

**MINUTES**  
(Subject to Approval by the Council)  
**Idaho Council on Indian Affairs**  
**Monday, August 19, 2024**  
**1:00 P.M.**  
**Room EW41**  
**Boise, Idaho**

Cochair Hart called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.; a silent roll call was taken. Council members in attendance: Senators Phil Hart and James Just; Representatives Brandon Mitchell and Nate Roberts; Hayden Rogers, Office of the Governor; Caj Matheson, (for Chairman Chief Allan) Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Chairman Shannon Wheeler, Nez Perce Tribe; Chairman Brian Mason, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes; and Chairman Lee Juan Tyler, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Council members in attendance via Zoom: Chairman Jennifer Porter, Kootenai Tribe. Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff present: Matt Drake and Jennifer Kish.

Other attendees: Darren Williams - Nez Perce Tribe; Jared Larsen - Dept. of Health and Welfare; Brian Thomas and Arnold Thomas - Shoshone-Paiute Tribes; and Greg Wilson - Dept. of Education.

NOTE: presentations and materials distributed to members are posted to the Legislature's website: <https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2024/interim/icia/icia-materials/>; and copies of those items are on file with the Legislative Services Office located in the State Capitol. Video of this meeting may also be available on the website.

### **Opening Remarks / Introductions**

Prayer: Cochair Hart requested that Arnold Thomas provide the opening prayer, as was customarily done by a tribal member. Mr. Arnold obliged.

[September 15, 2023, Minutes](#): Cochair Hart requested that text be added on page 3, on the first line, to explain that Mr. Youde was representing the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. No other edits were requested. **Sen. Just made a motion to approve the minutes with the requested edit; Chrmn. Mason seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Amendment of Council Bylaws**

At 1:12 p.m., Cochair Hart invited Matt Drake, LSO Research and Legislation Division Manager, to the podium to present draft language for the council's bylaws. Mr. Drake explained the intention of [S1313 \(2024\)](#) was to move the council from a chair and vice chair system to two cochairs, having one from the tribal membership and one from the legislative membership. Mr. Drake provided a "[red-line document](#)" that detailed edits to the bylaws to reflect this change. Additionally, there were edits that would correct out-of-date citations and general formatting inconsistencies. Mr. Drake suggested the removal of a set date for the elected officer term to begin and implementing a term that would end one year from the election date. And finally, Mr. Drake noted that the date of adoption for the newly edited bylaws should be included at the end of the document.

- Chrmn. Wheeler inquired whether the language in ARTICLE IV, Section 1., lines 2-3, which read "...cochair which shall be a tribal member and..." should read "...cochair which shall be a tribal member representative and..." to better explain the tribal appointments to the council.
- Mr. Matheson commented that the term should be "tribal leader" because "tribal member" was not necessarily a recognized tribal leader.
- Rep. Mitchell noted that the statute creating the council (IC 67-4004) used the term "member" and that language may need to be changed to be consistent with the bylaws.

- Chrmn. Mason noted that ARTICLE II, Section 2., lines 3-5, supported the terminology change as it explained the tribal council participant would be "...a member of their respective tribal council."
- **Chrmn. Wheeler made a motion to change the language in ARTICLE IV, Section 1., lines 2-3, from "...shall be a tribal member and..." to "...shall be a tribal representative and..."; Mr. Matheson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- Mr. Matheson inquired whether the language in ARTICLE IV, Section 2, was intended to allow one cochair to preside over a meeting if the other was not in attendance. Mr. Drake agreed that such was the intention.
- **Cochair Hart made a motion to adopt the bylaws as presented and to include the additional edit of the previous motion. The motion passed unanimously.** [The approved [Bylaws](#) will be posted to the Legislature's website under the council's listing.]

### **Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Staff Introductions**

At 1:27 p.m., Cochair Hart invited Mr. Fred Martin, Tribal Relations Manager for the Dept. of Health and Welfare, to the podium for his comments to the council. Mr. Martin, a former Idaho State Senator and member of the Council on Indian Affairs, introduced Jared Larsen with a short bio about his experience serving in the governor's office. Mr. Larsen was recently named as the Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Chief for the Dept. of Health and Welfare. Mr. Larsen shared his experience working with tribes on various issues prior to this position and looked forward to strengthening the relationships. Mr. Larsen provided a brief bio for Alex Adams, recently named the Director of the Dept. of Health and Welfare, who was unable to attend today's meeting.

- Chrmn. Wheeler extended an invitation to Mr. Adams to visit the Nez Perce Tribe for a personal introduction.
- Chrmn. Matheson also extended an invitation to Mr. Adams to visit the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to build a stronger relationship between the tribe and DHW for the safety of children.
- Chrmn. Tyler encouraged the director to visit with all of the tribes to better understand tribal communities and to better facilitate programs from the DHW.

### **Idaho Department of Education Update on Idaho Indian Education**

At 1:35 p.m., Cochair Hart invited Debbie Critchfield, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Idaho Dept. of Education, to the podium for her comments to the council. Ms. Critchfield reported on her efforts to meet with each school with tribal students to ensure that both tribal educational goals and the department's educational goals were aligned. Ms. Critchfield explained that it was decided to elevate the lead position for Idaho's Indian Education to that of director. She noted that the ideal candidate would have both the academic experience as well as the cultural knowledge to best lead the program. She extended an invitation to the tribes to be part of the interview process by having representation on the interview panel. Ms. Critchfield reported that the department would be requesting an additional position within its annual budget to support the five tribes' educational matters. She commented that the reorganization occurred after feedback from the tribes regarding educational needs of the tribes. On another item, she reported that the 2024 Indian Education Summit had been canceled due to many reasons and not any one singular reason, but was looking forward to holding it next year.

- Chrmn. Mason commented on Nevada's legislative efforts to provide tuition-free, post-secondary education for tribal members and hoped that Idaho could work toward the same goal. Ms. Critchfield noted that the issue had been discussed when she served on the education board, but she could not recall why the topic was unsuccessful. She would research it and follow up with Chrmn. Mason.

- Chrmn. Tyler submitted that the tribes were willing to contribute tribal accounts of historic events for Idaho's curriculum and hoped that such would be encouraged. Ms. Critchfield noted that one of the important questions to be posed to candidates for the Indian Education director position would seek to understand how that individual would include/provide Idaho's tribal history into the curriculum.
- Mr. Matheson expressed his appreciation that department staff had visited with each tribe to better understand each tribe's differences and educational needs. He recognized that the Coeur d'Alene tribe had consulted with the department on the STEP grant in developing a portion of the 4th grade curriculum and he hoped that it was being implemented appropriately within the public schools. He recalled a time when students received credit for learning the Coeur d'Alene tribal language and he hoped that opportunity could be re-implemented into the curriculum. He also proposed that the curriculum reflect the uniqueness of each tribe's culture. Ms. Critchfield responded that she looked forward to having staff who could contribute in a meaningful way to tribal education.
- Chrmn. Wheeler requested to read from [a letter submitted to legislative leadership](#) by the Nez Perce Tribe that requested the tribes be notified/included when proposed legislation threatened to devalue, defund, or eliminate diversity efforts, as these may impact the tribal communities; in fact, the initial creation of the council was to ensure that legislation impacting the tribes was known and available for discussion prior to its introduction. Cochair Hart encouraged the tribal leaders to work closely with their legislative advisors to be aware of issues that affect them and to notify legislative members when those issues arise.
- Chrwmn. Porter asked for clarification about tribal members being included on the interview panel for the Indian Education director. Ms. Critchfield confirmed that it was her intention to have tribal representation on that interview panel.

### **HB 410 (2024)**

At 2:07 p.m., Tyrel Stevenson, Legislative Director for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, was invited to the podium for his comments on [HB 410 \(2024\)](#) relating to income taxes and its effects regarding tribal members. Mr. Stevenson explained that the bill was a good example of how legislation can be created and moved through the legislative process and how it originated after a discussion/presentation to the council the previous year. Mr. Stevenson spoke to the intensity of the legislative session and how quickly legislation moves through the process and how issues could inadvertently be overlooked.

### **Five Tribes Economic Impact Study**

At 2:10 p.m., Cochair Hart invited Steven Peterson, Associate Clinical Professor of Economics at the University of Idaho, to the podium for his presentation on the [Economic Contributions of the Five Tribes on the Idaho Economy](#). Mr. Peterson explained how complex and developed the tribal communities were, how robust the tribal economies were, and how they influence those communities contingent to theirs.

- Sen. Just inquired about the effort to get this report out to the general public and media. Mr. Peterson reported that the effort was limited and needed to be broader.
- Chrmn. Tyler commented that the report showed great economic success but that one had to recognize the other aspects such as the poverty and homelessness that still exist. He added that the tribes wanted to balance the wealth with the protection of the water and the land. Mr. Peterson responded that the report showed how the tribal economies have an impact on surrounding communities; but, yes, the study didn't show the paradox of real life. In fact, the average income of tribal members was below the state average.

- Cochair Hart inquired how often the report was updated. Mr. Peterson submitted that he had worked on the report over 20 years; in the initial studies, the growth was rapid but it had tapered to a steady overall incline.
- Sen. Just shared that the legislative members had composed an "op-ed" about the report and inquired whether others wanted to be included on it and/or whether the council members would like to endorse it as coming from the council in order to publicize the report to the media. Chrmn. Wheeler commented that the tribes each had their own media departments and could assist. **Sen. Just made a motion to distribute the "op-ed" as a communication from the council to the media; Rep. Roberts seconded the motion.** Chrmn. Wheeler requested the opportunity for tribal members to review the document thoroughly and add/edit comments before endorsing and/or releasing the "op-ed." Chrmn. Tyler echoed the need for the tribes to review the document before endorsement. **Chrmn. Wheeler made a substitute motion to distribute the "op-ed" once the tribes had time to review and comment; Cochair Hart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.** Cochair Hart requested that Sen. Just coordinate the council members' feedback on the document.

### Open Discussion

Cochair Hart directed the discussion toward the council's next meeting date. Considering earlier feedback, Cochair Hart suggested that the council consider the first week of the upcoming legislative session. He noted that, while it was convenient for the legislative members, it would be good for everyone to put it on their schedule with such early notice. Chrmn. Wheeler supported the idea of holding a meeting during that time. Mr. Drake supported that time as it would be convenient for LSO staff since the session was not yet busy.

Arnold Thomas commented that the Duck Valley [Reservation], along with Fort McDermott, passed a resolution to recognize the Owyhee Canyonlands for protection under the National Park System with the support of Senator Wyden [Oregon]. The resolution was an attempt to be proactive in protecting the ancestral land that is sacred to the tribes. He asked legislative members to be aware of the effort and support the tribes in protecting the land. Sen. Just asked for clarification about the resolution. Chrmn. Mason explained that the effort was brought to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes by the Oregon National Desert Association (ONDA), an organization that was attempting to protect the area with either a Congressional wilderness designation or a national monument designation. He added that the effort was to be introduced through the Oregon Legislature.

### Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.