



VCNAA MEETING MINUTES

Approved October 11, 2023

September 13, 2023

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Calvin Coolidge Conference Room

6th Floor Davis Building, National
Life Montpelier, VT
and Virtually

VERMONT
COMMISSION
ON
NATIVE
AMERICAN
AFFAIRS



vcnaa.vermont.gov

COMMISSION
Richard Holschuh, Chair
Douglas Bent, Vice Chair
Deborah Reger, Secretary
Jeffrey Benay
Daniel Coutu
Patrick Lamphere
Melody Walker Mackin
Deanna Edwards
Open Seat

Members present: Richard Holschuh, Deanna Edwards, Dan Coutu, Doug Bent, Deb Reger, Jeff Benay. **Members Online:** Patrick Lamphere, Melody Mackin

Guests Present: Cynthia Davis (VDHP Administrative Coordinator), Tom Fennario (APTN), Elodie Reed (Vermont Public), Kate Fredricks.

Guests Online: Max Krieger (ACCD-DHCD General Council), Alana Ojibway, Morgan Lamphere (Missisquoi Tribal Council), Shalini Suryanarayana (Office of Racial Equity) Xusana Davis (Director, Office of Racial Equity)

1. **Meeting called to order at 1:00pm**
2. **Welcoming**
3. **Agency Counsel Maxwell Krieger – Overview of Commissioner responsibilities, term periods and effects, timing of office elections**
Maxwell Krieger gave an overview of responsibilities of VCNAA, term periods and offered the Secretary of State website has more info on public meetings and can be found here: <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/> A quorum is 5 members for VCNAA.
4. **Changes to the Agenda**
No changes
5. **Approve June meeting minutes**
June 14, 2023, minutes approved by consensus.
6. **Meeting protocols & expectations, consensus voting**
Reminder of consensus was discussed.
7. **Commissioner’s annual priorities, goals, & suggestions**

This is an open agenda item for commissioners to bring forward that includes priorities, goals, suggestions.

8. Election of Officers

Election of Officers was held and by consensus the Officers are: Rich Holschuh, Chair; Dan Coutu, Vice Chair; Deb Reger, Secretary

OLD BUSINESS

1. Act 182 (2022) Land Access & Opportunity Board report

Act 182 update presented by Dan Coutu included the information that this is a 5 year project and this group meets frequently and will be hiring staff to work on interacting with other state agencies and identifying what agencies impede the access to land to Vermont citizens. The new job positions will include social networking.

2. Act 142 (2022) Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Council

Act 142; no updates.

3. Act 154 (2022) Environmental Justice Advisory Council

Act 154; meeting in the next few months

4. Act 174 (2020) Vermont State Parks - Abenaki waymarking

Act 174; discussion was had regarding adding Abenaki names to State Park signage

5. Act 128 (2022) VT Truth & Reconciliation Commission -TRC

Act 128; new website here: <https://vtrc.vermont.gov/> Melody Mackin updated us on the work of the Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission and story collecting has not started yet but meetings are happening. Please see the new website for more info.

6. Act 152 (2022) Nondiscriminatory school branding/mascots

Act 152 update not conclusive as state has not responded to complaints.

7. VT Health Equity Advisory Council (HEAC) ongoing

Vermont Health Equity Advisory Council (HEAC) is ongoing. By consensus Deb Reger will be the VCNAA rep as well as the representative for the Koasek of Koas as the law states there are 29 seats on this council with each state recognized tribe having a seat as well as VCNAA having one seat. Act 33 passed in 2021 and Xsusana Davis is the contact.

8. Seventh Generation Curriculum Grant Committee report

Seventh Generation Curriculum Grant Committee report from Jeff Benay included a suggestion he has been advocating which is for schools to stay open on Indigenous Peoples' Day and teach Abenaki Curriculum. He told us about the programs in Franklin County and other schools that are supporting the Abenaki curriculum and will be having programs this year. Many schools are having presentations by Tribal representatives and there are also residency programs being organized. Jeff is also

meeting with the Agency of Education (AOE) to discuss the Abenaki Curriculum Project with other members attending this meeting. There is also an Equity in Education report that has been issued with public meetings happening. It will still be up to local boards to put these programs in place or keep in place as many of these positions have been in place with post pandemic grants from federal funding grants.

NEW BUSINESS

1. VCNAA part-time staff position with Agency of Commerce & Community Development/Division of Historic Preservation

VCNAA has been granted a part-time funded position. It will be part time with 24 hours a week to facilitate communication between agencies. Position will be described and advertised.

2. Environmental Journal Symposium, early Nov., VT Law & Graduate School

There will be a symposium at Vermont Law and Graduate School to discuss insuring Tribal Voices are included in policies regarding the environment.

3. Support Statement for State Tribal recognition process from VCNAA

A statement of support for State Tribal Recognition from VCNAA will be prepared by committee and passed by consensus and a committee was formed to include Dan, Deanna, Rich, and others.

4. Reauthorize or update statutory board/council positions

Reauthorizing statutory board positions not necessary at this time.

5. Tribal representative reports

Tribal reports were made. Health reports and programs announced include: Cultural Competency, Drum-making classes, Language classes

6. Announcements/Upcoming Events

Announcements and upcoming events included: Harvest Festival with <https://www.alnobaiwi.org/> Nulhegan has three educational teams working in schools. Elnu is presenting at the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Park <https://www.nps.gov/mabi/index.htm> Mel can be contacted for the Abenaki Children's gathering happening once a month. Elnu is also collecting data from petroglyph sites.

7. Public comments

Public Comments included the announcement of Hispanic Month and an event that will happen Oct 14 in Barre, Vermont.