

**Spirit Lake Tribe
General Assembly Meeting
February 27, 2024**



Present: Lonna J. Street, Tribal Chairwoman
ReNa Lohnes, Vice Chairwoman/Mission District Representative
Charmayne Bohanon, Secretary Treasurer
Kimberly Three Irons, Fort Totten District Representative
Darren Walking Eagle, Crow Hill District Representative

Absent: Kooper Longie, Woodlake District Representative – leave

Location: Tribal Conference Room

Guests: Kenneth Greywater Jr., THPO Director
Richard Yankton, Mission District Election Committee member
Cora Whiteman, Executive Secretary to Tribal Chairwoman

Lonna J. Street, Tribal Chairwoman calls the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m.
Prayer by Elder Oliver Gourd Sr.

1. Welcome

Chairwoman Street extends a thank you to the tribal members who are in attendance for the General Assembly and would like to thank our Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for giving an update on the Spirit Lake Tribe and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate 1867 Treaty Day celebration.

2. Kenneth Graywater Jr., THPO – Spirit Lake Tribe/Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Treaty Day

Mr. Greywater informs the public that the event was held in Sisseton, SD, and some of our Elders were in attendance. Louie Garcia presented at the event on the Spirit Lake Tribe history. There were also other events such as round dances, making ribbon skirts/shirts, moccasins, and there were also hand games going on at the event.

A community member shares that our youth should be involved in this treaty day event because they can learn a lot about their language and culture. Next year the tribal members would like to see our youth participate in this event. Oliver Gourd Sr. informs the public that there is an upcoming language bowl and strongly encourages everyone to watch out for the announcement.

Mr. Greywater informs the public that hair clippings were discovered and traced back to our Ancestors, he will travel to pick up the hair clippings and bring them home. The people will need to help decide how we plan to handle these hair clippings.

3. Spirit Lake Tribe – Election Committee update

A tribal member would like to know who the members are on the Election Committee, when did they received their oath of office, and letters sent on behalf of the election committee should be on an official letterhead. These committee members need to be properly orientated and follow the laws.

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Tribal members share concerns about Resolution A05-24-251 where Kooper motioned to approve Richard Yankton to serve as the Mission District Committee member and it is not allowable to change board members on the day the committee is going to meet.

Richard Yankton, Mission District Election Committee member states that the committee did follow the Constitution and Bylaws and precedence that was previously set, but that does not make it correct. Section three, article 4 gives the Tribal Council the authority to appoint committee members. There are changes to the Constitution and everyone needs to pay attention to the changes. Our Ancestors gave us the Constitution and Bylaws as a guide for the Tribe.

Discussion begins on a petition that was turned in on February 22, 2024, and Richard wasn't appointed until February 23, 2024. Debates begin about whether the Tribal Council was ethical or unethical by replacing June Gourd with Richard Yankton to serve as the Election Committee member for the Mission District.

Oralia Diaz states that the one-thousand-and-nine (1009) individuals that the election committee used to deny the petition include children. A determination needs to be made on whether we use the current population or if we use the registered voter.

Cora Whiteman explains that every year the Tribe does toys for the children of the tribe and how she gets the list of the number of children in each district is from Enrollment. They have a list for enrolled members with the different age ranges.

Shantel Dubois states that the election committee gets to decide which number they use such as the registered voter or the enrollment number.

Jeannie Cavanaugh states that in order for a tribal member to carry a petition he/she needs to live here on the Reservation. She informs the public that previously a non-enrolled member carried a petition on the Tribal Chairwoman Peggy L. Cavanaugh.

Vice-Chairwoman/Mission District Representative Lohnes states that her previous board member June Gourd requested to no longer serve on the election committee due to errors with a prior situation. Right now, the current Election Committee consists of the following: Wanda Thomas – Crow Hill District; Roanna Demarce – Fort Totten District; Richard Yankton – Mission District; Samantha Leftbear – Woodlake District.

Valerie Yankton informs the public that the enrollment committee requested to have the Tribal Council get a forensic audit done. Chairwoman Street states that she will have the procurement department obtain three bids for a company to complete this forensic audit.

Josie Lawrence states that at the last Mission District meeting he motioned that both parents need to be enrolled with the Spirit Lake Tribe for people to serve on the Tribal Council.

Kenneth Baker Jr states that when eligible tribal members sign their names to vote that is when he/she becomes a registered voter. The Constitution and Bylaws need to include an Ethics Code for situations that have occurred with current tribal council members to be addressed.

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Valerie Yankton states that she would like to redistrict the four districts within the Tribe to get equal representation.

Chairwoman Street informs the public that these are all changes that we need to work on and get more involvement from the tribal members.

Ila McKay states that any changes made to the Constitution and Bylaws must have a referendum vote.

4. Cora Whiteman, Executive Secretary, - Spirit Lake Tribe Rent-to-Own home application process.

Cora Whiteman is collecting the rent-to-own home applications from Fort Totten District members, Penelope Yankton is collecting Mission District members applications, and Deb LaVallie is collecting Crow Hill and Woodlake District member's applications.

Currently there are eight (8) homes available in the Fort Totten District and Representative Three Irons formed a committee that consists of district members: Christopher Cavanaugh, Lisa Burdick, Jessica McKay, Al Thompson – alternate. They will oversee screening applicants and selecting which applicants will be approved for the rent-to-own home.

Kenneth Baker Jr. suggests that the Tribal Council use a random drawing out of a hat style to be fair to all the applicants who apply.

Christopher McCloud states that he would like to serve on the Mission District committee that will select applicants for the rent-to-own homes.

5. Other

Discussion begins on replacing all the current board members, getting the new members sworn into office, and proper orientation for board members.

Josie Lawrence states that he wants the Elder Advisory Board back and Valerie Yankton states that her and Peggy L. Cavanaugh never received a resolution from when they were voted in on Elders Day Out to serve on the Elderly Advisory Board.

Valerie Yankton states that she wants something done to Vanessa Thomas, former Senior Services Director instead she transferred to another job within the Tribe.

Clarise Brownshield states that the Secretary Treasurer needs to record all comments of the People. Oliver Gourd states that Melvine Merrick brought up school employees who were making our kids cry and nothing was done about it. This is a form of child abuse, and something needs to be done.

Roger Yankton Sr., states that the boards need to be properly orientated and there is a lady and ND Jobs who does orientation. We need to follow precedence that was previously set and get the board

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members training otherwise we will still be in the same situation. The school board failed to protect our children.

Roger Yankton Sr., requests to have another District meeting; ReNa Lohnes, Vice-Chairwoman/Mission District Representative states that if people can conduct themselves in a civil manner and if district members are willing to help conduct the meeting, then she will consider having another meeting.

Ila McKay states that Oliver Gourd's concern about the kids at school being mistreated has been addressed by the Tribal Council. We still have kids being treated the same way the nuns treated us before.

ReNa Lohnes, Vice-Chairwoman/Mission District Representative, states that the Tribal Council did have a meeting with the Tate Topa tribal school staff and they informed us about how the children are being treated.

Darcie Delorme informs the public that our Native teachers call our kids half breeds and name call them. We need to quit tearing each other down for not being a real native.

Duane Jackson Sr., states that we need to quit being negative and stop bringing this into our kids' lives. The Council can do a lot with the voice of the people.

Jeannie Cavanaugh asks why can't the Tribal Council appoint a school advocate? Chairwoman Street states that the Council can work on this.

Valerie Yankton states that Davey Davidson has worked at the school for many years, he could be that advocate rather than Council creating another position.

Josie Lawrence states that education starts in the home, parents and grandparents need to start teaching the language and how to pray.

Discussion begins on Dakota Language; Oliver Gourd states that the language needs to be taught more than twice a week. He would like to have the language be taught on a weekly schedule, the same as a math class would be taught.

Josie Lawrence states that he wants the Tribal Council to attend Cankdeska Cikana Community College to learn the language.

Clarice Lawrence states that Marva Tollefson's program does not teach the language and all that program is doing is getting correction pronunciation and spelling. Marva should include the Elders who helped her with her book.

Chairwoman Street would like the Elders to work together to create a book with the different dialects from the districts.

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Duane Jackson Sr., states that the Elders are holding back the revitalization of the language, and we need things to run smoothly and work together. We need to work on ideas that can help make change. It is our downfall that we like to argue.

Discussion begins on the Tribal Council needing to bring back the Dakota Language board, this board made sure the kids were being taught and the Tribe needs this board.

Discussion begins on February 23, 2024, Tribal Council meeting minutes that was conducted and completed in five minutes. This is not efficient time to decide on Richard Yankton to serve on the election committee and this wouldn't be enough time to decide to demote a director and put Jolene Crosswhite in charge of the Victim Assistance Program.

Valerie Yankton states that Jolene Crosswhite does not have the qualifications to run that program and Erica Thompson has a master's degree.

Chairwoman Street states that the Tribal Council needed to address the Victim Assistance Program, it wasn't providing services to victims. BIA law enforcement, the Criminal Investigator, and other entities reported that Spirit Lake does not provide services to victims. We did the program assessment and asked for improvements to be made but nothing was done.

Darren Walking Eagle, Crow Hill District Representative states that the Council took this action to ensure that the people are receiving the services that are offered.

Discussion begins on the purchase of the Tokio General Store; the intent was to get our land back and have another business to generate revenue for the Tribe.

Discussion begins on the need for a treatment center because all of our Enrolled members are going to California. Chairwoman Street states that we have a treatment center here that people need to use and the Council can ban that organization from the Spirit Lake Tribe.

Roger Yankton Sr., states that this administration lacks public administration, and we need to hold weekly meetings. The Tribe also needs to work on a comprehensive health plan, we need infrastructure, and our health center needs doctors.

Discussion begins on the Tiwahe healing village homes that need to be cleaned and we can't use that facility. We are trying to receive some of the bond funds to correct the shelter, healing village homes, and the homes by the powwow grounds that tested positive for methamphetamine.

Shantel Dubois states that she had asked EPA to test her home for methamphetamine, but EPA told her that the Tribal Council had to approve this first.

Darren Walking Eagle, Crow Hill District Representative, states that he did stop EPA from testing Shantel Dubois' home because it is the responsibility of the contractor and now that contractor is stating that we aren't able to be positive that it is his crew that cause those homes to test positive.

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Chairwoman Street states that the contractor Chris Dumont was awarded the contractor for the projects and his subcontractors also worked on the buildings. It is expensive to get those affected homes and buildings cleaned and we are working on getting this done.

Valerie Yankton states that Al Gleason and Galen Robertson were blacklisted from doing work with the Tribe when Carl Walking Eagle and Mark Lufkins served on Council.

Discussion begins on Crow Hill district members' homes that need to be addressed; ReNa Lohnes, Vice-Chairwoman/Mission District Representative states that the contractor Kris Proux worked on those homes and there was a warranty. Darren Walking Eagle, Crow Hill District Representative will need to contact him to get those fixed.

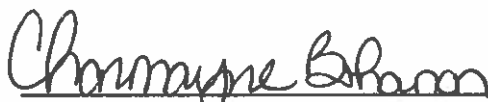
Discussion begins on the Spirit Lake Casino & Resort's General Manager, Paul Matheny's contract ended on February 19, 2024, and it was decided to appoint him as the General Manager until a decision is made on the new General Manager position.

Tribal members inquire about Kooper Longie, Woodlake District Representative, incident at the Spirit Lake Casino & Resort auditorium. Chairwoman Street states that Representative Longie was suspended for two weeks due to that incident.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned as Secretary-Treasurer of the Tribal Council, do hereby certify that the Tribal Council is composed of six (6) members of whom five (5) were present, constituting a quorum for a General Assembly meeting duly called and convened on this 27th day of February, 2024 and approved these General Assembly meeting minutes by certification of signature of the Spirit Lake Tribal Chairwoman and Secretary Treasurer.


Charmayne Bohanon
Secretary Treasurer




Lonna J. Street
Tribal Chairwoman