



STATE-TRIBAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

67th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Bob Brown
Mike Fox
Jason Small
Susan Webber

HOUSE MEMBERS

Casey Knudsen
Joe Read
Tyson Running Wolf
Lola Sheldon-Galloway
Frank Smith
Sharon Stewart Peregoy

COMMITTEE STAFF

Pad McCracken - Research Analyst
Bethany McDowell - Secretary
Laura Sankey Keip - Attorney

MINUTES LOG

April 07, 2022
Poplar, MT
Helena, Montana

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Tyson Running Wolf, Chair (D)
Sen. Bob Brown (R)
Sen. Mike Fox (D)
Rep. Casey Knudsen (R)
Rep. Joe Read (R)
Rep. Lola Sheldon-Galloway (R)
Rep. Frank Smith (D)
Sen. Susan Webber (D)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Jason Small (R)
Rep. Sharon Stewart Peregoy (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Pad McCracken, Research Analyst
Bethany McDowell, Secretary
Laura Sankey Keip, Attorney

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

COMMITTEE ACTION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

10:08:12 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf-D called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

Opening Remarks and Introductions

10:11:52 Tribal councilmembers, legislators, and visitors introduced themselves to the committee.

DISCUSSION WITH FT. PECK TRIBAL COUNCIL

10:14:54 Tribal Chairman Floyd Azure welcomed the committee and gave opening remarks on behalf of the Ft. Peck Tribal Council.

10:17:24 Rep. Running Wolf gave opening remarks on behalf of the State-Tribal Relations Committee.

10:22:03 Wayne Martell, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, discussed the issues surrounding water lines and roads on the reservation.

10:24:38 Mr. Azure voiced his concerns regarding Medicare expansion on the reservation and additional medical funding.

10:27:02 Rep. Running Wolf commented on the process of acquiring third-party billing and Blackfeet reservation's experience in acquiring it.

10:27:59 Mr. Azure described some of the work that the council has done with the state and the benefits of that work.

10:30:15 Rep. Running Wolf commented on the water treatment plans across the reservation.

10:30:54 Mr. Azure responded to Rep. Running Wolf's comment.

10:31:28 Mr. Martel asked the Tribal Economic Program Director, Rodney Miller, to talk about access to Medicaid on the reservation.

10:32:07 Mr. Miller talked about Medicaid projects on the reservation and asked the committee about the importance of Medicaid throughout Montana and if it is supported in the legislature.

10:33:45 Rep. Smith responded by commenting on the work he's done relating to Medicaid rates.

10:36:20 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway described the reasons that Medicaid was not supported by some legislators in the House. She asked the Council to help the committee understand how to better help the Council regarding Medicaid. She described some ways that the reservation can acquire Medicaid expansion.

10:38:22 Rep. Running Wolf stated that it would be beneficial for the council to communicate with committee regarding their needs so that the legislators can be prepared to look into bills related to the council's requests.

10:39:14 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked the council to communicate with their legislators regarding projects that work or don't work.

10:40:32 Mr. Azure asked Rep. Sheldon-Galloway about individuals on the different Medicaid programs that she mentioned earlier.

10:40:49 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway stated that she would get more precise information to the council regarding the different programs and the qualifications for each of those programs.

10:41:51 Rep. Running Wolf mentioned the representation that the committee has on the reservation on behalf of the state.

10:42:41 Mr. Martel asked if the council needed to vote on a representative.

10:43:05 Carolyn Brugh, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, stated that the council appreciates the representatives that are sent to communicate between the tribe and state.

10:44:22 Marva Chapman, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, commented on the reservation's water project. She continued by discussing the use of opioids and other drugs across the reservation. She voiced her support for medical marijuana. Ms. Chapman asked about Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and if it is intended that the tribes receive some of that funding.

10:49:15 Ms. Brugh asked for assistance to make dental offices more accessible to tribe members on the reservation.

10:51:08 Mr. Azure commented on the lack of hospitals on the reservation and the work that their doctors are able to do onsite. He asked the committee to remain mindful of the assistance needed in creating a hospital on the reservation.

10:52:41 Rep. Running Wolf asked Mr. Azure about the tribal hospital and the services provided there.

10:53:44 Rep. Smith commented on the lack of VA assistance in certain parts of the state as well as the cost of medical transfers from hospitals within the state.

10:58:35 Lawrence Hamilton, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, asked about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) objectives regarding SB 312.

10:59:28 Sen. Webber discussed the intention of some legislators to request more funding for MMIW initiatives. She described the process of requesting and receiving additional funding as well as the status of the acquisition of additional funds for the program.

11:01:31 Mr. Hamilton responded by describing the differences in exposure of missing indigenous kids versus nonindigenous kids.

11:02:33 Sen. Webber stated that legislators and leaders need to work on publicizing missing indigenous peoples.

11:03:25 Ms. Chapman mentioned a young lady who has been missing from the reservation since 1983.

11:03:36 Sen. Webber stated the necessity of raising awareness with aggressive publicity regarding missing indigenous peoples.

11:04:09 Sen. Brown voiced his support for acquiring additional funding for MMIW programs. He stated that the cause of problems surrounding missing indigenous peoples needs to be addressed as well as the effect. He continued by stating that these are state issues, not just issues of the reservation, and he would support whatever needed to be done in order to progress.

11:10:38 Shannon Martell, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, mentioned the Violence Against Women's Act from the federal government and asked whether the bill was also a priority for the state.

11:11:44 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway responded by asking the council to look at previous meetings of the committee and discuss what could be done differently in certain areas. She continued by describing the issues behind waiting 48 hours to declare a missing person.

11:15:16 Mr. Hamilton stated that the MMIW/MMIP officer should communicate with the tribal leaders with updates and questions regarding policies related to the program. He continued by stating that the proposed funding for MMIW is inadequate.

11:16:00 Ms. Brugh stated that she was impressed by the immediacy of the Blackfeet reservation's ability to find missing children.

11:17:27 Mr. Azure mentioned a collaboration between the tribal reservation and the city of Wolf Point to find a missing child a few years back and the impressive effort put forth.

11:18:19 Ms. Chapman commented on the demonstration of the kit that makes it easier to find children.

11:19:12 Jill Read, wife of Rep. Read and public member of the audience, voiced her opinions on the treatment of children today.

11:21:32 Rep. Read described his work with the Montana Highway Patrol and the similar issues with murder and abduction.

11:23:18 Melvin Rattling Thunder, Ft. Peck tribal councilmember, described the efforts setup by the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). He stated that initiatives similar to SORNA need to be constantly improved.

11:28:03 Rep. Running Wolf commented on marijuana use and voiced his support for the reservation's fight to get it legalized. He also commented on the reservation's issue with fentanyl and suggested that tribes collaborate with one another to work to improve those kinds of issues. He continued by stating that the MMIW bill is not adequately funded.

Fee-to-Trust; Land Status

11:34:06 Pad McCracken, Research Analyst, opened discussion on fee-to-trust conversion. (Exhibit 1)

11:38:55 Mr. Azure described the reservation's experience with fee land and the efforts to transfer some of that land into trust land.

11:39:02 Gordon Oelkers, Commissioner for Roosevelt County, commented on the work related to the roads and federal funding on road projects and how it relates to the fee-to-trust issue.

11:41:38 Rep. Running Wolf asked Mr. Oelkers how much the county receives in PILT funding.

11:41:54 Mr. Oelkers responded to Rep. Running Wolf's question.

11:42:15 Mr. Azure commented on the challenges with working alongside the cities near the reservation compared to challenges with working alongside the counties.

11:43:25 Rep. Read commented on the issue of fee-to-trust and the differences in funding between counties. He voiced his intention to request that payment in lieu of taxes be authorized by the federal government.

11:46:27 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked the council which cities in the reservation are incorporated.

Voting Access - Satellite/Alternate Election Offices

11:47:24 Mr. Azure introduced an additional councilmember to talk about satellite voting offices on the reservation.

Committee Questions/Discussion

- 11:48:50 Sen. Webber asked for clarification as to whether the gentleman was referring to "satellite" offices or "alternate" voting offices.
- 11:49:54 Mr. Oelker described the satellite office in his county and the collaboration between the county commissioners and clerks and tribal councilmembers during voting season.
- 11:52:20 Rep. Running Wolf commented on the work of the council.
- 11:52:51 Ms. Brugh asked if there was anywhere in the state that allows for registration renewals to be done through a DMV kiosk.
- 11:53:24 Rep. Read stated that in Lake County there is an agreement between the county and CSKT for the offices on the reservation to distribute registrations, which is also allowed by the state.
- 11:55:18 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway stated that she gets her tags in the mail.

Public Comment on any matter within STRC's jurisdiction

- 11:57:09 None

Closing Remarks

- 11:57:13 Rep. Running Wolf gave closing remarks on behalf of the committee.
- 11:57:40 Mr. Azure gave closing remarks on behalf of the council.

ADJOURNMENT

- 11:59:22 Rep. Running Wolf adjourned the meeting at 11:59am.