



# SENECA-CAYUGA NATION

## CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEETING

<b>DATE</b>	Monday, February 16, 2026	<b>TIME</b> <b>PLACE</b>	6pm CT Zoom only	<b>FACILITATOR</b>	Carrie Kneeland
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MEMBERS			
<b>Roberta Smith</b>	Present - Zoom	<b>Yvonne Perryman</b>	Present - Zoom
<b>Carrie Kneeland</b>	Present - Zoom	<b>Jo Lynn Gentry</b>	Present - Zoom
<b>Natalie Dixon</b>	Present - Zoom	Others Present:	<b>Curt Lawrence - Present via Zoom</b> <b>3 General Council Members</b>

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
6:00pm	<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> 01/19/2026 and 02/02/2026 meeting minutes not sent out by Secretary prior to meeting this week.</p> <p><b>See 03/30/2026 minutes for meeting minute changes and approval for 01/19/2026 and 02/02/2026.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>CERTIFICATION</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>On <u>03/30/2026</u> the minutes of <u>01/19/2026 &amp; 02/02/2026</u> were approved by unanimous committee consent. Copy emailed to BC Secretary on <u>03/31/2026</u>.</b></p>	Natalie

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	<p style="text-align: center;">/s/Natalie Dixon  <b>Attest:</b> _____  <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 – None Presented for Review</li> <li>iii. Confirmation of next meeting – March 02, 2026</li> </ul>	Natalie
--	<p><b>Planned Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Housekeeping</li> <li>● Tribal Member Outreach</li> <li>● Finalize Membership of the Nation article</li> <li>● Responsibilities of the Business Committee as members</li> <li>● Review Each Article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Duties of Officers</li> <li>○ Qualifications of Officers</li> <li>○ Structure of Govt/Standing Committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Vote on what's ready</li> <li>● Open Forum</li> <li>● Next Constitution meeting 03/02/2026 @ 6pm</li> </ul>	
<b>Minutes Begin</b>		
	<p><b>Tribal Member Outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No updates from Facebook page/groups</li> <li>● One email received from Election Committee tribal member and CC'd to Election Committee email concerning recently discovered mistake made during prior Secretarial Election process for 2023 Constitution amendments</li> <li>● All proceeding discussions in this section is related to this email</li> <li>● Full email reproduced below without greetings/closings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>I hope this email finds you well and warm! Also, I would like to thank each one of you on the committee for your hard work, dedication and TIME, you are putting in to update our Nation's</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p><i>constitution.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>As you know, our Election Committee has been working on updating our election ordinance, as well.</i></li> <li>○ <i>I wanted to share with your committee what I found a couple of weeks ago and who I have spoken to about this issue.</i></li> <li>○ <i>We (election committee) were giving a folder of past election material from Joanna Hadley. While looking through the folder, there is a 2023 tab, that had the secretarial election paperwork that was mailed out to tribal members. Attached are screenshots of the notice letter, side-by-side current/proposed amendment changes to be voted on, certificate of results and a letter from the Department of Interior certifying the election.</i></li> <li>○ <i>What caught my attention was the Fifth Proposed Amendment that was voted on, passed and certified but was not changed in our Constitution after the election.</i></li> <li>○ <i>I went to the BIA Miami Agency to do a FIOA request for more information on this election. After a few trips and speaking with Kathy Greenhaw, I was told, that information for 2023 was on a legal hold and I wouldn't be able to receive any copies. I did receive a phone call from Justin, in Tribal Services at the Muskogee office, who forwarded my questions to a Casey McKenzie in the same office.</i></li> <li>○ <i>In speaking with Casey and Kathy, they both informed me that the current constitution is incorrect and have put in a call to the solicitor to rectify this matter. Kathy confirmed that ballot question number 5 was what was mailed out to tribal members to be voted on.</i></li> <li>○ <i>They both told me that the tribe (Chief) would be receiving a letter on this matter and correcting the wording. I have no timeframe for this course of action from the Bureau.</i></li> <li>○ <i>Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I have only spoken to Natalie, our</i></li> </ul>	

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	<p><i>committee and Amy about this.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>I, personally, do not know what would be best course of action to take on spreading this information out to tribal members. I feel if both committees can come up with a working strategy, it could soften some of the fallout from online rhetoric.</i></li> <li>● Screenshots shared by Election Committee member in separate but related email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Screenshots include ballot materials, notice of election, certification of election, and related documents</li> <li>○ <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nYf11M1z6RC8VrO8NPqKPSKIWcOaFaQS?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nYf11M1z6RC8VrO8NPqKPSKIWcOaFaQS?usp=sharing</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Summary of issue as understood through discussion with Constitution Committee and General Council members present reading email and reviewing provided documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">The original ballot for the 2023 Constitutional amendment for Constitution Article VIII Annual Meetings</a> did not retain parts of the already-existing Article when voted on for amendment, including the sentence stating about “Regular elections of the Business Committee shall be held pursuant to a nation election ordinance prescribed by the Business Committee.”</li> <li>○ This was not an intentional oversight on anyone’s part, and the ballot error originated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and not the Seneca-Cayuga Nation</li> <li>○ The Secretarial Election Board that did sign off on the proposed ballot did contain at least 2 elected officials from the Nation</li> <li>○ Secretary of the Constitution Committee reports that the BIA currently has a letter in draft to the Chief on behalf of the Nation to notify us of the error</li> <li>○ The Nation is in an election year and there is supposed to be a draft Election Ordinance that the Election Committee and Business Committee have been working on and that the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>Business Committee now may or may not have the clear authority to approve of depending on the contents of the BIA's letter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post-Script 03/27/2026: the Business Committee has approved a <a href="#">2026 Election Ordinance</a></li> <li>○ Last year's Special Election was conducted using procedures set in an earlier Election Ordinance that must be reviewed by the General Council for changes to be made</li> <li>○ We do not have enough information to move forward with this matter, and likely may not have access to future documentation from the Business Committee based on the current issues with unfulfilled records requests</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Drafting and review of Constitution Article VII Standing Committees/Structure of Government article takes place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Committees of the Nation include Benefits, Election, and Grievance Committees and Enrollment Committee in name only</li> <li>• Tax Commission is currently created by the <a href="#">1985 Tax Ordinance</a> but should probably be protected in the Constitution so jurisdiction and authority is clear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current taxed goods include car and trailer tags, cigarettes, and certain casino sales</li> <li>○ Future taxes can include motor fuel for new convenience store/gas station</li> <li>○ The Tax Commission generates revenue for the tribe</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Drafting of Tax Commission language reproduced below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Tax Commission.</b> The Tax Commission is an agency of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation that has the authority to regulate and levy taxes within the Nation's jurisdiction.</li> <li>○ The purpose of the Tax Commission is to provide financing for the maintenance and expansion of tribal government operations and services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gaming Commission is made necessary per federal</li> </ul>	

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	<p>NIGC Regulations including <a href="#">25 CFR 522.2</a> Titled “Submission of Gaming Ordinance or Resolution” which requires a designated gaming license agent with appropriate procedures for any Class II or Class III gaming license</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current Gaming Commissioner is hired by the Business Committee and is not a tribal member</li> <li>○ Gaming Commissioners may or may not be elected and/or tribal members in other Native Nations, it depends on the complexity of their gaming operations and Gaming Ordinance</li> </ul>	
7:03pm	<b>Roberta joins the meeting via Zoom</b>	
	<p><b>Discussion continues surrounding primarily Constitution Article VII Standing Committees/Structure of Government article</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Much of the current structure of government is authorized by the Corporate Charter and the powers given to the Nation therein</li> <li>● Benefits/Claims Committee is a separate entity that resulted from getting federal monies from treaty violations</li> <li>● Gaming Commission language from the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A tribal gaming commission is an arm of the tribal government established for the exclusive purpose of regulating and monitoring gaming on behalf of the tribe.</li> <li>○ The Eastern Shawnee Gaming Commission Office is in place to protect the integrity of gaming.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Gaming Commission and gaming ordinances need to be responsive to changes in federal regulations, gaming licenses, and/or economic capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is especially true for the changes between Minimum Internal Control Standards (MICS) and Tribal Internal Control Standards (TICS) of which the latter may change more often</li> <li>○ Gaming Commission is a response to the federal law(s) cited above and does not necessarily need to be further codified or</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>restricted by addition to Tribal Governing Documents at this time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting of subcommittees section of article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Subcommittees.</b> Either the Business Committee or the General Council may establish subcommittees under their respective authorities. Each subcommittee shall be created via Resolution and have a designated purpose, a given timeframe, a budget, and include the membership criteria and selection &amp; replacement process. All subcommittees have the right to receive information relevant to their work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Subcommittees of the Business Committee must include one Business Committee member to be the subcommittee Chairperson.</li> <li>▪ Executive sessions may be called by any subcommittee only under the most unique of circumstances.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Any amendments done will likely be processed via General Council Resolution directing the Business Committee/Chief to initiate contact with the BIA to start the Secretarial Election/Constitution Amendment process – Constitution Article XI reviewed and reproduced below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Amendments to this Constitution and the attached Bylaws may be proposed by a majority vote of the Business Committee or by a petition signed by 30 percent of the adult members of the Nation, and if approved by the Secretary of the Interior shall be submitted to a referendum vote of the members of the Nation, and shall be effective if approved by a majority vote</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Subcommittees have different reporting times and audiences depending on their originating authority</li> <li>• Drafting of legislative hierarchy section of the article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Legislative Hierarchy.</b> The following hierarchy of tribal legislation shall be observed by all government entities and citizens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Constitution and By-Laws.</b> These are the ultimate governing documents of</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>the Nation and are subject to the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Savings Clause.</b> All prior enactments of the Nation adopted before the effective date of this Constitution and By-Laws shall continue in effect to the extent that they are consistent with this Constitution and By-Laws. Any enactment in conflict with this Constitution and By-Laws shall be reconciled or invalidated by its issuing authority.</li> <li>• <b>Severability.</b> If any provision of this Constitution or By-Laws shall in the future be declared invalid, the invalid or unenforceable provision(s) shall be severed, and the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings and Severability clause drafted from the Constitution of the Yavapai-Apache Nation</li> <li>• Drafting of legislative hierarchy section of the article continues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>General Council Ordinances.</b> All Committees and Commissions shall create, approve, and present Ordinances to be ratified by the General Council that will not conflict with any other General Council Resolution or applicable laws, and take effect after ratification. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Accessible Ordinances.</b> All General Council Ordinances in effect will be made easily accessible to citizens in a timely manner.</li> <li>▪ <b>Draft Ordinances.</b> All unratified Ordinances to be proposed for approval will be published no later than 45 days before the date of the General Council meeting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ordinances are counted – Grievance Ordinance,</li> </ul>	

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	<p>Election Ordinance, a Claims/Benefits Ordinance, Gaming Ordinance, Tax Ordinance, Enrollment Ordinance, possible Business Committee Ordinance and/or Housing Ordinance in the future – realistically there will be fewer than 10 ordinances for a while and so an indexing system does not need to be established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice to the General Council does need to be clarified somewhere in amendments</li> <li>• Finalization and review of Constitution Article III Membership of the Nation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The membership of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation shall consist of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Original Membership.</b> The original membership roll of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation shall consist of all persons of Indian blood whose names appear on the official census roll of the Nation as of January 1, 1937.</li> <li>▪ <b>Biological Lineal Descendants.</b> The biological lineal descendants of the original membership are eligible for enrollment and tribal citizen benefits upon application approval by the Enrollment Committee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Presentation of amendments to the General Council discussed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could be presented as a series of questions on government reform and what the majority vote of the 2026 General Council would like to see for each question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ eg. What changes or additions does the General Council want to see to Constitution Article III – Membership of the Nation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Should “biological” be added so it reads “biological lineal descendants” ?</li> <li>▪ Should dual enrollment be protected in the article?</li> <li>▪ Should we make our blood quantum 4/4 for all members for all time?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
8:19pm	<b>Jo Lynn departs the meeting</b>	

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
	<p><b>Discussion over the finalization of Constitution Article III – Membership of the Nation continues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafted text reproduced below, additional discussion made in following top level bullet points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Fraud.</b> Evidence of fraudulent and/or misrepresented documentation for enrollment shall result in the immediate suspension of tribal citizen benefits pending a hearing before the General Council. If findings of fraud are not substantiated by clear and convincing evidence, then benefits may be restored retroactively. The Nation shall have a right of recovery regarding any excess or improper payments hereunder.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where can we build in the due process for a tribal member accused of enrollment fraud? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clear and convincing evidence as a standard of proof for findings of fraud</li> <li>○ Findings of fraud may lead to possible disenrollment via General Council Resolution</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Open Forum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No matters brought up</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Confirmation of next meeting on March 02, 2026 @ 6pm</b></p>	
8:31pm	<p><b>Motion #19 (Roberta/Yvonne) – to adjourn the meeting - unanimous committee vote – motion carries</b></p>	