

CONSTITUTION REFORM CONVENTION  
BOIS FORTE – FORTUNE BAY CASINO  
FEBRUARY 15, 2019  
10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Leech Lake Delegates Attending: Rose Robinson, Clinton Fairbanks, David Jackson, Carrie Day Aspinwall (Rich), Jason Decker, and Sally Fineday

Discussion of who shall take Lenny's speaker responsibilities today; all agreed Jason Decker.

Discussion of the shortage of Delegates today; all agreed to credential the other Leech Lake citizens who are in attendance – Donita Odden, Wally and Debbie Storbakken and Dale Green.

The meeting began with a smudging, a prayer, and a traditional rice and berry mix. Announcements were made that if non-Delegates wished to speak, they are to bring their voice to the Delegate group to bring forward.

**PRIORITY ISSUES AND PREAMBLE**

LL – Education of the people must occur and it is too soon to officiate writing the preamble without proper input from many.

BF – Include protection of land

FDL – Develop themes, i.e., natural law, spiritual law, and harmony

ML – Rewrite Preamble and are starting to educate self and future changes

WE – Premature to write Preamble; proposed five options to move forward

BF – Develop education pieces so that there's a uniform piece; need education people while Delegates continue working on language simultaneously

FDL – As Delegates can prepare as we move forward

**OPTION PUT FORTH**

1. Stop working on Preamble and focus on education
2. Continue to work on Constitution while educating communities

Discussion took place of options. Need to keep moving forward as well as educating and structuring the education piece. Education piece to include – nation, rights, identification is huge, clans, heros; educate where there is already an audience such as State of the Band address and bingo in the communities.

Big question – how do we want to move forward – 1) Alliance of MN Chippewa Tribes; 2) each Tribe will develop and maintain its own constitution.

**GROUND RULES FOR VOTING**

Discussion of the proposal from LL.

Vote – 1 vote per Tribe, If no consensus, then

Give each Delegate who disagrees 3 minutes to speak and educate about why not

Vote - 1 vote per Tribe, If no consensus, then

Break out into Clans to discuss

Vote – 1 vote per Tribe, if still no consensus, then

Vote with each individual Delegate giving their individual vote

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

FDL wants Clans to break out first, then the Tribes

Decided cannot change the discussion at this time, vote on the LL proposal took place

LL – yea

FDL – undecided

ML – abstain

WE – no

Bois Fort – Yea

Agreed no vote today without the input of Grand Portage who are absent due to the loss of Norman Deschaump

Dale Green – No one has the right to speak for me; the Delegates should have officers, and there should be committees to work on Preamble and Education of citizens

Carrie Day Aspinwall – Asked to put the meeting minutes on the Band website

## **CLAN DISCUSSION**

WE – Clan roles have not been made clear

ML – No decision without Grand Portage

LL – Clan system had been in place for millennium

After all discussion, it was agreed if a Delegation cannot attend then Convention should be cancelled.

Still no decision on how to come to consensus.

## **PRIORITIZE TOPICS**

Jason Decker spoke about the 1825 Treaty of Ojibwe/Dakota north of the river was to be Ojibwe territory. Not all chiefs were present. 1826 Chiefs who were not present were now present; secured their input all was well with the 1825 Treaty.

A hand raise for Clans present was conducted:

Eagle – 5

Crane – 2

Fish – 4

Bear – 9

King Fisher – 1

Loon – none

Marten – 2

Bijiou – 2

Caribou – none

Maaingan – 1

Turtle – 1 (fish)

## **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Set Agenda for future meetings. BF – break into Article.

LL – each article for each meeting

LL – Overarching alliance with other tribes/confederacy; then each nation have its own constitution and laws. Power in numbers and honor our differences. Still need articles for economics and legalities. It's going to take some time.

WE – Asked Confederacy and Clans how? Dale Green responded with the Indian Reorganization Act, came the MCT constitution, Federal Statute #48 Article 1, MCT granted under that act as a corporate charter. MCT incorporated as a body of politics of the US Congress. Can Congress get rid of MCT with their political power? US Supreme Court vs. Menominee 1968 states US Congress cannot take away treaty rights or reservation taken away from treaties. Congress doesn't give us our rights. Delegates must understand what we are reforming. Personally, keep MCT as is with an Amendment process. MCT constitution to create forum to meet our needs. Treaty is the law of the land; LL and WE come from several different Bands. Example: Parts of SW are Ojibwe; Algonquin language from Florida to the plains. We Ojibwe are the largest in population. Shawnees speak Algonquin spectrum as well as Western tribes. Dale is a hostile not found on a reservation; MCT/LLBO; Mdewewin creation stories; he accepts who he is. All must accept who they are as Ojibwe. All are enrolled in the MCT Tribe not at the local level. What's the process if going to break away?

WE – Tara Mason inquired of formal way to get to the Interior. We need to collect points and questions from the interior? Federation – same; constitution – individual to each tribe.

WEBSITE – Darren (BF) needs a go ahead to do the website.

BF – Sharon Day inquired what best for us? Create new constitution; what are feds to say (limit us); We are true people of this land; what do we have to be afraid of? Let's create the plan. In the past lawyers have rewritten. Our laws predate the US Constitution.

FDL – Ricky Defoe – Cautious of seeing self through others eyes; How do we see selves? BIA? Fed? MCT? How far back do we go? Treaty or beginning?

WE – Declaration of Independence – consider? Discussion of break away from MCT to stand on Treaty. Prepare for survival; use resources to trade with other tribes; each village makes something to trade; prepare youth who will have to know basic skills.

BF – Mille – family dynamics are broad.

LL – Wally – own personal knowledge; declaration of independence brought great jeopardy to the colonists from the UK. They treated with the Native Americans which then gave them international level status. They were fledgling wedged into the US Nation – they used treaties with the Indian Nations. What does declaration mean? MCT still gets all funding; we get zero. We need to keep our allies; we must allow self to reunify with other Ojibwe people who may become part of our Nation.

VOTES

Article I – IV

II Membership differences 1) open and 2) closed

Self-rule under the National Constitution if the national constitution gives authority to develop own constitution. Each Nation then may decide for self their per capita or quantum which leads to extinction.

Current is opposite of self-determination. Article I Purpose and Section 16 Act 6/18/34 – 9/84 as amended. Section 1 organization through natural inherent right to determine through self-determination.

In agreement on a larger body than individual Nation. Amend the MCT Constitution to increase our self-determination.

Why constitution reform? For the people; can change the Articles; it is the right of the people.

## **NEXT MEETING**

List of Delegates' names and current email to Darren of BF.

Sidra Starkovich will attend the TEC meeting next week.

What binds us?

1. Enrollment
2. Land base
3. Licensing
4. Elections
5. Government Structure

Do we want to add Clans?

What is needed?

- Economic
- Legal
- Cultural Integrity
- Education
- Traditional leadership base

Clinton Fairbanks announced the next Convention may be held at LL but must be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March at the Northern Lights Casino.

All agreed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Voting rules will be finalized.

March 3<sup>rd</sup> is the next LL Constitution Reform Committee to be held at the Noopiming Community Center from noon to 2pm. Delegates who attended this Convention will report to the Committee and citizens of Noopiming.