



# SENECA-CAYUGA NATION

## CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE	Monday, October 27, 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	Others Present:	<b>Curt Lawrence – Zoom</b> <b>3 General Council Members</b>

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
07:00 PM	<b>Called to Order</b> - Quorum established at the Seneca-Cayuga Nation's regular Constitution Committee (CC) meeting.	Carrie
	<p><b>Approval of Previous Minutes</b> – October 13th and 19th, 2025 minutes reviewed separately for approval.</p> <p>CC member changes for October 13<sup>th</sup> minutes included clarifications on a document request and a Special Meeting request, a title correction, corrections to grammar and addition of words for clearer sentences – <b>minutes APPROVED via motion</b></p> <p><b>Motion #9 (Carrie/Jo Lynn)</b> – to approve the October 13, 2025 minutes as corrected - <b>unanimous committee vote – motion carries</b></p>	Natalie

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
	<p>CC member changes for October 19<sup>th</sup> minutes included clarification on timing of CC-submitted budgets happening prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year, minor formatting changes, addition of words and changes to grammar for clearer understandings – <b>minutes APPROVED via motion</b></p> <p><b>Motion #10 (Roberta/Yvonne)</b> – to approve the October 19, 2025 minutes as corrected - <b>unanimous committee vote</b> – <b>motion carries</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u><b>CERTIFICATION</b></u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>On <u>10/27/2025</u> the minutes of <u>10/13/2025 &amp; 10/19/2025</u> were approved by unanimous committee consent. Copy emailed to BC Secretary on <u>11/03/2025</u>.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Attest: <u>/s/Natalie Dixon</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Natalie Dixon, Secretary</b></p>	
	<p><b>Housekeeping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Roll Call</li> <li>ii. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes – OCT 13 &amp; 19, 2025</li> <li>iii. Confirmation of next meeting – NOV 10, 2025</li> </ul>	Natalie
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<b>Minutes Begin</b>		
	<p><b>Discussion surrounding next drafting steps begins among Constitution Committee. For ease of reading, some items have been combined, but all top-level bullet points are in chronological order.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC member suggests reviewing Election Committee notes to begin drafting Constitution Article VII – Standing Committees</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prior Election Ordinance(s) had timeframes prohibiting changes to an Election Ordinance within 90 day of preceding an election.</li> <li>○ A recently drafted Election Ordinance cannot be distributed for review until a Special Meeting of the General Council is held to address General Council Resolutions that prohibit absentee voting and require the General Council to ratify Election Ordinances</li> <li>● A different CC member suggests including timeframe requirements for petitions for Special Meetings of the General Council</li> <li>● Sanctions and consequences for failure to perform official duties are necessary, also codifying Grievance process to allow for proper due process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A distinction is needed between the investigative and the judgement functions that the Grievance Committee currently operates under</li> <li>○ Subpoena power given to the Grievance Committee would allow for a General Council member to receive materials to ensure a matter is fully investigated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Later on, CC members state that a subpoena power and authority of the Grievance Committee would allow for General Council members to investigate</li> <li>■ There should be an evidentiary burden on subpoenas, so they are not filed frivolously</li> <li>■ Subpoenas should allow for Grievance investigations without a Grievance having been filed – this permits General Council members to investigate matters and could head off frivolous Grievances</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ CC member states they think there should be a burden of proof when filing a Grievance, failure to meet the burden may result in summary dismissals of filed Grievances without prejudice.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dismissed Grievances may be refiled with improved or additional evidence.</li> <li>○ Constitution Article X states “The Grievance Committee shall investigate complaints of misconduct [...]” creating investigative powers</li> <li>▪ A CC member asks if there can be an investigative body created by the Grievance Committee to avoid putting the Grievance Committee in the investigative role.</li> <li>○ Committee members discuss the use of “examine complaints” instead of “investigate complaints”</li> <li>• CC member brings up accessibility concerns in creating formalized Grievance processes that include subpoenas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does more complicated administrative procedure take away power from the General Council?</li> <li>○ CC member brings up that having due process and a Grievance process better outlined in the Constitution will only benefit General Council members in the event a matter is taken to CFR Court</li> <li>○ A “quasi-judicial body” is given as terminology to include</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Burden of proof for filing Grievances is brought up by Business Committee member present <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A CC member agrees that if a Grievance does not meet a filing standard, then it should be summarily dismissed</li> <li>○ Terms including preponderance of evidence, substantiative evidence, probable cause are discussed as burdens of proof</li> <li>○ Examples to inform readers should be used when discussing evidence as burdens of proof</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Due process is important for an accused, but what are the consequences for an accusation proving true and how do the General Council and the Grievance</li> </ul>	

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	<p>Committee share that power to determine those consequences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CC member responds that the ultimate punishment is removal from a Committee, lesser consequences may include censure, reprimand and/or loss of tribal benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further clarification given that the results can be no proper showing of misconduct, a proper showing of misconduct with censure or other remedies, a proper showing of misconduct with the recommendation of removal</li> <li>▪ Sanctioning is not against the Bill of Rights, penalties and sanctions are synonyms and both require due process</li> <li>▪ CC member asks that Grievance matters resulting in criminal charges or any other tribal member participation in unjust enrichment directed by an elected official(s) also be subject to sanctions on tribal member benefits</li> <li>▪ Any loss of eligibility for political office must be addressed in the Qualifications of Officers article (By-Laws Article II)</li> <li>▪ Possible loss of eligibility includes but not limited to monetary claims, tribal tags, tribal administrative or enterprise employment with all sanctions being subject to a vote of the General Council</li> <li>▪ Mechanisms for the notification of Committees regarding tribal member or elected official sanctions discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctions imposed by the General Council should be public record, possibly through General Council Resolution</li> <li>• Sanction documentation should contain names with findings and clear and actionable sanctions</li> <li>• Administrative procedures should include a</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>sentence in applications where tribal members swear they haven't been sanctioned or prohibited from engaging in relevant tribal member benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson of the Grievance Committee or Secretary-Treasurer can be the person to notify departments of sanctions and keep master lists, goes back to open records policy as well; later on 2<sup>nd</sup> Chief is suggested for an alternate if the Secretary-Treasurer position is vacant</li> <li>• Per Business Committee member the tribe is using OneTribe software, but not all data has been migrated over for every tribal administrative department, this would allow for sanctions to be seen across tribal administrative departments</li> <li>• Eviction proceedings in tribal leases seem to be in limbo between BIA/federal courts, local courts, and the tribal courts currently in the process of being set up</li> <li>• Resignations will not halt the Grievance process</li> <li>• Discussion on Grievance requirements and service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current Grievance Ordinance Article 5 requires a signature, printed name, contact information, and a tribal roll number on a Grievance</li> <li>○ Prior member of the Grievance Committee brings up not having a postbox or private lockbox at the offices to receive Grievances, a prior Grievance Committee did pay for a PO Box</li> <li>○ Current receipt procedure for filing a Grievance can include handing it to someone at the tribal offices who signs and dates the Grievance envelope and then notifies the Chairperson of the Grievance Committee; CC member asks if a statutory agent should be named instead, suggestions of the Tag Agent are given</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
8:31pm	<b>Constitution Committee takes a short break.</b>	
8:42pm	<b>Constitution Committee resumes from the break.</b>	
	<p><b>Discussion surrounding next drafting steps begins among Constitution Committee. For ease of reading, some items have been combined, but all top-level bullet points are in chronological order.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the reception of a Grievance continues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Does a hypothetical statutory agent need to be a notary? A CC member states they don't believe so, the agent would just have to be able to accept and notify the appropriate person</li> <li>◦ A receipt should be provided to a filing party with the agent receiving, and the date and time of filing</li> <li>◦ Avenues of proper service include USPS Certified Mail restricted delivery or service via process server or appropriate BIA or tribal law enforcement including via posting and leaving the notice with an adult member of the household</li> <li>◦ Timelines of Grievances discussed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chairperson of Grievance Committee will call a meeting of the Grievance Committee within 30 calendar days but allows for meeting to happen on business days</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Open Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deadline for newsletter is December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025</li> <li>• Target date for completion is March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026</li> </ul>	
	<b>Confirmation of next meeting on Nov 10, 2025 @ 6pm</b>	
9:01pm	<b>Motion #11 (Jo Lynn/Roberta) – to adjourn meeting – unanimous committee vote – motion carries</b>	