



SENECA-CAYUGA NATION

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE	Monday, March 30, 2026	TIME PLACE	6pm CT Zoom only	FACILITATOR	Roberta Smith
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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:	Curt Lawrence – Present via Zoom 2 General Council Members

TIME	ITEM	OWNER
6:02pm	Called to Order - Quorum established at the Seneca-Cayuga Nation's regular Constitution Committee (CC) meeting.	Roberta
	<p>Approval of Previous Minutes – January 19, 2026 minutes spoken to, minor grammatical corrections and additions such as “<i>self-imposed</i>” to “[...] be finished before the March 31 deadline” or “funds” to clarify it is funding meant when referring to “tribal operations” - minutes APPROVED</p> <p>February 02, 2026 minutes spoken to, minor corrections made week prior via email including primarily grammatical corrections and clarifications, although it was suggested, added to the minutes, and discussed on the record that the 1937 base roll may be reset to include everyone at 4/4 blood quantum as a different way to further sovereignty and ensure treaty rights- minutes APPROVED</p>	Natalie

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CERTIFICATION</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">On <u>04/13/2026</u> the minutes of <u>02/16/2026</u> & <u>03/02/2026</u> & <u>03/16/2026</u> were approved by unanimous committee consent. Copy emailed to BC Secretary on <u>04/16/2026</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">/s/Natalie Dixon Attest: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Natalie Dixon, Secretary</p>	
	<p>Housekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Roll Call ii. Approval of Previous Meetings Minutes – JAN 19 and FEB 02, 2026 iii. Confirmation of next meeting – APR 13, 2026 	Natalie
	<p>Planned Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping • Timing of Meetings • Tribal Member Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook ○ Zoom by computer ○ Zoom by phone ○ Email ○ Newsletter Outreach • Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oath of Office Administration ○ Membership ○ Qualifications and Disqualifications ○ Other Bodies of Government/Structure ○ Secretary-Treasurer split (Constitution Article V and By-Laws Article I) ○ Duties of Office • Cover Letter for Release • Open Forum • Next Constitution meeting 04/13/2026 @ 6pm 	
Minutes Begin		

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	<p>Tribal Member Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Facebook requested minutes from past meetings. The requested minutes were not yet available. The Facebook user questioned whether delayed minutes violate Robert’s Rules of Order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secretary of Constitution Committee recuses self from discussion of whether discipline for the delayed minutes is appropriate ○ Chairperson states there was a good enough reason for the delay, and the CC does not find a reason to discipline • Possible avenues for transparency and communication with the General Council discussed, avenues listed out below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Posting of the minutes (when available) ○ Zoom via computer ○ Zoom via telephone ○ Facebook group ○ Email constitution@sctribe.com ○ Newsletter has been sent to all tribal households with all the above information 	
	<p>Discussion and drafting on amendments begins. All top-level bullet points are in chronological order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting Oath of Office administration (section includes previously drafted Oath of Office for better comprehension) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Tuesday following the certification of an election is when the Oath of Office will be administered by the Chief or 2nd Chief. ○ A written and signed copy of this Oath will be kept by the Secretary of the Nation on behalf of the General Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I, _____, do solemnly affirm that I will uphold, support, and defend the Constitution, By-Laws, Resolutions, Ordinances, codes, rules, and sovereignty of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation. I pledge to shield our Nation from any act or influence that could undermine, defraud, or diminish its 	

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	<p>jurisdiction or inherent rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I further affirm that I will serve with honesty, integrity, and respect for the laws and values of our people. I will not mislead through false statement, nor behave in a manner that compromises the trust granted to me. I will carry out my duties with dignity, decorum, and the highest level of fiduciary responsibility, guided by truth, fairness, and a commitment to the well-being and progress of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation—its culture, languages, and citizens. ▪ With this oath, I commit myself to faithful, ethical, and impartial service, dedicating my abilities and efforts to the promotion, protection, and perpetuation of the Seneca-Cayuga Nation, now and for future generations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Council member present states they know of a (unknown if recent) issue with an unnamed Secretary-Treasurer where she [the Secretary-Treasurer] was unable “to sign checks” and get “access to the accounts” stating that “she was able to finally do that” • Newly-elected Secretary-Treasurers do not know bank balances until after they are sworn into office and become responsible for everything immediately after installation, even if the prior official did not do their work or mismanaged funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Auditing duties as well as monthly and reconciliation duties are in the Treasurer’s duties and may allow for stable and fluid transitions of power ○ General Council member present asks if there has been a problem with this; they are informed that the Nation failed its most recent tribal administration audit because they don’t do reconciliations at all, there are no written provisions in the current Constitution or By-Laws requiring a yearly audit, this was done on the honor system before but in recent years 	

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	<p>has become spotty/rare/contested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not currently a standard Oath of Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No standard Oath of Office means less continuity ○ A prior Grievance defense asserted that since there was no written standards for behavior, an accused cannot be held to a particular standard of behavior ○ General Council member asks why we need an administration of the Oath of Office and if there's been an issue with it; Committee members explain that there was a Grievance Committee member who was elected into office but not sworn in for several months, and when the Constitution Advisory Committee met with the Grievance Committee in around or about Fall 2023 the then-Chairperson of the Grievance Committee refused to invite the duly elected Grievance Committee member on the basis that she had not been sworn in, this was several months after the June election ○ When the 2025 tribal elections were re-done, it took about a month to complete them, the unopposed candidates who were guaranteed to have won their election were still required to wait to be sworn in and could not assume their duties or receive pay ○ Constitution Committee member states they believe there should be more pomp and circumstance to the installation of officers, there is rarely if any notice at all to the General Council and it is an important part of the process ○ Current Election Ordinance reviewed (Business Committee Resolution #018-021726) to determine the timing of the challenge period prior to the certification of election ○ Serious concerns identified with the Election Committee not being considered the final arbitrator on election challenges, currently the decision of the Election Committee may be appealed to the Business Committee who are 	

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	<p>given the ability influence their own elections via this mechanism (Found in Article XI Counting Ballots Section 4 Election Challenge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Council member states that the administration of the Oath of Office is already in the Election Ordinance ○ Discussion surrounding the administration of Oath of Office by a Faithkeeper/Pothanger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Council member states that the current oath is administered by the Chief or a Pothanger per the Election Ordinance ▪ Constitution Committee member points out to the General Council member that the Nation does not have the authority to determine who is a Faithkeeper/Pothanger of the Nation, that is a ceremonial position and there is a difference between the political government and the spiritual government and the political government (the Nation) does not have any authority over the spiritual government and this would need to be explicitly mentioned if we are to put the words “Faithkeeper” or “Pothanger” in the Constitution or By-laws that the Nation cannot define or appoint or elect anyone to a Faithkeeper or Pothanger position ▪ General Council member asks if including Faithkeeper in the administration of the oath creates a problem, Constitution Committee member replies in the affirmative ▪ General Council member says they are just stating what is already in the Election Ordinance ▪ Different Constitution Committee member replies that anything in an Ordinance is subject to change depending on the elected government 	

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	<p>officials in charge and their wishes, and this is a reason to both carefully consider the use of the word Faithkeeper as well as outline the elected officials who are allowed to administer the oath in the Constitution and By-Laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constitution Committee determines that the Chief and 2nd Chief are the appropriate people to swear in newly elected and appointed officials, and the Secretary will keep a written and signed copy of the Oath of Office for each tribal official • Review of Constitution Article III – Membership of the Nation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Previously approved amendment draft reviewed and read aloud ○ General Council member asks if there is an issue with the article based on adoptions ○ Constitution Committee member states that the Enrollment Committee gave notice of this issue where adopted children who are not biologically Seneca-Cayuga are being enrolled ○ General Council member asks if “lineal descendants” is being used to refer to adopted children because they mean to understand it to mean “blood descendants” ○ Lineal descent is based on the birth certificate of a person which usually reflects a change of parentage when birth certificates are reissued due to adoption, which is the issue with non-biological lineal descendants enrolling • Review of By-Laws Article II Qualifications of Officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secretary of Constitution Committee states that this Article has not been drafted; there are two parts, the qualifications for office and any disqualifications for office ○ Qualifications currently include being a tribal citizen, 25 years old or more, and living within 150 miles radius of the ceremonial grounds; additions could be requiring relevant education 	

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	<p>or professional experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disqualifications previously discussed but not drafted include being convicted of a crime of moral turpitude or violent felony, removal from office via Grievance – moral turpitude should be defined somewhere as it is subjective ○ General Council member asks what’s being discussed and when it’s explained asks if elected officials being removed by Grievance if it is an issue ○ Constitution Committee member summarizes two recently filed Grievances and their dispositions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The first Grievance had an elected official that was found to have a proper showing of misconduct but said official resigned prior to the Grievance Committee holding a meeting of the General Council to determine if the official would be removed or not – this person is now running for office in a position different than the one they were elected for, the term of which was up this year, and no findings were ever released by the Grievance Committee on this Grievance ▪ The second Grievance included a Grievance Committee that originally voted that there was a proper showing of misconduct by this person, but then when meeting again one person changed their vote and the Grievance Committee stated that there was not a proper showing of misconduct ○ General Council member asks if the Constitution Committee thinks there needs to be more in the Constitution ○ Constitution Committee member states that there probably needs to be more than the current requirements for qualification of office which are based on citizenship, age, and location 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution Committee member continues and states that the 2024 Ethics Committee created by the General Council tried to address higher qualifications for certain positions, for example purposes only: to be elected Secretary-Treasurer you must not be convicted of a financial crime like embezzlement, or if you are convicted of crimes against children then perhaps you should not be able to run for any office ○ The Ethics Committee (2 former members present) was unable to address anything having to do with elected officials and determined adding qualifications or disqualifications would require a Constitutional amendment ○ Situations have happened where there was verifiable mismanagement of tribal monies but the person was allowed to resign in lieu of prosecution. They were required to pay back the money and resign from their job but there is no conviction on record and despite having verifiably mismanaged money for the Nation. They would be allowed to run for Secretary-Treasurer since there is no conviction on record. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sanctions have been placed before but they were rolled back when one of the sanctioned members passed away and their relatives needed the General Council to lift sanctions to apply for the tribal member's burial assistance benefits ▪ Prior sanctions were blanket sanctions and all sanctioned members were listed on the same document and affected by the same roll back ○ General Council member states they think the Constitution is fine as it is ○ Yurok Constitution Article III Section 5 General Qualifications for Office reviewed, Constitution Committee discussion include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ https://yurok.tribal.codes/Constitution/ 	

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	<p><u>III-5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In a) “conviction of any violent felony or crime of moral turpitude within 10 years of the date of election or appointment” <li>▪ In a) “criminal background check” <li>▪ In b) there are measures to declare pending criminal charges during the candidacy period <li>▪ In d) the official is required to disclose criminal convictions with failure to do so resulting in removal from office, and an official faces immediate suspension from the date of indictment if prosecuted for a violent felony or crime of moral turpitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discussion on crimes of moral turpitude – it is subjective and needs to be defined, Constitution Committee member suggests the Election Committee as an appropriate authority to determine what constitutes a crime of moral turpitude <li>○ Discussion on removal from office due to a Grievance and that being a disqualification for running for office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitution Committee member states that it should probably depend on the issue(s) at the heart of the Grievance e.g. A failure to perform <li>▪ CC member continues that the General Council should be determinant on whether someone should be re-elected if they previously didn’t do the job right <li>▪ Perhaps a candidate can state any prior Grievance actions on their form for declaration of candidacy? <li>▪ Should go along with criminal convictions including situations like a misdemeanor DUI where an elected official with that conviction may have access/be insured to drive tribal vehicles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review of Constitution Article VII – Standing Committees (working title Structure of Government or 	

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	<p>Committees and Commissions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drafting of Standing Committees and Enrollment section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrollment Committee. The Enrollment Committee shall be considered a Standing Committee in name but have a separate membership pool and selection process. ▪ All Standing Committees. The Standing Committees shall be the Grievance Committee, the Election Committee, and the Benefits Committee. ▪ Electing Committees. The Grievance, Election, and Benefits Committees each shall have five (5) members elected from the General Council for staggered 4-year terms following the election terms established in Article VIII of the Constitution. ○ Discussion on alternates in Committee membership ○ General Council member asks for clarification on whether the Constitution Committee is talking about elected or appointed Committees and how many members – CC member states that Standing and other Committees are both currently elected (Grievance) and appointed (Election) and some have been both (Welfare/Claims/Benefits) and to make it a written standard across all regular Committees to have 5 members ○ General Council member asks about alternates for membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reasons for an alternate would be to have a person on standby in the event of resignation or removal or other reason for office vacancy or temporary recusal due to close relationship to a given matter ▪ General Council member asks if this is an issue ▪ CC member states that in recent past 	

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	<p>the Grievance Committee has had to operate on the minimum number (3) of members possible due to an unfilled vacancy and a temporary recusal due to familial relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CC member continues that in the most recent election there were 2 members of the Election Committee with a close family or household relationship with 2 different candidates, and if they had recused themselves there may not have been enough members of the Election Committee to make quorum ▪ General Council member states that the Business Committee could appoint a new member of the Election Committee, they were a member of the Election Committee – CC members state that a separation of powers means power goes back to the General Council and the Business Committee should not be able to influence their own elections through the choice of Election Committee membership as well as the Election Ordinance they are already responsible for, it becomes a conflict of interest ▪ Alternates who listen in on meetings can replace members as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CC member states that 2025 General Council Resolution passed says only members of the Enrollment Committee may belong to a second Committee, but CC does not have a copy of said Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Council member asks if the Constitution Committee can look at the Resolution ▪ CC member replies they have asked to look at those Resolutions multiple times and the Secretary-Treasurer has refused to schedule a date for review despite multiple requests to provide General 	

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	<p>Council Resolutions since the Fall of 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Council Resolutions do change when submitted verbally to the crowd versus being written out later by the Business Committee, this happens across administrations and may be an issue when discussing if certain Committees should have exclusive membership and basing it off this Resolution ▪ Best section for this provision would be the Enrollment Committee membership section, no language approved by CC ○ General Council member asks if Enrollment Committee membership needs to be written <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CC members explain that yes, it would be an ongoing issue for the Enrollment Committee to restrict members to only former elected officials since we are already requiring more appointed members who know the family lines ○ Drafting of membership provisions for all Standing Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusive Memberships. No employee or contractor may hold an elected or appointed office of the Nation during the term of their employment or contract. ▪ Standing Committee members shall only serve on one Standing Committee per term but may serve on multiple subcommittees. ○ Membership exclusivity dates to a prior General Council Resolution that stated one could not hold a tribal job and sit on a Committee at the same time – at the time it was related to appointed Committees, but it is relevant to elected Committees today as well ○ Current Constitution Article VII Section 1 states that the Grievance Committee “shall not include any members of the Business 	

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	<p>Committee”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current draft of Standing Committee membership should also be made clear that the Business Committee cannot hold concurrent Standing Committee positions 	
8:27pm	Constitution Committee agrees to short break	
8:35pm	Constitution Committee returns from break	
	<p>Review continues of Constitution Article VII – Standing Committees (working title Structure of Government or Committees and Commissions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to discussion of alternates for Standing Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have elected them in the past, need identified to speak with the Business Committee for any major changes in structure like additional paid members of Standing Committees ○ Possibility of having electoral runners-up being alternates who can attend meetings unpaid, discussion surrounding alternates being paid a stipend as well, a duty as an alternate to know what’s going on would require a stipend ○ We currently have a vacant Grievance Committee position that no one filed to run for and if we can’t fill a standard position then how will we fill an alternate position alongside regular members? ○ One of the biggest reasons for having an alternate is that it was an issue to get a Special Meeting of the General Council called for any reason – if this Special Meeting issue is resolved elsewhere in the Constitution, then there is no need for a provision for alternate members of Standing Committees ○ Lack of candidates registering for a vacant office could have their people nominated from the floor of the Annual Meeting, like how it works today ○ Constitution Committee members asked for 	

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	<p>input – one says that without a way to compensate an alternate for their expected time commitment then there is no point to include them, others agree to remove the provision for alternates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion surrounding the Annual Meeting and/or Special Meetings and elections being held in conjunction, but not reliant on each other to proceed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution Committee member states that without a physical General Council quorum present the only way they would want to see an election being hosted is if absentee balloting is made available to all members, two other Constitution Committee members and a General Council member voice agreement ○ Different Constitution Committee member present remembers situation where a former Chief stated that there was not a quorum and so therefore elections could not take place and it resulted in those officers continuing in office past their expected terms – absentee balloting was not made available at this time ○ Review of Constitution Article VIII – Annual Meetings relevant language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Election of officers will also be held at such annual meetings.” ▪ “Regular elections of the Business Committee shall be held pursuant to a Nation election ordinance prescribed by the Business Committee” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Business Committee has directed the elections for the Grievance Committee to happen in the Election Ordinance • This is under the authority of the General Council over Standing Committees and their election • If the Business Committee continues to have control over an Election Ordinance governing their elections then that is a conflict of interest, even if the 	

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	<p>Election Committee is given more autonomy and becomes elected to office, because of how this article is currently written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of By-Laws Article IV Section 2 relevant language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “One hundred fifty (150) members of the Seneca-Cayuga Council shall constitute a quorum to transact regular business.” ▪ Subsequent discussion is regarding whether an election should require at least 150 votes if it is not held at a Regular or Special Meeting of the General Council with quorum – no consensus reached ○ General Council member present asks to read out a part of Constitution Article VIII – Annual Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Regular elections of the Business Committee shall be held pursuant to a nation election ordinance prescribed by the Business Committee.” ▪ General Council member states that there is no mention of 150 people required to hold an election ▪ Constitution Committee member reads out sentence earlier in same article “Election of officers will also be held at such annual meetings.” and explains that the Annual Meeting requires 150 members present to open the meeting to be able to elect officers ▪ General Council member states that “if the Constitution is followed, everyone is allowed to vote” ▪ Constitution Committee member brings up that there is a General Council Resolution 01-060708 which states that voting by mail constitutionally impacts the rights of tribal members and prohibits the Business Committee from 	

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	<p>addressing absentee balloting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Council member states they didn't get to vote in the previous election and that they do in this one ▪ Constitution Committee member states that it is the same Constitution in operation and this is proof of how inconsistent our Constitution can be interpreted ▪ Different Constitution Committee member asks if General Council member has been to CFR Court – they reply affirmative – CC member continues that they must understand how important it is to have clear and concise language in the Constitution for a Committee to follow and for the General Council to know exactly what our rights are ▪ General Council member asks if absentee balloting is currently mentioned in Constitution – CC member replies that it is not mentioned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposes and powers of the Election Committee reviewed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To oversee the elections of the Nation including but not limited to the administration of elections including hiring of a third party administration, certification of results, and revising the Election Ordinance as needed ○ Including determining if candidates meet the qualifications to run for office – prior procedures included a member of Enrollment Committee to verify enrollment ○ Giving notice to the General Council for a vote, overseeing any absentee balloting processes ○ Potential language drafted for absentee balloting if the General Council wants it - Right to Vote. Every member of the General Council shall be afforded the right to vote either in-person or by absentee ballot. ○ Duties to give notice to the General Council of elections and candidates may conflict with 	

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	<p style="text-align: center;">nomination from the floor of the Annual Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution Article X – Removal of Officers read aloud for relevant language surrounding elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Such council [Seneca-Cayuga Council] shall have power, by majority vote, after giving the accused a hearing, to remove him from office and proceed to elect a successor.” ▪ This would imply nomination from the floor at a Special Meeting of 150 or more General Council members • Drafting language around powers retained by the General Council under the Legislative Hierarchy section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reservation of Powers. Any power not expressly delegated to the Business Committee is retained by the General Council. • Drafting related to the duties of Treasurer in By-Laws Article I Sections 3-4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual Reports. The Treasurer shall provide a detailed annual report at the Annual Meeting of the General Council. This annual report shall include accurate financial information including but not limited to the current assets of the Nation, the sources and amounts of all anticipated tribal revenues and expenses for the year, current bank balances, a financial health report, an annual profit and loss statement for each tribal enterprise, and the Nation’s audit for the prior fiscal year. 	
	Confirmation of next meeting on April 13, 2026 @ 6pm CT	
10:10pm	Motion #22 (Roberta/Yvonne) – to adjourn meeting - unanimous committee vote – motion carries	