

**MINUTES**  
**Approved by Council**  
**Idaho Council on Indian Affairs**  
**Tuesday, June 06, 2023**  
**1:00 P.M.**  
**Room EW41**  
**Boise, Idaho**

Senator Hart called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.; a silent roll call was taken. Council members in attendance: Senators Phil Hart and Rick Just; Representatives Brandon Mitchell and Nate Roberts; Bobbi-Jo Meuleman, Office of the Governor; Mary Jane Miles, Nez Perce Tribe; Chief J. Allan, Coeur d'Alene Tribe; Arnold Thomas, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe; and Nathan Small, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe. Legislative Services Office (LSO) staff present: Matt Drake, Janet Jessup, and Baylie Moore.

Other attendees: Fred Martin, Tribal Relations Manager, Department of Health and Welfare; Nicole Irwin, Regional CEO, American Red Cross of Idaho, Montana, and East Oregon; Debbie Critchfield, Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction; Janet Gallimore, Executive Director, Idaho State Historical Society; Yolanda Bisbee, Office of Indian Education, State Department of Education; and Gaylen Edmo, Tribal Council Leader, Shoshone-Bannock Tribe.

NOTE: presentations and materials distributed to members are posted to the Legislature's website: <https://legislature.idaho.gov/sessioninfo/2023/interim/icia/>; and copies of those items are on file with the Legislative Services Office located in the State Capitol. Video of this meeting is also available on the website.

### **Opening Remarks and Introductions**

The council members introduced themselves and shared their skills, experience, and background information. The tribal members gave updates on tribal leadership changes and elections. Chief Allan made a motion to approve the minutes from July 6th, 2022, and Bobbi-Jo Mueleman seconded the motion.

### **Introduction, New Tribal Relations Manager**

Fred Martin, Tribal Relations Manager, Department of Health and Welfare (DHW), introduced himself to the committee and explained the goals he hopes to achieve in this new position.

- Senator Hart asked Mr. Martin to elaborate on the relationship between DHW and the Idaho tribes. Mr. Martin replied he represents government to the tribes. He stated that if a tribal member were to ask him a question about a certain government agency, he would do everything possible to get the answer. Mr. Martin mentioned that his main focuses are Medicaid, Medicare, and Child Protective Services (CPS), but that he can help the tribes with anything they need.
- Senator Just asked Mr. Martin if the tribes he has already visited were specifically interested in anything regarding DHW. Mr. Martin replied yes, specifically Medicaid reimbursement and Medicaid eligibility.
- Arnold Thomas of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe stated that the Governor is aware of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe's need for fiber infrastructure to have access to the internet. He mentioned that the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe need a new fire station and asked Mr. Martin to send the tribe resources to get this accomplished. He also said that the tribe needs better knowledge regarding suicide and suicide prevention. Mr. Martin mentioned he recently visited the Shoshone-Paiute Reservation and there was a clinic with hundreds of medics from the Air Force that met with the tribal members.
- Nathan Small of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe asked Mr. Martin if he is familiar with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Mr. Martin replied that he was. Mr. Small then asked if Mr. Martin had

any direct working relationship under the ICWA or if he had been involved in any cases. Mr. Martin replied that this is a very important process, and CPS is the first source that should be used. He mentioned there is a Supreme Court ruling that is supposed to come out sometime in June, and this ruling could affect the relationship between the tribes and CPS. If the relationship is affected adversely, Mr. Martin believes the state should move quickly with the tribes to make sure the mostly good relationship they have now continues. Mr. Small stated that he just found out Idaho is one of two states with a lot of Native tribes that has no ICWA policy or public policy for the guidance of all tribal members. Mr. Martin mentioned Bobbi-Jo Mueleman from the Governor's Office probably had more knowledge than him regarding this topic. He reiterated the criticalness of the state to continue its relationships with the tribes.

- Mary Jane Miles of the Nez Perce Tribe stated that she is looking forward to Mr. Martin's visit with the Nez Perce Tribe. She said that she is very concerned about the lack of in-home services for tribal elders who do not need to go to a nursing home yet, and she would like to speak to Mr. Martin about pursuing this further. Mr. Martin stated he would like to talk to Ms. Miles after the meeting and when he visits with the Nez Perce Tribe.
- Chief Allan of the Coeur D'Alene Tribe mentioned a lot of tribal members were feeling uneasy waiting for the Supreme Court's decision, and he hoped the council could work with the Governor's Office to keep its relationship strong with the state regardless of the Supreme Court's decision.

### **American Red Cross Update**

Nicole Irwin, Regional CEO, American Red Cross (ARC) of Idaho, Montana, and East Oregon, discussed disasters and blood supply as Idaho approaches fire season. Ms. Irwin stated the ARC recruits volunteers so that when a disaster occurs, the volunteers and members from the ARC can open a shelter within four hours and can respond to a house fire within two hours anywhere in the region. She discussed the rare blood type, RZDZ, found within the Native American and Alaskan Native community. Ms. Irwin stated this blood type occurs in less than 2% of the world's population. She discussed tribal youth preparedness for natural disasters and mentioned the Home Fire Campaign, which conducts fundraising for free smoke alarms.

- Mr. Allan asked if the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's ARC representation is out of the Spokane region. Ms. Irwin replied yes, she could be the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's point of contact.
- Representative Roberts mentioned he has been honored to participate in some of ARC's smoke detector replacement programs, specifically in Pocatello. He asked if there had been any outreach regarding tribes receiving similar systems on tribal lands. Ms. Irwin stated there has been some outreach in Montana, and the ARC has installed a few for the Nez Perce Tribe.
- Mr. Thomas asked if the Duck Valley Reservation is in the ARC's region. Ms. Irwin replied that it is. He asked her if carbon monoxide alarms are part of the ARC's installment program and mentioned that a lot of tribal members remove carbon monoxide alarms so they can burn wood, sage, and cedar for religious purposes. Mr. Thomas asked if there is a more culturally effective method to detect carbon monoxide that the ARC could place in homes on the reservations. Ms. Irwin stated the smoke alarms the ARC purchased have a ten-year battery life, and the smoke alarms are separate from the carbon monoxide detectors. She stated the ARC works with local fire departments to get carbon monoxide monitors installed.

### **Update on Tribal Outreach and Tribal Students Learning Achievements**

Debbie Critchfield, Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction, discussed some things the State Department of Education (SDE) is working on regarding Native students, Indian education initiatives, and ways the SDE continues to help students who need extra resources and tools. She mentioned that while visiting with the tribes, she and the tribal councils were able to identify some common issues seen in tribal students. These issues include: attendance, behavioral health, and how to

engage our communities. Ms. Critchfield stated that these issues are seen in students across the state.

- Mr. Allan thanked Ms. Critchfield for visiting the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. He said that the state has failed every reservation and tribe in regards to educational testing. Mr. Allan mentioned the lowest testing numbers in the state were all in reservations. He stated that testing is an important topic that needs to be discussed and that he does not want it to be ignored. Ms. Critchfield expressed her gratitude toward the open and honest conversations she and Mr. Allan have been able to have. She stated there has been much discussion in education circles on how the SDE assesses and how they measure those assessments. Ms. Critchfield mentioned that as the SDE looks at essential standards, it will affect and drive how the SDE will assess its students. She stated she wants Idaho to be a leader in how we create and develop something that recognizes professional skills as well as the academic side.
- Senator Just asked what efforts if any were being made to include Native cultural elements in student education, and he asked if it could be folded into the Idaho history curriculum. Ms. Critchfield said yes and that there will be more conversation and effort to get supplemental material. She said the Department of Education (DOE) could serve as a repository for this information. Senator Just stated that he believes we can learn a lot from tribal members regarding the environment and land here in Idaho.
- Representative Mitchell stated he appreciates the work Ms. Critchfield has been doing to get schools back to focusing on the basics and teaching some professional skills. He asked if there are certain districts with better attendance rates than other districts and if there is something we can learn from the districts with higher attendance rates. Ms. Critchfield stated there is not a certain district that does significantly better than the rest, and due to the culture created during COVID, there is still a more relaxed attitude regarding attendance. She commented there is a low attendance rate for high school students due to lack of relevance and that if high school students had more meaningful curriculum, they would be more encouraged to be in attendance. Ms. Critchfield mentioned parents also need to be less relaxed regarding attendance. Representative Mitchell stated that he appreciates the work Ms. Critchfield is doing.
- Ms. Miles praised the University of Idaho for beginning to offer two-year classes. She stated she liked Senator Just's comment about the stewardship of the land and that she is simply amazed when she hears stories of the fisherman and hunters of the Nez Perce Tribe.
- Mr. Thomas stated that the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe works with both the Governor of Idaho and the Governor of Nevada. He said the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe is in need of a new school and the tribe has been lobbying in Carson City, Nevada, in hopes of getting a new school built. Mr. Thomas mentioned the tribe was rewarded a new school with only one "no" vote out of the Nevada Senate. He stated that the tribe is in need of fiber optic cables to add to the new school, and he would like to challenge the politicians of Idaho to see how they can support the most remote community in Idaho. Mr. Thomas asked how many of Ms. Critchfield's statistics are addressing the issues regarding tribal students, and he stated he would like to see more social workers and counselors that are Native American in schools statewide to support tribal students. Mr. Thomas asked if Native American history is being taught correctly with the true facts and if there are testing questions relevant to treaties and Native American culture. He stated that what happened to the tribes was a horrific, terrible, factual history that should be told and taught in schools so there can be some reconciliation as well. Ms. Critchfield acknowledged the broadband issue and said there is a committee put together to look at this issue.
- Senator Hart commented that he has written a book on the history of taxes and that he has been to the National Archives many times and the library of Congress many times, and he said that in order to have the history written accurately you have to do it yourself. He suggested that if it is something you want out there, you need to roll up your sleeves and make it happen.

- Mr. Allan stated that the tribes will write their history as long as the schools include it in their curriculum. He commented schools need to agree and be willing to include true Native American history. Mr. Allan argued that schools need to stop being so rigid in regards to attendance. He believes schools need to look more carefully at all student absences and not only student athletes. Ms. Critchfield stated that school attendance policies are driven by state statutes, which are thirty years old. She mentioned there will be a statewide discussion before the legislative session on how to address this issue.
- Bobbi-Jo Meuleman mentioned that her children go to school in Boise, and her fourth grader learned about the tribes this year.

### **Update on Tribal Relations**

Janet Gallimore, Executive Director of the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS), gave a report on a range of activities and consultations the ISHS has been working on with its tribal partners. She stated that ISHS is partnering with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) on updating the content on the historic highway markers across the state. Ms. Gallimore mentioned the Roots of Wisdom Native Knowledge Shared Science travelling exhibition, which has contributions from all five Idaho tribes. She discussed other consultations ISHS has conducted regarding the Native American Tribes of Idaho. Ms. Gallimore discussed the Old Idaho Penitentiary Interpretive & Experience Master Plan. She thanked all of the tribes for their contributions and participation in creating the new state museum, and invited everyone to the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) conference.

### **Open Discussion**

Senator Hart asked the council if there were any additional questions or comments.

- A member of the audience, Gaylen Edmo, Tribal Council Leader of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, mentioned Senator Hart's comment about tribal members needing to roll up their sleeves and write their own history was not sitting well with him. He stated that tribal members have tried to put their version of history out there for generations, and it is not for lack of trying but because there has been institutional road blocks and people not wanting Native Americans to speak about their true history. Senator Hart said he wanted to clarify part of his statement. He mentioned how he was in the National Archives Museum and checked out several boxes of documents, and when he went back six months later, the boxes were reclassified as top secret. He continued by saying if you do not write your history yourself, it is very likely not going to be accurate, which was the point he was trying to make. Mr. Edmo stated he was glad Senator Hart could clarify his point.
- Mr. Thomas mentioned that he is involved in treaty negotiations regarding the Columbia River because the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe is in the Columbia River Basin. Tribal leaders of the Sovereign Nations of the Columbia had asked Mr. Thomas: if there is more devastation to federal policies protecting water and air, then what are our children going to have? Mr. Thomas stated that his children and grandchildren are advocating for clean air and water. He said that he brought up certain topics because they are topics that need to be talked about.
- Ms. Miles read a quote that reminded her of Mr. Thomas's comments, "Possibly the last war we will be in will not be over oil, but over water."
- Mr. Small stated that when you look at the history of the people within the state of Idaho, there was a lot of war, but there is nothing about the Bear River Massacre in Idaho history books. Mr. Small mentioned it is going to take some time for anyone to really look at the history, and regardless of what was done to the native people, they are still alive today.
- Senator Just said he writes a lot about history, but he is hesitant to write about tribal history because it is not his history to write about. He continued by saying he then realized that he writes about history that isn't his own often. He stated that if tribal members find some of his work to be inaccurate to please let him know.

- Yolanda Bisbee, Vice Chair of the Idaho Indian Education Committee (IIEC), stated that she appreciates Ms. Critchfield coming to talk about Indian education, but she feels that the progress of the IIEC was left out of Ms. Critchfield's report. She recommended that Johanna Jones, Director of the Idaho Indian Education Committee, present to the committee about the work of the IIEC at the next committee meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.