would love for there to be a way for at-large citizens to cast their ballot online. She said she was just passing this along. Kevin said he will take these suggestions to the administration. Lindi noted that there is a new option for verifying voter identification by using the witness forms.

Patsy suggested that the Puget Sound group would like to have more information in CN's printed material about at-large orgs. For example, it would be great if the Cherokee Phoenix and/or Anadisgoi would print info about [CherokeesAtLarge.org](http://CherokeesAtLarge.org).

A representative from Kansas City asked if CN has funds available to at-large citizens regarding elders in need. We're looking for suggestions to forward on to elders and caregivers at the at-large communities.

Kevin noted that he is recording the meeting and he will get meeting minutes out in advance of the next quarterly meeting.

Kevin asked if there were any other items under New Business. There was not. The next meeting will be September 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm Central.

Patsy Edgar commended Cherokee Nation and CCO on being inclusive of at-large citizens.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:38pm.