



## Bayfield County Administrator

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**MINUTES OF THE:**  
**Bayfield County Tribal Relations Committee Meeting**  
**9:00am, Thursday, May 20, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting Via Web Ex, hosted by Red Cliff**

Members Present: *Supervisor* Jeff Silbert, *Supervisor* Steve Sandstrom, *Vice Chair* Nathan Gordon, *Chairman* Rick Peterson

Others Present: *County Administrator* Mark Abeles-Allison, *Bayfield County Tourism & Recreational Director* Mary Motiff, *Bayfield County Health Director* Sara Wartman, *Community Health Center Operations Manager* Michael Lang, *Tribal Attorney* Wade Williams, Chase Meierotto, *Interim Tribal Police Chief* Mark Pope, *UW-Extension Area Director* Mary Pardee, *Bayfield County Sheriff* Paul Susienka, *Tribal Administration Liaison* Bryon Daley, *Transportation Planner* Jeff Benton, *Bayfield County Clerk III* Paige Terry.

Called to order at 9:02 am by *Vice-Chair* Gordon

Introductions of various Bayfield County and Red Cliff Tribal staff were made.

Meierotto delivered an update to the committee regarding the GLRI applications were submitted, explaining that he anticipated hearing news regarding the funds shortly.

9:04 am – *Chair* Peterson joined the meeting via telephone.

**2. Public Comment:** None.

**3. Minutes of January 7, 2021:**

*Motion by Silbert seconded by Sandstrom to approve the minutes of March 18, 2021. Motion Carried, 4-0.*

**4. Tribal County Law Enforcement Update:**

Susienka informed the committee that the Red Cliff Police Department was reduced due to loss of staff over the winter. The Bayfield County Sheriff's Office has had to spend more time in Red Cliff over the past year to assist the Police Department by supplementing staff. Susienka reviewed a chart included in the meeting packet that displayed the number of incidences that occurred in Red Cliff that were assigned exclusively to the Bayfield County Sheriff's Office. Abeles-Allison explained that Bayfield County and Red Cliff signed an agreement the previous year that requested the previously mentioned statistics be reviewed. during the Tribal-County relations meetings.

Abeles-Allison had a question regarding another item mentioned in the agreement signed by the two entities that pertained to a revenue sharing provision between the two entities where \$10,000 would be delivered to the County and the remaining amount would go to the Tribe. Peterson explained that the item had been approved by the Tribal Council and ask that Mark submit the information regarding these funds so Peterson could follow up on the topic. Abeles-Allison asked that the Tribe's HR representative communicate with the County's IT Department to update the department on any new staff in Red Cliff that would need to be added to the law enforcement database. Procedure for coding infrastructure for new staff. Approval to add staff to the law enforcement database. Susienka explained that all law enforcement agencies throughout Bayfield County utilized a shared CODY system and the issue regarding active and inactive members needs to be address. Gordon informed the committee that he would follow up on the issue with Red Cliff HR. Peterson asked Abeles-Allison if there was a contact person at Bayfield County that Red Cliff should communicate with. Abeles-Allison answered that the IT Director Paul Houck would be the contact.

Susienka stated he would like the ability to share work schedules with the Red Cliff Police Department to better coordinate supplementing staff. Pope replied he would be willing to share schedules with Bayfield County.

Silbert questioned Pope on his law enforcement philosophy he would be bringing to the position as well as any immediate challenges he is experiencing. Pope listed his initial challenges as: staffing, training, and making everything uniform throughout the department.

##### **5. Tribal County Health Update:**

Michael Lang introduced himself as the operations manager at the Red Cliff Community Health Center. Lang reported 19 Red Cliff citizens currently in quarantine with 3 of those individuals being confirmed positive cases and 16 being close contacts. Lang informed the committee that the Red Cliff Community Health Center has been working alongside the Bayfield School and the Bayfield County Health Department to distribute vaccines to minors. 36 vaccines were distributed at the Bayfield School during the vaccine clinic held the day before. Lang explained that the clinic is looking to acquire two mobile response vehicles that could be deployed throughout the community as well as a mobile testing unit that would be capable of running PCR testing out the back of the vehicle. Red Cliff is currently working on improving testing surveillance.

Wartman reported a total of over 1,200 positive or probable COVID-19 cases for Bayfield County with an increase in probable positive tests versus confirmed positive tests. The number of positive cases in older adults has gone down dramatically. Wartman explained that the vaccine efforts conducted for individuals 16-18 years of age have stalled due to resistance for receiving the vaccine while efforts are proving more favorable for individuals in the 12-15 age range. The Bayfield County Health Department is working to visit schools throughout Bayfield County to set up vaccine clinics in the schools to better distribute the vaccine. Wartman reported outbreaks have begun to occur in schools throughout the pediatric population. Bayfield County is shortening quarantine regulations from 14 days to 10 days.

Discussion took place regarding the notification system for vaccine clinics held at schools and potential schedules for these clinics.

Abeles-Allison asked Lang to elaborate on the two response vehicles mentioned earlier. Lang explained that the vehicles would be two vans that could be deployed throughout the Tribe as well as the City of Bayfield should a need arise to test many individuals at one time during a potential outbreak. The last vehicle would be a truck that would need the capability of running the unit needed to conduct PCR testing.

Silbert questioned if the County and Tribe needed to develop more outreach efforts and incentives to motivate individuals to get vaccinated. Lang explained that the Tribal elders have been extremely motivated; however, the 20-40 age range population have been more resistant towards receiving the vaccine. Lang informed the committee that the Red Cliff has done as much as it can regarding educating the public on the vaccine as well as conducting cold calls to reach as many members of the Tribe as possible. Wartman stated that the Bayfield County Health Department is working with the Bayfield County Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Center to develop mailings for a targeted population. Sandstrom asked if a form may be developed for individuals to complete if they did not wish to receive a vaccine. Wartman explained that the Health Department is discourage individuals from filling out the vaccine consent form if they do not wish to receive the vaccine to avoid any confusion on who receives the vaccine and who does not.

Daley reviewed the mask mandate amendment that would be released later in the day for the Red Cliff Reservation and how the amendment will affect seasonal events planned for the year.

## **6. Tribal County Tourism Update:**

Gordon informed the committee that Red Cliff is in the process of trying to get their seasonal events up and running and Legendary Waters is working with Bayfield on a new commercial.

Motiff informed the committee that she learned, after a conversation with Bayfield Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, that the City of Bayfield room tax totals from the first quarter of 2021 were approximately double the amount from the same time in 2020. Motiff reported that the scenic byway has received national designation as an All-American Road. Plans for an official ribbon cutting ceremony are being developed along with celebration events that may take place along the byway. Motiff stated that efforts are being made to prep snowmobile trails throughout

the County to ensure that the trail will be properly groomed for the year. Visitor spending numbers in Bayfield County were the second-best numbers in the entire state of Wisconsin for 2020 with Bayfield County's numbers being down 2.68% compared to the previous year. Motiff reported the Bayfield County Fair will be in-person for 2021 and reviewed some of the expectations for the Fair.

Abeles-Allison reported that the Bayfield County Board had applied for Community Development Block Grant funding for business and rental assistance programs. The applications were approved for a total of \$450,000 awarded, and the County should begin receiving funds within the next two weeks. Funds will be distributed to applicants in the form of grants rather than loans. Gordon asked that Abeles-Allison forward notification of the business assistance program to the Tribe when it is received. Abeles-Allison replied that it would be forwarded.

### **7. Tribal County Highway Update:**

Abeles-Allison reported that the Bayfield County Highway Department would be conducting work on County Highway M and E during 2021 with repairs continuing on Pigeon Lake. A major project will be conducted by the DOT on US 2, from County Highway A to County Highway E, which began on May 18, 2021. Abeles-Allison listed another project including a section of US 2 with the specific section to be revealed soon.

Benton reported that Red Cliff is still waiting on news for funding that will be used to complete transportation projects. Construction on the Red Cliff transportation facility will begin summer 2022 at the earliest.

Abeles-Allison suggested jumping to Item 9 of the agenda.

### **8. Joint Land Repatriation Resolution Review:**

Abeles-Allison reported that comments were made at the previous meeting regarding revisions that should be made to the joint resolution draft that was presented, and that those changes have been made. Abeles-Allison stated that the resolution included in the packet had some slight differences compared to the resolution passed by Red Cliff in November. Gordon asked if the resolution should be kept on the agenda as work would continue to be made on it. Abeles-Allison replied yes. Williams expressed concern over the mechanics of having a joint resolution and explained that he did not understand how the County Board and Tribal Council would simultaneously adopt a resolution.

Discussion was had regarding the topic of adding a specific timeline to the joint resolution. Committee members agreed to refrain from adding a timeline to the resolution and use the word "expeditiously" instead.

### **9. US DOT RAISE:**

Abeles-Allison explained that Bayfield County applied for a US DOT BUILD Grant 2 years prior and did not receive funding. The Red Cliff Tribe had provided a letter in support to

Bayfield County for the application. Abeles-Allison informed the committee that Bayfield County would now be applying for the US DOT RAISE Grant and asked if Red Cliff would be willing to send another letter in support. Gordon stated that the previous letter would be revised, and a new version would be sent to the County. Benton asked Abeles-Allison if a debrief was ever had with the DOT, Abeles-Allison answered that a debrief did occur and it was suggested that Bayfield County strive for more public outreach, provide a more detailed explanation of the project and seek more State and Federal legislative support. Benton informed Abeles-Allison that he would revise the letter of support so it may be used for the application.

#### **10. Legislative Updates:**

Silbert reviewed the Land Repatriation legislative topic that was brought before state legislators during the County's Superior Days meetings. Silbert informed the committee that the language change was previously included in the Governor's budget but was recently removed due to the topic not falling in line with being categorized as a budget item. Abeles-Allison reported on Bayfield County reaching out to State and Federal Wisconsin Legislators for assistance in purchasing lands to replace lands that would be repatriated with back to the Tribe. Wade expressed curiosity on how a joint resolution may help move the legislative topics forward and if the planned joint meeting between the two government entities would meet any potential timelines. Abeles-Allison stated that he was not aware of any timeline, but the current MOU would be available to look back on should a timeline arise.

#### **11. Grants for County Lands on Reservation:**

Meierotto reiterated his statement from the beginning of the meeting that he expected to hear back regarding the status of the GLRI applications in a week or two and would update the committee members once he does.

#### **12. Federal Recognized Tribal Extension Educator Program:**

Abeles-Allison explained that the topic was a follow up to the previous meeting and reviewed the FRTEP program with the committee members, explaining that the application process for the new round of funding will be opening at the beginning of next year and UW-Extension is open to dialogue with the Red Cliff Tribe regarding the program, but it would be a tribal initiative. Meierotto stated he received the information regarding the program and would be following up on it.

#### **13. Joint Meeting Planning:**

- a. Location: Red Cliff**
- b. Time: 6:00 PM (Bayfield County Board meet at 5)**
- c. Topics:**
  - a. Land Repatriation**
  - b. COVID Response Review**
  - c. Tourism Opportunities**
  - d. Working to Build Relationships**

Gordon suggested passing the joint resolution between Bayfield County and the Red Cliff Tribe at the joint meeting planned for November 30, 2021. Silbert stated that it would be nice to announce more land repatriation at the joint meeting as well. Gordon suggested conducting a press release ahead of the joint meeting to discuss the land repatriation efforts.

**14. Outgoing Leadership Appreciation:**

Abeles-Allison informed the committee that it would be current *Tribal Chair* Rick Peterson's last meeting. Gordon mentioned that the swearing in of the new chair would be occurring on July 10. Committee members and participants expressed their appreciation and respect for Peterson's time as the Tribal Chair and a member of the Tribal-County Relations Committee.

**15. Future Meeting Date:** July 15, 2021, 9:00 AM.

**16. Adjourn:**

There being no further business to discuss, *a motion was made by Sandstrom seconded by Silbert to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried, 4-0 meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.*