



SENECA-CAYUGA NATION

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE	Monday, Oct 13, 2025	TIME PLACE	6pm CT Zoom only	FACILITATOR	Carrie Kneeland
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MEMBERS			
Roberta Smith	Present – Zoom	Yvonne Perryman	Present – Zoom
Carrie Kneeland	Present – Zoom	Jo Lynn Gentry	Present – Zoom
Natalie Dixon	Present - Zoom	Others Present:	0 General Council Members

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
5:58pm	Called to Order - Quorum established at the Seneca-Cayuga Nation's regular Constitution Committee (CC) meeting.	Carrie
	Approval of Previous Minutes – September 29, 2025 minutes and Constitution Committee member corrections reviewed in meeting as a group, amendments made included rephrasing sentences for better clarity touching on subjects including tribal member right to privacy in electoral candidate materials, the allocation of funds spent on elections, callouts on time-sensitive matters including codification of laws, mail-in voting, and potential Special Meetings of the General Council. – minutes APPROVED	Natalie

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	<u>CERTIFICATION</u> On <u>10/13/2025</u> the minutes of <u>09/29/2025</u> were approved by unanimous committee consent. Copy emailed to BC Secretary on <u>10/24/2025</u>. Attest: <u> /s/Natalie Dixon </u> Natalie Dixon, Secretary	
	Housekeeping i. Roll Call ii. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes – SEP 29, 2025 iii. Confirmation of next meeting – OCT 19, 2025 @ 2pm	Natalie
--	Planned Agenda • Housekeeping • Review work thus far • Discuss Initial Advisory Report • Open Forum • Next Constitution meeting 10/19/2025 @ 2pm	
Minutes Begin		
	Discussion topics during minutes included the following • 2 email requests have been made by our Chairperson to the Secretary-Treasurer for the October 15, 1990 version of the Constitution and By-Laws, no replies have been received ○ While there is no time limit associated with Secretary-Treasurer duties to provide documents upon request, this can be an issue for Committees or individuals requesting documents for the continuation of their work ○ Duties state “in presence” of Secretary-Treasurer for review, this has been the sticking point for tribal member access to Resolutions for the codification of laws	

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	• There is a Business Committee Resolution for a Special Meeting of the General Council on November 8, 2025 however the Chief has not called Special Meeting and there are vocalizations from tribal members about the constitutionality of aforementioned Resolution ○ Debate centers around By-Laws Article III Section II which requires “the majority of Business Committee” to call for a Special Meeting ○ At the original meeting where the Business Committee passed the Resolution the majority of Business Committee members present passed this Resolution, however that was 3 out of 5 voting members who were present. Some tribal members believe it should be 4 members out of 7 to vote for a Special Meeting of the General Council call-out to be valid, per By-Laws Article III Section II • Liaison for the Business Committee Curt Lawrence notified Secretary that he will not be present at tonight’s meeting	
	Constitution Committee member discusses Regular Elections • Constitution Committee member states that it is important to address the discrepancy the Election Committee brought forward regarding Constitution Article VIII which states “Regular elections of the Business Committee” are what’s covered under a Business Committee-prescribed Election Ordinance • Another Constitution Committee member states that Constitution Article VIII states that “Election of officers will also be held at such Annual Meetings.” ○ This has limited General Council participation in elections in prior years when quorum could not be met to hold an Annual Meeting ○ A possible solution is to divorce the elections from the Annual Meeting, this was done in 2025 when the Annual Meeting election was in dispute but there have been tribal member calls to review the constitutionality of an election done outside of an Annual Meeting per Constitution Article VIII	

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	○ A third Constitution Committee member states they believe that separating Elections from Meetings is a viable solution to making sure that elections happen regularly and General Council members can vote for elected officers ONLY if mail-in voting is available for all General Council members regardless of location. ○ Constitution Committee member suggests language of “Elections happen in conjunction with Annual Meetings.” ○ Matter is currently not within scope of initial potential amendments identified by Constitution Committee but should be addressed in future revision rounds	
	Constitution Committee reviews Initial Advisory Report and begins drafting session. Top level bullet points are chronological, some subjects were combined for ease of reading. • Members agree to address Constitution Article VII currently titled Standing Committees ○ Most, if not all, elected Standing Committees should have 5 members ○ Debate over keeping Standing Committees structure and each Section listing a Standing Committee ○ Staggering of terms is necessary to note ○ Elected Standing Committee members should be subject to Grievances and potential removal ○ Alternates may need to be established • Constitution Committee member expresses concerns that focus on specific minutiae may make the Constitution too long to be understood as intended, the longer it is the more arguments over interpretations that can be made ○ Different Constitution Committee member states that we can alleviate misinterpretations by having tribal members who are not involved in tribal government to proofread and walk-through any finished drafts before releasing them • Constitution Committee continues drafting	

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	Constitution Article VII currently titled Standing Committees ○ Subcommittees may not necessary to be named in a new draft but the structure and creation of them should be ○ Numbers can be reserved for future Standing Committees ○ Current Standing Committees include Grievance, Credit, Welfare, Education ▪ Current benefits structure called Welfare Committee comes from formerly named Claims Committee structure which was established by the General Council to oversee court settlements and how those monies were disbursed ▪ Need to add Election Committee to Standing Committees ▪ Enrollment Committee needs to be included ▪ Ethics Committee is debated by Constitution Committee to be included under Standing Committees • One Committee member does not see a functional difference between the Ethics and Grievance Committees • One Committee member states that Ethics Committee could write policy but it's pointed out that the current Ethics Committee tried to do as much and was not able to galvanize forces to do that ▪ Housing and Constitution Committees come up later in the discussion and are determined to be more akin to subcommittees than Standing Committees that can be created by the Business Committee and/or General Council ○ Grievance Committee is the one check that	

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	balances Business Committee currently ○ Committee discusses possibility of stand alone Education Committee – may not be cost-effective and has multiple funding sources including federal funding ○ Committee member asks if Tax Commission should be included in Constitution Article VIII ▪ Another Committee member asked the same about Gaming Commission ○ Committee members discuss Economic Development Committee and Land Acquisition Fund ▪ Committeeperson states that Economic Development and Land Acquisition Fund are separate structures, the original Land Acquisition General Council Resolutions show evidence of manipulation via two different pieces of paper with the same Resolution number but state two opposing situations, one states that it was a one-time \$500,000 distribution and the other states it is an annual distribution of General Council monies ▪ Committee later returns to topic of Economic Development Committee which one Committeeperson says is essentially the Business Committee and another states an Economic Development Committee can be created as a subcommittee if needed ○ Committee member clarifies if the new article will contain a Claims Committee or a Benefits Committee, debate ensues ▪ Initial claims monies did come from Cayuga claims including 341A and B • Discussion over tribal funding sources including court claim monies held in trust by the federal government ○ Duties of Secretary-Treasurer extend to understanding these monies ○ Current duties do not include financial audits, providing financials to members, should be	

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	changed ○ Split of Secretary-Treasurer position makes sense in this respect ○ Treasurer duties would include oversight using best practices with enterprises	
	Motion #6 (Yvonne/Carrie) – to eliminate Credit and Welfare/Education Committees to establish a Benefits Committee - split committee vote Yea: Yvonne, Carrie, Jo Lynn, Natalie Nay: Roberta – motion carries	
	Constitution Committee continues drafting session on Constitution Article VII – Standing Committees. Top level bullet points are chronological, some subjects were combined for ease of reading. • All Standing Committees except for Enrollment will have 5 members • Business Committee is not a Standing Committee by definition as it is created by a different Article • Possible language of “election of Standing Committee officers may be held in conjunction with any Regular or Special Meeting of the General Council” ○ Committee debates on holding Elections outside of General Council Meetings as previous Elections have been called off due to not meeting quorum ○ Committee member states they are only OK with such a provision if mailed-in ballots are used for a given Election that does not require a Meeting of the General Council ○ Committee continues debate later on, but does not come to concrete conclusion, past history and potential abuse of power is explored with the idea of divorcing Elections from General Council Meetings • Committeeperson proposes idea of 5 Standing Committee members and 2 alternates, the purposes of alternates being to replace Committee members who have to recuse themselves or are removed in a given matter ○ Debate over language of alternates is addressed later on in drafting – only certain	

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	Committees such as the Grievance, Benefits, and Election Committees would benefit from alternates • Current Constitution only covers Regular Elections of the Business and Grievance Committees, any additional Committee elections need Constitutional mention for clarity • Need to add purposes/duties for each Committee ○ Committee debates how much of Standing Committee procedures need to be put into drafted article ○ One Committee member states there should be high level policy in the Constitution Article so processes are not subject to manipulation • One or more of the appointed General Council members of the Tax Commission have stepped down recently ○ A Committeeperson familiar with the situation stated it was due to differences in our Tobacco enterprise best operation practices ○ A lapse in judgment on the best operation practices does open the tribe up to potential lawsuits ○ Past history with poor operational practices by Tobacco resulted in multiple warnings from state and federal governments to stop selling untaxed cigarettes which went unheeded and resulted in the seizure of the Seneca Falls convenience store in New York • The question of Tax Commission being separate from Standing Committees is raised ○ Due to the alternative structure of Tax Commission which currently consists of 2nd Chief, Secretary-Treasurer, Executive Director, and 2 appointed General Council members it makes sense to separate it from Standing Committees ○ Similar to Enrollment Committee which has alternative membership numbers and procedures to Standing Committees • The Tax Commission and the Grievance, Benefits, and Election Committees shall have 5 members elected in	

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	staggered, 4-year terms ○ Committeeperson asks if the terms can be staggered similar to the Business Committee's terms for ease of election ○ Matter tabled after discussion due to time	
	Confirmation of Grievance Committee meeting on October 19, 2025 @ 2pm	
	Confirmation of next regular meeting on October 27, 2025 @ 6pm	
8:07pm	Motion #7 (Jo Lynn/Yvonne) – to adjourn meeting - unanimous committee vote – motion carries	