



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

Hope Stockwell - Research Analyst
Laura Sankey - Attorney
Laura Sherley - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

July 23, 2021

Blackfeet Tribal Business Council Chambers
Browning, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Tyson Running Wolf, Chair (D)

Sen. Jason Small, Vice-Chair (R)

Sen. Bob Brown (R)

Sen. Mike Fox (D)

Sen. Susan Webber (D)

Rep. Frank Smith, Chair (D)

Rep. Joe Read (R)

Rep. Lola Sheldon-Galloway (R)

Rep. Sharon Stewart Peregoy (D)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Casey Knudsen (R)

STAFF PRESENT:

Hope Stockwell, Research Analyst

Laura Sankey, Attorney

Pad McCracken, Research Analyst

Laura Sherley, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

COMMITTEE ACTION

The 2021-2022 State-Tribal Relations Committee:

- elected Rep. Tyson Running Wolf as presiding officer and Sen. Jason Small as vice-presiding officer; and
- adopted its procedural rules for the interim. The use of proxy votes is not allowed.

RECONVENE

10:45:49 The State-Tribal meeting reconvened at 10:45 AM.

MEET WITH BLACKFEET TRIBAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

Welcome, Opening Prayer, and Introductions

10:45:50 Council Secretary Lauren Monroe
10:45:55 Council Member Mark Pollock
10:47:41 Rep. Running Wolf gave the opening prayer
10:49:52 Sen. Fox
10:50:24 Rep. Read
10:51:04 Rep. Stewart Peregoy
10:51:40 Rep. Smith
10:52:29 Sen. Webber
10:53:15 Rep. Running Wolf
10:53:54 Rep. Sheldon Galloway
10:54:46 Sen. Brown
10:55:17 Sen. Small
10:55:59 Ms. Stockwell
10:56:13 Ms. Sankey
10:56:30 Mr. McCracken
10:56:40 Ms. Sherley
10:57:03 Don Wilson, Glacier County Treasurer
10:57:37 Jill Read, legislative spouse
10:59:04 Ron Catlett, Sen. Steve Daines' Regional Director

Council and Committee discussion

10:59:16 Secretary Monroe opened the floor for discussion and asked Ms. Stockwell to introduce the STRC's work plan.
10:59:38 Ms. Stockwell spoke on the STRC and the committee's potential 2021-2022 work plan.
11:00:30 Council Member Pollock spoke on the Blackfeet Tribe's governance of and the existing infrastructure of Browning, MT.
11:05:37 Sen. Webber spoke on her Local Government Interim Committee membership and responded to Council Member Pollock's comments regarding Browning's infrastructure needs. Council Member Pollock responded to Sen. Webber's recommendations.
11:08:40 Mr. Wilson spoke on the unincorporated status of Browning and funding that was go to the county for infrastructure needs when the city government disbanded. Council Member Pollock responded to Mr. Wilson's comments.
11:10:42 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked for clarification on the Siyeh Corporation and if it receives funding from the city's leftover money. Dawn Grey, Blackfeet Nation Managing Attorney, responded.

11:12:57 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway spoke on the League of Cities and Towns and potential technical assistance it could give to help non-incorporated towns.

11:14:07 Sen. Webber commented on prerequisites for incorporating a town. Council Member Pollock responded to Sen. Webber's comments.

11:15:23 Rep. Stewart Peregoy spoke on the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) money and America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money and said the tribe might be eligible for the funding and recommended reaching out to the Department of Commerce.

11:16:26 Secretary Monroe thanked the committee for the information on funding and spoke on voting registration.

11:17:55 Rep. Read commented on grant requests for infrastructure projects. Secretary Monroe responded to Rep. Read's comments.

11:19:57 Secretary Monroe spoke on voting rights. Rep. Running Wolf responded to Secretary Monroe's comments.

11:25:20 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked committee staff to refresh the members on voting law changes that were adopted during the 2021 Legislative Session.

11:26:10 Secretary Monroe spoke on the work of Western Native Voice and voting rights in Indian Country.

11:27:39 Rep. Smith spoke on the history of voting rights in Indian Country, and also spoke on tribal, state, and federal laws.

11:29:27 Ms. Stockwell responded to Rep. Stewart Peregoy's request for information regarding 2021 state legislation related to voting rights. ([Exhibit 1](#))

11:32:02 Council Member Pollock commented on voting rights and election workers in Indian Country and commented on the importance of allowing public comment by people representing Indian Country.

11:40:46 Sen. Brown responded to Council Member Pollock's comments, and asked if research has been done regarding the increase of voters in Indian Country. Council Member Pollock responded to Sen. Brown's question.

11:46:30 Ms. Stockwell clarified the information given regarding voting rights legislation in 2021.

11:47:00 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked the council about elections in Indian Country and if there are best practices the state should consider on a state level. Secretary Monroe and Council Member Pollock responded to Rep. Sheldon-Galloway's question.

11:51:36 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked about the conflict regarding Tribal IDs at polling places. Council Member Pollock responded to the question.

11:53:26 Sen. Webber asked the council and staff about the historical preservation fee at St. Mary's. Council Member Pollock responded to the question. The question was also referred to Mr. Wilson.

11:59:22 Sen. Webber asked for a brief on the fee to trust land conversion process. Council Member Pollock responded to Sen. Webber's comments and Mr. Wilson gave a brief overview.

12:07:57 Council Member Pollock asked Mr. Wilson for his recommendations on the fee to trust land process.

12:09:28 Rep. Running Wolf commented on the fee to trust land conversion process and how the state legislature could assist in the issue.

12:13:39 Mr. Wilson spoke on the history of the Blackfeet lawsuit against the counties. Council Member Pollock thanked Mr. Wilson for his comments and information.

12:17:37 Rep. Read commented on the fee to trust land conversion process. Mr. Wilson responded to the comments.

12:21:47 Sen. Webber spoke on the history of the word 'competency' and what it means as it relates to the fee to trust land conversion process.

12:23:03 Rep. Running Wolf spoke on Indian education, economic developmental funding, revisiting the Gas, Alcohol, and Tobacco tax sharing agreements, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

12:26:27 Council Member Pollock responded to the comments by Rep. Running Wolf, and spoke on the Gas, Alcohol, and Tobacco Tax distributions to the tribes.

12:30:17 Rep. Smith spoke on the Gas, Alcohol, and Tobacco Tax distributions and the legislative intent of the taxes.

LUNCH

13:22:00 Rep. Smith left the meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Committee and staff responsibilities

13:22:56 Ms. Stockwell

13:28:01 Council Member Pollock thanked the committee for their conversation with the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council.

ADOPTION OF STRC RULES

13:28:47 Ms. Stockwell reviewed the rules adopted by Legislative Council for interim committees and asked the committee to determine whether they want to allow the use of proxies this interim. ([Exhibit 2](#))

13:30:08 Sen. Small moved that the 2021-2022 STRC not allow the use of proxies.

Vote:

13:30:17 Carried 7 - 1 by voice vote with Rep. Sheldon-Galloway voting no.

13:30:56 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked the committee for any discussion on any other points in the rules (see Exhibit 2).

13:31:13 Sen. Webber asked how many times have there been STRC subcommittees.

13:32:28 Committee discussion on STRC subcommittees and the rules, procedures, and guidelines of interim committees.

13:37:03 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked about committee travel expenses. Ms. Stockwell responded to the question.

13:37:31 Sen. Small moved to adopt the Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines for Interim Committees with the exception of the section on proxy votes.

Vote:

13:37:41 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

STRC CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR ELECTIONS

13:38:09 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked for nominations for committee chair and referred members to the history of the committee's leadership. ([Exhibit 3](#))

13:39:21 Sen. Webber nominated Rep. Running Wolf as Presiding Chair of the 2021-2022 State-Tribal Relations Committee.

Vote:

13:40:30 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

13:40:53 Rep. Running Wolf thanked the committee for its consideration.

13:41:25 Rep. Stewart Peregoy nominated Sen. Small as Vice-Presiding Chair of the 2021-2022 State-Tribal Relations Committee.

Discussion on the motion:

13:42:26 Rep. Stewart Peregoy

Vote:

13:43:10 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MATTER NOT CONTAINED IN THIS AGENDA AND THAT IS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE STRC

13:44:00 Ron Catlett, Sen. Steve Daines Regional Manager

STRC WORK PLAN DISCUSSION

Overview

13:44:35 Ms. Stockwell

Committee questions/discussion

13:51:03 Rep. Sheldon Galloway asked if the committee has agency oversight.

13:55:33 Rep. Stewart Peregoy commented on the importance of being knowledgeable on the different topics the committee will handle and asked if the members could receive a copy of the Tribal Nations in Montana: A Handbook for Legislators ([Exhibit 4](#)).

13:58:58 Rep. Running Wolf asked the committee for direction on the work plan.

13:59:26 Committee discussion on fee to trust land conversion and advocacy.

14:05:16 Rep. Running Wolf asked Ms. Stockwell if the committee should visit tribes before they settle on their work plan topics.

14:06:07 Committee discussion on meeting dates.

14:07:35 Committee discussion on voting rights, tribal courts, the need for a women's shelter at CSKT, broadband, and nonbeneficiary education.

14:09:00 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked for clarification on nonbeneficiary students.

14:11:32 Ms. Stockwell reviewed nonbeneficiary student funding from the state data.

14:12:00 Committee discussion on nonbeneficiary students.

14:19:28 Committee discussion on one-time-only (OTO) appropriations for several Indian Country programs.

14:33:10 Committee discussion on aquatic invasive species (AIS) and Indian law.

14:34:14 Sen. Small requested an update on AIS fund spending on reservations.

14:34:25 Committee discussion on AIS funds distributed to tribes.

14:35:06 Rep. Sheldon-Galloway asked for information on the communication and cooperation between CPS and tribes.

14:36:41 Sen. Small asked for information on SB16 (2021) regarding emergency shelter and services for minors.

14:37:41 Committee discussion on emergency shelter and incarcerated native women.

14:47:31 Committee discussion on voter suppression.

14:50:16 Sen. Small asked for a summarization of topics brought up by the members and work plan options.

14:50:52 Committee discussion on voting.

14:52:01 Committee discussion on the *Wandering Medicine* case.

14:54:52 Sen. Webber asked if there was legislation regarding Indian Education for All and critical race theory.

14:56:15 Committee discussion on critical race theory and how it affects Indian Education for All.

14:57:19 Ms. Sankey informed the committee regarding a recent lawsuit involving the Indian Education for All program. ([Exhibit 5](#))

14:58:03 Ms. Stockwell said the committee could receive updates throughout the interim regarding the lawsuit.

14:59:19 Committee discussion on Indian Education for All.

14:59:50 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked Ms. Sankey for the briefs from the lawsuit.

15:00:05 Committee discussion on work plan topics.

15:00:31 Sen. Fox asked if the committee will receive updates on the 2020 Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission work and how it will impact their work plan.

15:00:50 Rep. Sheldon Galloway asked if the committee could receive updates on Native Americans in correctional facilities, and spoke on prison allocation and Native American treatment in correctional facilities.

15:02:57 Rep. Stewart Peregoy asked Ms. Stockwell for an update on treatment of Native Americans within the state correctional system.

15:04:00 Committee discussion on Native American treatment in state correctional facilities.

15:04:51 Rep. Sheldon Galloway asked about prayer in BIE schools.

15:07:38 Rep. Running Wolf asked Ms. Stockwell to summarize the work plan topics.

15:10:01 Rep. Read asked for an overview of ARPA funds going to the tribes.

15:10:26 Committee discussion on native community events and the impact of residential boarding schools on tribes and historical trauma.

OTHER BUSINESS

15:23:22 Committee discussion on reimbursement forms

15:24:54 Committee discussion on which tribes to visit next.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 15:26:58