



American Indian/Alaska Native Employees Association for NRCS

"Respect, Harmony, and Beauty"

AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKA NATIVE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION FOR NRCS NATIONAL COUNCIL TELECONFERENCE April 9, 2008

Those present: Millie Titla, Dave Wise, Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, Gina Kerzman, Levi Montoya, Shiraz Vira, Leota Burnett, Phillip Dixon and Julia Malzitz for Buster Landin, Ciro LoPinto.

Not Present: Carol Crouch, Buster Landin and Edie Morigeau, Yvette Dulle.

President, Millie Titla called the meeting to order at approximately **pm CST.**

Approval of March Minutes

The March 2008 minutes were reviewed and approved by the National Council members.

MOTION: 02-14-2008-1:

Motion was made to accept the March minutes.

Motion made by: Tanya

Motion seconded: Leota

Motion passed: Unanimously

Approval of March Treasurer's Report

Tanya reviewed the Treasurer's Report for March.

- a. Petty cash fund/financial procedures: Tanya was going to work with Finance and Budget committee, which she now chairs. Most recent committee list she could find was 2006. Two people retired, and Millie and Tanya were the only ones left on the list. She is going to start from scratch. Millie recommends that she and Dave Wise serve on the committee in addition to Tanya and the new treasurer. Tanya will move forward and take action on this recommendation.
- b. Treasurer Position – Tanya said Harold Bryant has accepted the position for Treasurer. Harold said he would like for it to be a long term position so there can be continuity. National Council members are happy to have Harold on board and welcome him wholeheartedly. Harold was the Treasurer for the range society for 17 years. Tanya wants to get Harold on the Wells Fargo account. Anyone already listed on the account needs to agree to have Harold added. Millie, Tanya and David Wise are currently on the account. The decision was made to take Millie off, and to add Harold. Dave and Tanya will remain on the account.

MOTION: 02-14-2008-2:

Motion was made to approve, as presented, the AIANEA March Treasurer's Report for April 9, 2008 AIANEA monthly teleconference.

Motion made by: Levi

Motion seconded: Leota

Motion passed: Unanimously

MOTION: 02-14-2008-3:

Motion was made to approve, as presented, Harold Bryant as the new Treasurer for the association.

Motion made by: Leota

Motion seconded: Gina

Motion passed: Unanimously

NHQ/Tribal Liaison: Edith Morigeau –

Edith Morigeau reported that the new Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Schafer, appointed Dawn Charging as the Director of USDA's Native American Programs. Edie recommended that we invite Ms. Charging to the conference and have her on the agenda. This could assist in marketing AIANEA.

Edie requested ideas for position descriptions for GS-12 Tribal Liaison positions.

National Council members with access to such should submit to Edie Morigeau.

Consultation Guide – the draft guide is out for comments. Edie has received some good comments on it. It will be 6-7 months before it is final and distributed. There is a new Tribal SWCD that is currently in the clearance process. It is Hoopa Valley in California. This will be the 30th Tribal SWCD!

Edie is working on a policy for the Department for the Native American Working Group. She is also working with BIA on contract issues on trust and fee land. There will be information distributed once the issues are cleared up.

Edie is also looking at data for FY06 – 07 in Protracts and SCIMS to look at tribal contracts. The most widely utilized programs by tribes are WHIP and EQIP. She is mostly looking at EQIP and seeing a significant drop in tribal applications approved when comparing FY06 to FY07. She is communicating with 12-14 states to determine the reasons. Information will be sent out regarding this.

Phillip Dixon, Leota Burnett, Edie Morigeau left the teleconference at 3:30 pm. Shiraz Vira was approved a proxy to represent Gina Kerzman to maintain a quorum.

OLD BUSINESS

Amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws

Regarding membership of council. Current bylaws state that membership for the President and Vice President must be current by January 1 of each year. The suggested change to the bylaw would require that all members of the national council must pay their dues by January 1 each year of their entire term in order to be nominated, elected and to serve. **Tanya was going to send the change to Yvette to post on the website.**

MOTION: 02-14-2008-4:

Motion was made to approve, as presented, to accept the change to the bylaws and post it on the website for membership to review.

Motion made by: Ciro

Motion seconded: Leota

Motion passed: Unanimously

2008 Conference-

Discussion took place regarding a scouting trip taken by APIO prior to the partnership with AIANEA and how cost of that trip will be paid. APIO has asked AIANEA to share the cost.

Millie will discuss this with Kent Matasuni, APIO President.

It was determined that clarification is needed during the next AIANEA/APIO teleconference regarding registration and conference costs split. Tanya confirmed that the joint teleconference minutes state that registration will be split by the registrant showing whether they are a member of AIANEA, APIO, Neither, or Both. There is no documentation that conference costs will be split accordingly, likely assumed.

Millie reported that draft letters of invitation have been developed to be sent to the USDA Office of Civil Rights. Crystal is in Washington DC this week and will talk to Margo McKay about the conference and potential sponsorship.

Tanya will look for a template for speaker letters used in the past and forward to Millie.

Millie reported that she was invited to the NOPHNRCSE conference in July in Madison, WI to speak as President of AIANEA. She asked if AIANEA has ever paid for the President to attend employee organization conferences if they are not approved to attend by NRCS. This has not been done in the past, but might need to be considered. Another option is to have a member that is already planning to attend the conference or is nearby represent the AIANEA. Millie will consider Buster Landin, Ivan Dozier, Julie Malvitz.

Millie forwarded letters to the National Council as sent to national leadership regarding the 2008 conference. APIO is trying to connect with the chair of the poster committee because arrangements need to be made very soon.

Millie will contact Carol Crouch by email to follow up. Carol serves as chair of the poster committee.

Shiraz discussed moderators – half will represent APIO and half AIANEA. AIANEA will need to provide names of moderators from their membership. All agreed that it should be newer employees/members. Tanya mentioned that we will need to wait until some registrations are received to name moderators. Although, Shiraz stated that for some employees, being a moderator or speaker may allow for attendance approval.

Shiraz discussed the funding contribution Washington plans to provide. Originally, they committed to funding the tour buses, AV equipment, nametags, and program printing. Because of budget, this may change and Shiraz will keep the planning committee updated.

Ciro explained the visioning process and how it contributes to the conference agenda. On Tuesday (8/12), there will be two visioning (Appreciative Inquiry) presentations. One will be an hour long general session and the other a 1 ½ hour concurrent session that is open to all attendees. The cost for that day will be shared by AIANEA and APIO. On Wednesday evening, the AIANEA visioning process will take place for paid AIANEA members only and will be entirely an AIANEA cost that will come from the general treasury not considered a conference cost.

Tanya discussed Elder travel cost for the conference. She explained that this has been a cost that AIANEA has always absorbed or have gotten others to assist with. The cost is increasing and is a significant budget item for the conference. It has been brought to Tanya's attention that it is not documented in the Constitution and Bylaws that AIANEA will cover the costs and a future discussion and decisions are needed.

For the short term, a decision needs to be made for the 2008 conference. It was discussed that the draft conference agenda shows the Elder panel and breakouts as part of the separate cultural training that will not include APIO. Although, the Elders will provide prayer each morning, presentation and retiring of colors, and be part of the drum group. There is a shared budget item for API cultural entertainment as part of the banquet, so possibly the same amount should be a budgeted shared cost for the portion of the Elders time that is enjoyed by all participants (\$3000). It was determined that the remainder of the funds needed for Elder travel costs should be pursued from the states in which the Elders live. Tanya will work with the Elder Representatives on this. Levi shared that possibly this should wait until after April 18, when we know the outcome of the Farm

Bill. It will likely be after April 18 before any funding would be pursued. Future teleconferences need to include discussions and decisions/official documentation regarding how these expenses will be handled for 2009 and future conferences.

Shiraz discussed that we should pursue a \$,5000 - \$10,000 sponsorship from NRCS at the national level since AIANEA and APIO are partnering for the second time and following the Chief's initiative for more partnering and budget savings. It was suggested that Crystal discuss this while in Washington DC this week.

Millie will email Crystal's cell phone number to Shiraz so he can talk to Crystal about this immediately.

It was discussed and agreed that we need to try to add Dawn Charging to the agenda for Tuesday. Shiraz will look at the agenda and see what changes can be made. He will keep Ciro, Gina, and Manny informed on the number of concurrent speakers needed.

Ciro reported on the speakers for concurrent sessions. There are five confirmed sessions/speakers:

Greg Johnson, WA – Air Quality
Angela Biggs, Jerry Rouse – Outreach and Recruitment
Noller Herbert and 2 others – Engineering software
Nila Rhinehart – Appreciative Inquiry
Speaker from 07 APIO conference – Professional Business Writing

The sub-committee is working to fill 5 additional concurrent sessions and have 11 leads. These sessions will be non-traditional and may include topics such as: Leadership, Self Development, Persuasive Speaking, Influencing Leaders, Effective Facilitation, Goal Setting. The committee is looking for local speakers at no cost.

Visioning – Ciro reported that he is working to confirm travel costs for the facilitator, deposit needed etc. He also reported that, because we will just be returning from the tour and will need to go to the visioning process, we should have food available for the members that participate so they do not need to take time for dinner. Ciro will select 2 or 3 trays of various foods, at a maximum of \$500. This will come from general treasury, not a conference cost.

The National Council agreed that Ciro and Gina will develop suggestions for the concurrent sessions that take place separate from APIO and provide that information to the National Council for decisions.

An AIANEA planning committee teleconference was scheduled for May 1 at 9am Pacific Time. Shiraz will email the entire committee.

Membership/Newsletter

Yvette emailed a report to the National Council. Membership increased after the membership campaign and several new members joined. This was successful. Millie reported that there has been discussion by the Membership Committee and other members that the word "NRCS" should be removed from the association's official name. Discussion took place about implications such as the need to change the papers of incorporation etc. Millie suggested this be brought before the general membership at the business meeting in Spokane in August. It was suggested that members that aren't able to attend the conference should also have the opportunity to give input. Discussion included that the majority of our members are NRCS employees. A change could negatively affect support from NRCS regarding attendance at the conference, but a change could also gain new members outside of NRCS.

Millie will add the proposed name change to the 2008 business meeting agenda. The business meeting agenda will also include Visioning. Millie will talk to Yvette about how the Membership Committee can also gain input from members that are not at the conference/business meeting.

Millie reported that Yvette has had problems sending the electronic newsletter to members at their NRCS email address, it was blocked. She got it resolved. Yvette also suggests we update our web software because we no longer have access to what has been used in the past. This is creating problems and Yvette is looking into new software. The second edition of the newsletter was formatted by Yvette although the material used was provided by Buster.

NEW BUSINESS:

Visioning Committee Report – Before Leota and Phillip left the teleconference, Ciro pursued a vote on the Visioning Process facilitator. The Visioning Committee only received one proposal. This was forwarded to the National Council.

Motion: Leota made the motion to accept the proposal received from Nila Rhinehart for the visioning process to take place during the 2008 conference.

Levi seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Other – Levi announced that he has been honored by being selected as the keeper of the AIANEA drum. He is working with Herb Webb to design and develop the drum and is seeking spiritual guidance. They are considering getting wood from each Elder. Ciro pointed out that at the present time, we do not have an Elder from the East Region and he would appreciate it if the East could still be represented.

Review of Action items

Items marked in red.

Next meeting –The next meeting is May 14, 2008. Call in information will be provided.
12:00 noon, Arizona time.

Motion: Ciro made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 pm.

Levi seconded the motion.

Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by Gina Kerzman and Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen for Carol Vallee Crouch, Secretary