

Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission
Tuesday, January 25, 2022
Remote Meeting by Zoom
With Audio Stream for the Public

Commissioners Present by Zoom:

Joseph Barnes, Sarah Medina, Sandra Yarmal, Ezekiel Crofton-Macdonald, Darren Ranco, James Cote, Bob Checkoway, John Cashwell, Richard Rosen, Sam St. John, Bert Polchies

Staff Present by Zoom: Paul Thibeault (Managing Director), Rachel Bell (Projects Coordinator)

Guests Present by Zoom: Judson Etsy-Kendall, Representative Rena Newell, Michael-Corey Hinton

Public: By audio stream

Review of Agenda

The draft Agenda was reviewed. One item regarding the Remote Meetings Policy was deferred to the next meeting.

Approval of Minutes- Commissioners reviewed minutes from September 15, October 22, and December 21, 2021.

Motion: James Cote made a motion to approve all three sets of minutes as drafted.

Seconded by Sarah Medina. Motion approved unanimously.

Financial Report- Paul Thibeault summarized the written financial report and shared that spending continues to be below projections. He reported that the audit was done in early December and should be finalized early January. There were no questions.

Managing Director Report- Paul Thibeault referred Commissioners to the written report outlining administrative work and other projects that took place from November 17th to the present.

Motion: James Cote made a motion to approve the Financial Report.
Seconded by Sarah Medina. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairperson Vote: Interim Chair, Bob Checkoway briefly summarized the recommendations made by the Administrative Committee to appoint candidate Newell Lewey as the chairperson for a four-year term.

Motion: Bob Checkoway made a motion to appoint Newell Lewey as the new Chairperson. Seconded by Bert Polchies. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sustenance Study Update: Judson Etsy-Kendall provided an update on the present status of the Sustenance Fishing Study, a draft of which is nearly complete. Commissioners were encouraged to read this most recent draft of the report and offer feedback.

Proposal to Approve Work Plan: Paul Thibeault referred Commissioners to the Work Plan and proposed that they formally approve it.

Motion: Bert Polchies made a motion to approve the Work Plan. Seconded by Bob Checkoway. The motion was approved unanimously.

LD 1626, Review Provisions that Would Directly Involve MITSC: Reference was made to the staff-generated document summarizing the provisions in LD 1626 that would directly involve MITSC. It was discussed that the scope of this would be better suited for the focused attention of the Legislative and Policy Committee.

Motion: Bob Checkoway made a motion to refer further discussion on provisions of LD 1626 that would directly involve MITSC to the Legislative Policy Committee. Seconded by Sarah Medina. The motion was approved unanimously.

Update from Representative Rena Newell: Representative Newell shared a list of upcoming bills involving Tribal-State relations which MITSC should be aware of and may want to take positions on.

Holtrachem Case: Bob Checkoway provided information on the current status of the longstanding Holtrachem case involving mercury contamination in the lower Penobscot. It would appear that both the Penobscot Nation and MITSC should have roles as stakeholders with respect to the remediation process. There was also discussion about recent and ongoing issue of PFAS-contaminated leachate from the Juniper Ridge Landfill making its way into the Penobscot River.

Proposed Meeting Schedule: There was a brief discussion of the proposed meeting schedule for the upcoming year, with a decision that the next regular meeting will be held in March. MITSC staff were directed to schedule this next meeting after first consulting with the new chairperson.

Motion to Recess: Bob Checkoway made a motion to recess until 3:00 pm. Seconded by Bert Polchies. The motion was approved.

Presentation by Corey Hinton, attorney for the Passamaquoddy Tribe, on the ongoing Water Quality Issues at Sipayik: Corey Hinton shared a slideshow and offered an extensive update on where things currently stand with regards to the water quality issues at Sipayik, as well as potential next steps. As part of this, Corey outlined the proposed amendment to LD 906.

Motion to Adjourn: Bert Polchies made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Joey Barnes. The motion was approved, and the meeting was adjourned.