



# **AIANEA National Council Teleconference Minutes**

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

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*Respect, Harmony and Beauty*

## **Council Members & Guests Attending:**

### **President**

Dr. Carol, Crouch, Oklahoma

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Kirt Peterson, Colorado

### **Secretary**

Melissa Sturdivant, Texas

### **Treasurer**

Bill Parrish, Pennsylvania

### **Southeast Regional Representative**

Melissa Allen, Virginia

*on behalf of* Debbie Henry, Georgia

### **West Region Representative**

Susan Looper, Nevada

### **Midwest Region Representative**

Deb Walchuk, Minnesota

## **Guests Attending**

Barry Hamilton, National Tribal Liaison Officer

## **Past Presidents Attending**

None

## **Meeting Minutes:**

- a. Meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm by Dr. Carol Crouch, President.
- b. Welcome, introductions & roll call  
A roll call of those in attendance was taken by Carol and Melissa. A quorum was not achieved, so business before the Council was limited.
- c. Treasurer Report  
The treasurer's report will be emailed and a vote to accept and record the report will be conducted by email. Susan asked questions about the audit report, and Bill reported that Pam would have to answer those questions. Susan asked who the other person was and what was done as part of the audit. Discussions followed. Carol said she will get these answers.
- d. Minutes for Review  
Minutes will be emailed and a vote to accept and record the minutes will be conducted by email.
- e. National AIAN SEPM Report  
Facilitator: Deborah Clairmont, NAIANSEPM  
Deborah was not able to be on the teleconference as she had another meeting.
- f. National Tribal Liaison Officer Report  
Facilitator: Barry Hamilton, National Tribal Liaison Officer  
Barry reported that there are a lot of things going on and he reported the following:

1. *Tribal Plant Nurseries.* AIHEC, tribal communities and the Plant Materials Centers (PMC) are partnering to revegetate sensitive areas on tribal lands with culturally significant plants. An MOU is being developed and a pilot project established to help with this initiative. They hope to involve other PMCs, but PMCs are facing short staffs as well, so this may affect implementation, but the goal is to help tribes grow culturally-significant plants for their communities.
2. *Climate Study Weather Stations.* NRCS and BIA are partnering to develop a system where weather stations can be installed across Indian Country and data will be reported to the Climate Portal and help with analyses of climate change and its impacts upon our indigenous communities. NRCS has donated \$75,000 and BIA will match this and help fund the purchase of weather stations and/or to upgrade existing stations on Indian lands.
3. *Youth Conservation.* USET is partnering with NRCS and tribes to involve youth in the conservation process to help address resource concerns affecting tribes.
4. *MOU.* The MOU between, BIA, FSA, NRCS & RD is completed and signed by USDA and now ready to go to BIA. Barry reported that this is really a good document to help us, and was developed from the ground up – from the Field Office which provided the basis for the structure.
5. *Tribal Portal.* A NRCS Tribal Liaison (TL) USDA Community webpage has been developed and available as a resource. The TL Directory has been updated and has been distributed.

g. Regional Representatives' Reports

Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Regional Representatives

1. South Central Region Representative, Derek Kelso
  - a) Carol reported that the Central Region's Regional Tribal Advisory Council (RTCAC) is planned in December in conjunction with the Intertribal Ag Council meeting in Las Vegas.
  - b) The following information was provided related to events planned in Oklahoma:

Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pawnee Nation College</li> </ul>	July 29
Upcoming Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choctaw Nation CSP &amp; USDA Programs workshop</li> <li>• Cheyenne &amp; Arapaho Soil Health workshop – Phase III</li> <li>• Cherokee NRCS Application &amp; FSA Eligibility Workshop</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Choctaw Nation Soil Health Workshop</li> <li>• Seminole Nation USDA programs workshop</li> <li>• Sac &amp; Fox Nation Summer Festival</li> <li>• Oklahoma Conservation Task Force Conservation Summit</li> <li>• Shawnee Nation Tour – NRCS projects</li> <li>• 6<sup>th</sup> Annual 2017 USDA Leadership and Nation to Nation Tribal Consultation Meeting</li> <li>• Quapaw Nation Tour – Buffalo herd and SHT</li> </ul>	July 27 July 25 August 2 August 10 August 15 August 17 August 18 August 21 August 22  August 22
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRCS named in top 50 places to work in the Winds of Change Magazine – AISES</li> <li>• November 27<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> – Oklahoma will be hosting 2 NEDC WEWAIT workshops</li> </ul>	

2. Interim Southeast Region Representative, Melissa Allen
  - a) Melissa had no report for this meeting as she was an invited guest.
  - b) Melissa asked if she could visit with Carol or Melissa regarding the position.
3. West Region Representative, Susan Looper
  - a) Susan commented that she is getting ready to attend the West Region's RTCAC meeting which is planned at the end of August in Wyoming.
  - b) Susan indicated that she attended the joint Nevada and California Civil Rights Advisory Council meeting.
4. Midwest Region Representative, Debe Walchuk
  - a) Debe reported that she and her husband continue to care for him during his illness and he seems to be better, but she appreciates all the prayers.
  - b) Debe reported that she continues to reach out to her states but her tribal duties are limited at present. Staffs are short and budgets are tight.
  - c) Debe did report that Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen had informed her that in Iowa, the Meskwaki Nation is preparing for their Pow Wow. Tanya also continues to work with the local RC&D Board to help with outreach to local communities.
  - d) Chris Borden reported that Wisconsin is preparing to support the Working Effectively with American Indians training scheduled for the week of April 23, and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

h. Committee Updates

Facilitator: Dr. Carol Crouch & Committee Chairs

1. *Scholarship Committee* – Susan Looper

Susan reported that she and Melissa have started updating the application form and have forwarded this to the committee. This is still in review. Susan stressed that the committee feels that we need to consult with a qualified CPA so we can define the parameters for the application. Melissa added that in conjunction with the Bylaws review, she wants to ensure we have the correct language and structure to support the Bylaws and the resulting scholarship program which will be framed in the Bylaws. Melissa added that the application is strong and comprehensive and it is in progress; we are just waiting to hear back from Pam and her progress with the CPA.

Carol added comments provided by Noller regarding the need for an audit, and that he had recommended possibly reaching out to an ethics officer. Discussions followed. Carol asked if we can move forward with releasing the scholarship application or do we need to wait on a consultation with a CPA. Carol reported that she had been in touch with Pam and recommended that we keep this close to her in Texas so that it is manageable, but she has not gotten a reply from her yet.

Carol asked if Susan and Melissa had reached out to other employee associations to see if they had met with or had a need for a CPA. Melissa noted that she wants to make sure we are okay for several reasons – at the forefront, it is with the work underway for the scholarship program, but she stated this really started with us receiving \$30,000 in donations from Judy Bryant. But, now, even moreso and importantly is that we need to consider that with the development of the *Elders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* book, and the work with the Elders' Council, we are looking at developing a relationship with the Leonardo Di Caprio Foundation (LDF). Melissa added that she and Tanya are getting ready to meet with representatives from the LDF and Melissa wants to ensure that our 501(c)3 status is in good standing and that we can receive funds from a Foundation such as this. Melissa went on to add that we are also trying to revamp the Bylaws at this time, and even though there are a lot of things going on, it is very important as we move forward that we make sure we are in good shape, that we have our ducks in a row – and especially because we are doing somethings we've never done before and we are receiving money we have never received before.

Melissa feels that if it costs us \$500 to have an audit and consultation with a qualified CPA, then she feels it is worth the investment, and we can build a stronger program with our Association.

Melissa reported that when she and Susan started working on developing the application, they approached it with pie-in-the-sky eyes – trying to capture everything that had been discussed and envisioned by our members for a comprehensive scholarship program – STEM, non-STEM, professional development, project work in Indian Country, etc., and, to provide support of our AIANEA community. Melissa clarified that with Noller's recent comment, it appears that he was discussing the addition of professional development and rules regarding awarding money to an employee for professional development and/or travel. Melissa added that this was added to the scholarship program because this was something that the Women in NRCS (WiN) organization recently provided for their national training, and it might be something we could do especially in light of such tight budgets. Susan added that she has started looking into this.

Discussions followed.

Carol asked that someone take the lead on this. Carol stated that she asked Pam but she has not heard back from her. Melissa stated that she had talked with Pam and asked her if she wanted her to look for someone in Abilene, or if she wanted to look in Temple. Melissa shared that she and Pam are trying to work on this. Susan asked that we need to make sure that this is an outside consultant and not a family member. Carol stated that we will get guidance and seek an outside CPA. Carol asked Melissa to take care of this.

2. Bylaws Committee – Melissa Sturdivant

Melissa stated that no new updates were ready. She had edited the Bylaws and sent that out, but had only heard back from one person to date.

i. New Business.

1. *National Council Vacancies.* Carol asked Melissa to discuss this. Carol asked Melissa if she would reach out to Melissa Allen and see if she can help her with the questions she has. Melissa said she would take care of it. The *Southeast Regional Rep* position was filled by David Elliott but David felt that he could not continue in this capacity. He had asked Debbie Henry to sit on his behalf and Debbie had been able to do this in the interim, but she asked that we seek out someone to permanently fill this position. Melissa Allen sat in for Debbie on several teleconferences. The SE position term will end in 2018, so the person appointed for the remainder of the term would be in this position until December 2018.

*Northern Plains Regional Rep* – This position was vacated when Cameron Clark took on the leadership role as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Carol shared that Derek has taken a new position, but would consider continuing to work as the South Central Rep. Elections for regional representative positions for this year will occur for Northern Plains, Northeast and South Central positions. If elections are held, candidates would be nominated, and elections held by December and they would take office in January 2018. It is a two-year commitment for these positions.

Carol will send an email Yvette and see if we can recruit for these positions and prepare the ballot.

2. *2019 National Training.* Carol reported that we are starting to develop the planning committee for the training, and she asked for volunteers to help with this. The training will be conducted in Spokane. If anyone is interested, please send Carol an email. Debe would like to be involved in this, but she is still trying to determine her workload in the near future.
3. *Articles of Incorporation.* Carol discussed that this needs to be addressed. Carol reported that the changes were made to the Articles and Pam sent this back to Arizona, but there are still problems. The state requires that someone in the entity reside in Arizona, and we are faced with making some decisions about what to do.

Carol asked about the feasibility of moving our 501(c)3 to another state such as Texas. Everyone agrees that this is the best option and makes the most sense with Pam located in Texas. Melissa added that the CPA should be able to help with this. Carol added that with Pam handling the funds and our accounts headquartered in Texas, this should not be a problem. Carol will talk with Pam about this.

- j. Carol extended her appreciation to those Council members and guests attending and with no further business, she asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting at 2:05 pm, Central.

*1<sup>st</sup> motion:* Debe Walchuk

*2<sup>nd</sup> motion:* Susan Looper

Next scheduled meetings are planned for September 27 at 1 pm, Central.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Melissa Sturdivant, AIANEA National Council Secretary. Please respond to [melissa.sturdivant@tx.usda.gov](mailto:melissa.sturdivant@tx.usda.gov) with questions or comments.