

MEETING MINUTES

LANGUAGE ADVISORY BOARD

Date: October 18th, 2023

Meeting Scheduled 4:45 pm – 6:00 pm.

- I. Meeting called to order at 4:48 pm by: Janis Fairbanks, Chairperson
- II. ROLL CALL

Board members:

Present: Sonny Peacock, Vicki Reynolds, Janis Fairbanks, Dawn LaPrairie (via phone)

Absent: Sonny Greensky, Veronica Smith, Wayne Dupuis

Guests present: Arianna Northbird, Shaun Himango Jr., Molly Fineday, Lance Northbird, Alex Kmett, Charlie Smith (declined signing attendance sign-in sheet, arrived to give coordinator's report)

- III. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda by Sonny Peacock seconded by Vicki Reynolds, unanimous approval.

- APPROVAL OF MINUTES of 9/20/2023 meeting

Vicki Reynolds noted section C of September 20, 2023, minutes needed an addition. Has been updated. (See final minutes posted to web page for 9/30/23.

Motion to approve September 20th minutes by Vicki Reynolds seconded by Dawn LaPrairie, unanimous approval.

- IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Board members report on community members responses to the question, "What do you want to see happen with language instruction and cultural activity on Fond du Lac Reservation?"

- 1) Vicki Reynolds spoke with people in Fond du Lac's Human Resources office. A non-native voiced concern of not knowing the why behind the what. When is it appropriate to speak the language? Another person was given information about the current classes available through the Language and Cultural Program.
- 2) Dawn LaPrairie received answers indicating a need for making more entry level language classes available and a language table. Community members also want audio recordings rather than just written language easily available. Can classes and meetings also be available virtually to extend accessibility?
- 3) Sonny Peacock was asked what happened to Kiwenz? The informal setting was very enjoyable and is missed. It gave comfort and ease in learning and speaking the language.

4) Janis Fairbanks provided a written report:

I met with several community members since our September 20, 2023, board meeting. Answers to the question resulted in various responses, as expected. All answers from all community input can be analyzed for patterns.

1. Meeting with a group of 6 members of the Elders' Concerns group resulted in six questions/requests.
 - 1) Come in and present to the group.
 - 2) Every week, we want to learn a new word.
 - 3) We want to learn everyday topics
 - 4) We want to learn greetings.
 - 5) Get a machine with translations. Boise Forte has an app.
 - 6) Street signs should be bilingual. In an emergency, it is hard to give directions to the address.
 - 7) Remember, it is hard for elders to travel around sometimes. Come to them.
 - 8) We want a pronunciation guide.

2. After announcing the October 18, 2023, meeting at the Elders Dinner, two community members came to tell me the answer to the question.
 - 1) One woman wants to teach quilt-making but wants to have someone there to give related Ojibwe words to what is being taught.
 - 2) Another woman is interested in teaching a ribbon skirt making workshop but would like help in buying materials and having someone there to teach the related Ojibwe words to the activity.

3. Visiting Natural Resources and Min No Aya Win to get more answers, the three people I visited gave the following responses.
 - 1) Games would help make learning the language easier.
 - 2) Comment: "I don't speak Ojibwe. I know 'boozhoo' and 'gigawaabamin.' My response. You're speaking Ojibwe!"
 - 3) Board games, Jenga, Go Fish to teach numbers, deck of cards works too.
 - 4) Want to learn introductions.

Additional comments: The elders in the community would like someone able to come to them as transportation proves difficult. Elders expressed concern with Ojibwemowin road names and signs in emergencies due to not being bilingual signage. They cannot pronounce the Ojibwe names to give emergency personnel street addresses. In summary, we need a way for learning to be more accessible, especially for our elders.

Vicki Reynolds reminded those present that all Ojibwemowin road names have translations on the Fond du Lac reservation website. She said Bill Howes has worked with local Law Enforcement ensuring they are aware of the roads, spelling, pronunciation etc. Janis thanked Vicki for the information but stated that some elders do not have or use online access, so we need to find a way to meet elders' needs as they have expressed them. Research will continue for more community responses.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Keynote speaker Alex Kmett presented regional curriculum planning. Alex Kmett is from Red Lake and has lived here since 2015. He has been teaching for a decade and received his master's degree in 2021. He spoke of the difficulties that we are facing in opening and running language immersion programs. There is a difficulty finding teachers who are qualified and struggles in keeping teachers from burnout. Another challenge in creating curriculum is that a one-hour session of recording dictation for an adult language lesson is 70 hours of transcription work. Alex is working towards using existing lessons and curriculum materials and indigenizing them to help lessen loads on teachers. The most important aspect is that there is a cohesive and unified approach to teaching the language because of loss of first-generation speakers. The best strategy now is to start immersion young, kids aged kindergarten, or even preschool, to second grade and build the program up from there. A large-scale K-12 program is simply overwhelming at this point in time. Consistency is key and sometimes problems arise when kids transfer schools or leave immersion. There is an immense number of resources available online, but the issue comes with turning those resources into a cohesive learning program based on scope and sequence.

B. Questions and Answers for Alex:

Q1: When did you start formally learning Ojibwe?

Q2: Are we locked in to colonial teaching ways of measuring students learning and deadlines?

Q3: What are some of the online resources?

A1: Learned some informally as a kid, started learning at 17 years old. Has hit many plateaus in his learning and his last big breakthrough was in 2016 while studying at Mille Lacs learning about word roots.

A2: It is important that we make our own standards to follow. Source community knowledge to gather input for language learning and intergenerational transmission. Find existing resources and indigenize them.

A3: Indian Land Tenure Foundation has Lessons of the Land curriculum and lesson plans online. It is a K-12 made out of Minneapolis but because curriculum standards are updated every ten years, and we are now in that phase, all standards are now outdated. There are also 500 videos on YouTube, some made in Toronto, but these videos would need to be organized into a manageable scope and sequence curriculum to be of greatest use.

C. TRAVEL REQUEST

Travel Request for board members to attend Red Lake immersion program Grand Opening on November 1st 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

- Motion to approve travel request for Janis Fairbanks by Vicki Reynolds seconded by Sonny Peacock, unanimous approval.
- Motion to approve travel request for Dawn LaPrairie by Sonny Peacock seconded by Vicki Reynolds, unanimous approval.

D. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT – Janis Fairbanks

Committee Members are Janis Fairbanks, Dawn LaPrairie, and Wayne Dupuis. Janis and Wayne had a brief discussion of having the full board consider whether we should remove board members after three missed meetings as stated in the bylaws, amending the bylaws, or meeting the challenge of keeping a quorum when board members are consistently missing meetings. The committee decided to hold discussion for the next meeting.

E. FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE – Vicki Reynolds

Budget for 2023 Language Advisory board was approved by the RBC. The board budget of \$6,480 was requested and approved for 2023. Our 2024 budget request of \$33,600 is pending review by RBC. For 2023 there is an allocation of \$400 for food and beverages. Division Director Jeff Savage told the Language Advisory Board to ask Language Program staff to handle language advisory board meets. Charles Smith ordered Subway for the previous meeting for 75 people and the bill totaled \$480. This amount exceeded the budget allocation for food expense and was paid by Charles Smith out of Language and Cultural Center budget. The board thanked him for his donation. Tonight's food total was \$48 from Domino's to feed approx. 15 people coming out of the board's budget.

F. NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Veronica Smith

Committee chair absent so Janis stated that she had spoken with Veronica and the report is that there are no updates and no current elections, so no need for committee action at this time.

G. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE – Wayne Dupuis

Written report sent to board members, committee chair absent. Committee Chair Dupuis requested time to study the plan for the next two meetings special board meetings. He will provide a report once the meetings are done.

H. BYLAWS REVIEW COMMITTEE – Sonny Peacock, Committee Chair

Janis Fairbanks submitted a review of her observations and recommendations to Sonny Peacock, with a working copy sent to board members for their review. The committee will submit a request for needed amendments to the legal department before submitting the bylaws to the RBC.

Charles Smith commented that the October meeting is the last meeting of the year for the Language Advisory Board according to the current bylaws. Sonny and Janis pointed out that the bylaws allow for special meetings and November and December are special meetings with the purpose of the meetings clearly stated. Charles found a missing hyphen. The bylaws review committee will be holding meetings to address all issues before submitting a request for amended bylaws to the RBC. One amendment is to request monthly board meetings as well as the quarterly community meetings and special meetings if needed.

I. HOSPITALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE – Dawn LaPrairie

A more accurate numbers of attendees is needed for future planning. Payment procedure has been discussed with Charles Smith. The Language Advisory Board has an account number provided by the CFO for a line-item Language Advisory account # 88-6390 nested within the Language and Cultural Program Budget for Language Advisory expenditures per CFO Chris Hammitt. That line item contains the full budget for the Language Advisory

expenditures and will be monitored by the Finance and Budget Committee Chair of the Language Advisory Board who will share her review with the Finance and Budget Committee and a monthly report to the Language Advisory Board.

J. LANGUAGE PROGRAM UPDATE FROM CHARLES SMITH

Focus this month was directed towards the Indigenous Day activities taking place on October 9, 2023, at Kiwenz Campground. 120 people attended the event and most of the funding for that event was used for prizes to “give back to the community.” The Language program is now directing its focus to preparing for Winter stories, a second annual Gala hosted at Black Bear, and symposium planned for 2024. The Language Program is traveling to Albuquerque, New Mexico in November to accept an award with details to come soon online!

K. OPEN DISCUSSION COMMUNITY INPUT

Janis Fairbanks had requests from community members to make board meetings available on Zoom as well as in person. We want to meet the need for people who requested online access to attend the meetings. Lance Northbird informed the Band will be transitioning to Microsoft 360 Teams as an organization in the near future. Charles Smith stated that the board will need to provide their own laptop, microphone, and speakers for this as the Language and Cultural Center is not yet equipped to host virtual meetings. Vicki Reynolds offered to set up her computer to host zoom sessions.

L. Special Board meetings scheduled November 15, 2023, and December 20, 2023, on Wednesdays from 4:45 pm – 6:00 pm to work on bylaws and review strategic plan. Quarterly Community meetings and the meeting Calendar for 2024 will be decided and posted to web page in November. The board will be discussing possibly moving meetings to Thursdays to minimize scheduling conflicts.

VI. Motion to adjourn by Vicki Reynolds seconded by Dawn LaPrairie, meeting Adjourned at 6:18 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Molly Fineday, reviewed by Janis Fairbanks