



SENECA-CAYUGA NATION

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE	Sunday, October 19, 2025	TIME PLACE	6pm CT Tribal HQ + Zoom	FACILITATOR	Carrie Kneeland
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MEMBERS			
Roberta Smith	Present	Yvonne Perryman	Present – Zoom
Carrie Kneeland	Present – Zoom	Jo Lynn Gentry	Present – Zoom
Natalie Dixon	Present – Zoom	Others Present:	Curt Lawrence – Present (Zoom) 0 General Council Members Grievance Committee Members – Ryan Birdsong, David “Boo” Lane, Rayma White, Preston Baker, and Shawn Stovall

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
2:07pm	Called to Order - Quorum established at the Seneca-Cayuga Nation's special Constitution Committee (CC) meeting.	Carrie
	Approval of Previous Minutes – minutes of October 13, 2025 not yet finished, Committee agrees to review October 13, 2025 minutes alongside October 19, 2025 minutes at October 27, 2025 meeting – minutes APPROVED on October 27, 2025	Natalie

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	<u>CERTIFICATION</u> On <u>10/27/2025</u> the minutes of <u>10/13/2025</u> and <u>10/19/2025</u> were approved by unanimous committee consent. Copy emailed to BC Secretary on <u>11/03/2025</u>. Attest: <u> /s/Natalie Dixon</u> Natalie Dixon, Secretary	
	Housekeeping i. Roll Call ii. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes – OCT 13, 2025 iii. Confirmation of next meeting – OCT 27, 2025	Natalie
--	Planned Agenda • Housekeeping • Open Forum • Notification of Unapproved Budgets • Grievance Committee Discussion • Next Constitution meeting 10/27/2025 @ 6pm	
Minutes Begin		
	Notification to Constitution and Grievance Committees that the Business Committee has not yet passed budgets • HR person for tribal administration notified Constitution Committee Secretary via email on 10/14/2025 that the Business Committee had not yet approved Constitution Committee's submitted budgets and Election Committee would not be paid for their FY25 September 29, 2025 meeting with Constitution Committee until budgets are approved • Grievance Committee present notified that their stipends for this meeting will likely not be disbursed in a timely manner due to Business Committee not approving budgets before the new fiscal year began on October 1, 2025 • Constitution Committee did submit budgets prior to FY25 ending including FY25 and FY26 budgets ○ Funding source for this Committee is the	

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	General Council Welfare Fund per General Council Resolution, this funding and our budgets should not be effected by the US federal government shutdown ○ Both Grievance Committee and Constitution Committee have been receiving regular meeting stipends despite budgets not being approved, the lack of budget approvals appears to affect only costs beyond planned stipends	
	Grievance Committee and Constitution Committee discussion begins. For ease of reading some items have been combined, but all top level bullet points are in chronological order. ● Grievance Committee member states that an often talked about issue is making quorum for Removal Hearings ○ Historical quorums have been 225 and 30, currently quorum requires 150 General Council members for a Special Meeting of the General Council ○ Grievance Committee members are asked what an appropriate quorum for a Removal Hearing is and generally agree on one of two answers, either “at least 100” or the present 150 members ○ Currently it is a struggle to get 150 General Council members together ● Grievance Committee hopes to have their revised Grievance Ordinance in time for the 2026 Annual Meeting of the General Council ● Grievance Committee is asked if having a specific day designated for Grievances (e.g. Saturday) would help with General Council attendance at meetings ○ Grievance Committee member agrees that Saturday General Council meetings would facilitate attendance ○ Current Grievance Ordinance provides for calendar days in calculating time frames so they would have to specify that the following Saturday is the specific day to hold a Removal Hearing during a Special Meeting of the General	

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	Council • Grievance Committee members agree that the current Grievance Committee quorum is appropriate for the Evidentiary Hearing and that a quorum for a Saturday Special Meeting of the General Council is appropriate for a Removal Hearing • Grievance Committee is asked what they think about extending Grievances over all elected officials, not just the Business Committee as it currently stands ○ Grievance Committee members agree that their Committee and Grievance process should oversee all elected officials of Standing Committees, with all removals under the purview of the General Council ○ Non-elected committeeperson removals would fall under the purview of their respective creator e.g. the Enrollment Committee can ask the General Council to remove a member who otherwise has lifetime membership in Enrollment Committee ○ Constitution Committee member asks how due process can be ensured for Grievance Committee members who may have a Grievance filed against them ▪ If the Grievance is handled entirely on the floor at a meeting of the General Council then there is a possibility that due process would not be fulfilled and open up the tribe to civil rights lawsuits ▪ Due process for an accused Committeeperson does include having the opportunity to fight the Grievance ▪ Possible solution is for the accused Grievance Committee member to recuse themselves from any Grievance proceeding filed against them; this is a situation where an already elected alternate would be relevant ▪ Having 4 members on Grievance Committee did not hinder the Grievance process in recent Grievance Committee experiences	

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	▪ Having an already elected alternate for the Grievance Committee would be relevant for recusals due to immediate family or household members, or resignations due to health issues ▪ Constitution Committee member proposes a 3 member Grievance Committee with 2 alternates that attend all meetings provided there are no conflicts of interest; Grievance Committee members agree this could work • An open records policy is important to the Grievance Committee and their work ○ Not receiving information from a Secretary-Treasurer in a timely manner can hinder an investigation ○ Grievance Committee has not been denied records recently, though there have been a few times when the Secretary-Treasurer communicated that they did not have the requested information ▪ Previous records request denials included concerns over the legality of viewing the stipend paystubs of elected officials ▪ Several Constitution Committee members present state they believe elected official stipends to be public record ▪ Grievance Committee is asked if it would be beneficial to have an explicit open records guarantee and/or relating to their investigations, Grievance Committee members agree • Grievance Committee members agree later on that 5 business days is an appropriate timeframe for a Secretary-Treasurer to produce simple records requests • Grievance process includes the following: ○ Opening the Grievance and then 10 days to	

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	- mail it out to the accused ○ The accused has 21 days to respond and the Grievance Committee takes the time to investigate the Grievance ○ Once the response is received then there must be a 20 day wait before calling an Evidentiary Hearing ○ There is no deadline for the calling of an Evidentiary Hearing, this can result in a Grievance Committee not calling a Evidentiary Hearing even when obligated to ▪ Grievance Committee is rewriting the Grievance Ordinance to require an Evidentiary Hearing be called within a certain timeframe of receiving a response to close this loophole • Question asked of the Grievance Committee – do you as a Committee feel empowered to call a meeting of the General Council? ○ Grievance Committee member says “It’s not clear” and members cite By-Laws Article I Section 1 “It shall be the duty of the chief to preside at all meetings” ▪ This gives the discretion to any Chief to delay proceedings and not call to order a Removal Hearing and/or creates a conflict of interest if the accused individual is the Chief	
2:49pm	Shawn Stovall arrives	
	Grievance Committee and Constitution Committee discussion resumes. For ease of reading some items have been combined, but all top level bullet points are in chronological order. • Topic of Grievance Committee calling a Special Meeting of the General Council (aka Removal Hearing) ○ The Grievance Committee needs the explicit right to set, provide notice, and call to order a Special Meeting of the General Council to provide due process for a Removal Hearing ○ Constitution Committee will have to address	

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	By-Laws Article I Duties of Chief section carefully so it does not prohibit the Grievance Committee from presiding over a Removal Hearing ○ By-Laws Article III Section 2 “Special meetings of the council may be called by the Chief, and shall be called by him upon [written requests of majority of BC or 150 members of the Nation]” is interpreted in different ways by Constitution Committee members when discussing possible limitations it creates on a Grievance Committee Removal Hearing being scheduled ○ Constitution Article X “The Grievance Committee [...] upon proper showing shall call a special meeting of the Seneca-Cayuga Council to act upon such complaints.” ○ Multiple references across the Constitution are often interpreted in contrast to each other ○ There are multiple loopholes that also create conflicts of interest that have before and may continue to limit General Council powers and due process ○ The two concepts of the General Council of the Nation (all members 18+) and the assembled General Council at an Annual or Special Meeting does create an issue depending on the interpretations made in practice, and can lead to disenfranchisement of the General Council ▪ Structure of Government Article drafting can include differentiating between the two so the rights of the General Council are understood better • Call to Grievance Committee members for questions for the Constitution Committee, if any • Grievance Committee member brings up lack of conduct standards for General Council members during Removal Hearings in the Constitution ○ Constitution Committee member states that Robert’s Rules reference in Chairperson duties may contain instructions on dealing with disruptive members during a meeting ○ Removing a General Council member during	

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	any Special or Annual Meeting is technically a sanction and would need due process • Question asked to Grievance Committee – What part of the Constitution functions for your Committee? What would you like to see stay in the Constitution? ○ Grievance Committee member states they think timeframes need to be protected in the Constitution – timeframes including but not limited to response times, timeframe to call a Removal Hearing, 30 days after receiving Grievance etc. ○ Grievance Committee being an independent judicial/tribunal power under the General Council ○ The power to call a Special Meeting of the General Council without Business Committee members presiding • Grievance Committee is currently drafting new Grievance Ordinance and says they will get a copy to Constitution Committee once they are finished drafting ○ Constitution Committee member asks percentage of completion of Grievance Ordinance – Grievance Committee member states they are about 75% done ○ New ordinance addresses lack of timeframe surrounding the calling of a Removal Hearing ○ Later on the Grievance Committee is given the information of the Nation's IT employee who posts Constitution Committee minutes on the website and will be able to post the drafted Grievance Ordinance for General Council review on the tribal website • Constitution Committee member asks Grievance Committee about funding – How would funding work with the separation of powers? How much funding was the Grievance Committee initially given? How much is currently allotted for Grievances? How much is generally spent on a Grievance? ○ Grievance Committee member says that when they started a Grievance and eventually needed an attorney which required them to meet with the Business Committee to up their \$2500	

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	attorney budget ○ Grievance Committee member states a Secretary-Treasurer should sit down with Committees to do budgets, have it be a part of duties, “to ensure funding happens for these Committees” ▪ Process could include taking the budget to the General Council for approval, but this would require assembling 150 General Council members to spend money if the Grievance Committee goes over budget ○ Attorney fees are the most costly part of Grievances, can easily be a \$5000 retainer for one Evidentiary Hearing, Grievance Committee cost is also \$1000/month when a Grievance is in (5 members @ \$200/meeting 2 meetings a month) ○ 2nd Chief is asked if Grievance Committee budget could come out of Tax Commission, he replies it is possible and a good idea	
3:18pm	Grievance and Constitution Committees agree to 10 minute break	
3:28pm	Grievance and Constitution Committees return from 10 minute break	
	Grievance Committee and Constitution Committee discussion resumes. For ease of reading some items have been combined, but all top level bullet points are in chronological order. • Discussion surrounding the defense of Grievances using tribal funds ○ Current Grievance Ordinance does require an accused individual to provide their own attorney ○ May be necessary based on historical precedence for tribal funds and/or the tribal attorney be explicitly accessible to the Grievance Committee to defend themselves in their official capacity from lawsuits	

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	• Question asked of the Grievance Committee – How do you view the function of your Committee? ○ Grievance Committee member notes that it would be important to make sure that Grievance Committee covers all Committees including the two General Council members on Tax Commission if they are elected ○ Other duties outlined could include to determine and investigate showings or acts of misconduct • Grievance Committee is asked if the current grounds for Grievances listed in the Grievance Ordinance is appropriate? ○ “For the most part” ○ Grievance Committee member says it should be clear that they only find if there is a “proper showing of misconduct” and there is no guilty or not guilty involved • Question for the Grievance Committee – Should poor hiring choices at the enterprise management level be grounds for Grievances on the Business Committee? ○ Grievance Committee member states that if there is an issue with a candidate for casino management then it could be addressed by a Gaming Commission who holds the authority to approve or disprove casino management licenses outside of the Business Committee’s choice to hire a candidate, gaming licenses are privileges, not rights ○ Current Gaming Commissioner is not a tribal member ○ Background checks by Gaming Commission will catch any convictions that disqualify employee candidates from licensure ○ Poor hiring choices by the Business Committee is already generally addressed by the Grievance procedure • Question asked of the Grievance Committee – If you can read on its face that a Grievance is meritless, do you still have to require a response? ○ “We need the evidence to make sure.” ○ Grievance Committee members agree that	

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	investigation into claims regardless of perceived merit is a part of the Grievance Committee job ○ The person filing a Grievance is required to provide their evidence at the time of filing • Question for the Grievance Committee – How important do you think it is for the General Council to hear from each elected Committee about their activity during the year at the Annual Meeting? ○ Grievance Committee member states that they don't see an issue with providing a general synopsis of the year – e.g. we had 3 Grievances this year – and to not include details ○ Constitution Committee member asks rhetorical question “What right to privacy do tribal members have for finished grievances? What right do tribal members have to know if a Grievance is filed and on whom?” ○ When Evidentiary Hearings for Grievances are posted they do provide the names of involved elected officials • Constitution Committee and Grievance Committee review if Grievance Committee is subject to Robert's Rules ○ By-Laws Article III Section 6 states “All meetings of the General Council and Business Committee shall be conducted pursuant to the most current version of Robert's Rules of Order [...]” ○ There appear to be no written provisions explicitly binding the Grievance Committee to the use of Robert's Rules of Order ○ Grievance Committee member requests the taking out of Robert's Rules of Order from our tribal governing documents • Grievance Committee is asked if there's anything they would like to see in their own personal opinions with the Constitution ○ Making sure the agendas and their changes are posted in a timely matter for Annual Meetings, even up to a month before (possibly in the duties section) ○ Folks generally agree that two digital postings	

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	(website, social media, text messaging etc.) and two physical postings (newsletter, administration building, Community Building etc.) is an appropriate process to provide notice to the General Council ○ Putting language and culture preservation in the Constitution, this can be in the preamble or an Oath of Office or both, it is already in the Charter	
4:18pm	Grievance Committee parts ways	
	Open Forum • An audio recording of the Business Committee monthly meeting on October 07, 2025 was provided to a Constitution Committee member who listened to it and reports that the Secretary-Treasurer mentioned that the interpretation of her duties is “something that needs to come up to the Constitution Committee.” ○ The Secretary-Treasurer has not responded to 3 different Constitution Committee member requests for non-financial documents, nor has the Secretary-Treasurer communicated needing help with the interpretation of aforementioned duties ○ Constitution Committee member states that this situation seems to rise to negligence of duty ○ Business Committee member present states that they cannot fully address this matter in their official capacity ○ There is no Freedom of Information Act or similar process within the Nation to compel information including financials ○ Business Committee member present states that the scanning and organizing of Resolutions done by prior Secretary-Treasurer Kim Guyett has been lost by current administration ▪ Constitution Committee member reminds Business Committee member that they still have access to majority of Resolutions from 2014-2023 and that	

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	they have offered multiple times to make a copy for the tribal administration to begin codifying laws but no one has made contact to do so ○ Constitution Committee member states that they believe there should be formal correspondence from our Committee to the Secretary-Treasurer ▪ Jo Lynn and Carrie to draft and send letter to Secretary-Treasurer for requested clarification of duties of the Secretary-Treasurer ▪ Will wait for response and address at the October 27, 2025 Regular Constitution Committee meeting ○ General Council Petition for Special Meeting on November 8, 2025 has about 80 signatures on the online copy ▪ Tribal members are afraid to sign this petition for fear of retribution ▪ Election cycle starts in January 2026 and there are numerous electoral matters that need to be addressed by the General Council	
	Confirmation of next meeting on October 27, 2025 @ 6pm	
5:08pm	Motion #8 (Jo Lynn/Carrie) – to adjourn meeting - unanimous committee vote – motion carries	