

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
- DOUBLETREE HITON HOTEL
LANSING, MICHIGAN
July 15, 2025

This meeting was opened at 5:07 p.m. by Chairman Austin Lowes.

Present: Bridgett Sorenson, Aaron Payment, Larry Barbeau, Kimberly Lee, Michael McKerchie, Kimberle Gravelle (Z), Shawn Borowicz, Tyler LaPlaunt, Lana Causley-Smith, Isaac McKechnie, Rob McRorie, Austin Lowes

Absent: Kimberly Hampton

Moved by Director Barbeau, supported by Director Causley-Smith, to excuse Director Hampton. Motion carries with Director Gravelle opposing.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director McRorie, to add Approving Contract Orchard LIS under Resolutions.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaunt, to add Authorization to Enter into a Contract with M&D General Contractor.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve the agenda as read. Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve the 7/1/25 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to make a technical amendment and delete the last Resolution paragraph.

Motion to amend carries with Director Causley-Smith abstaining.

Motion carries with Director Causley-Smith abstaining.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaunt, to approve Resolution 2025-156, FY 2025 Budget Document – Health Division.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby approves the FY 2025 Budget Document for the Health Division totaling \$65,859,937.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries with Director Causley-Smith abstaining.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Sorenson, to approve Resolution 2025-157, Amend Purchasing Policy 2018-121 & Rescind Construction Related Services Policy 2005-137.

Moved by Director McRorie, supported by Director Causley-Smith, to amend and add that the Board will get a report when emergencies are requested.

Motion to amend carries unanimously.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Purchasing Department will generate reports on emergencies for the Board of Directors to review.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Board of Directors approves amending the Tribal Purchasing Policy Resolution 2018-121 and rescinding the Construction Related Service Policy Resolution 2005-137.

Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director Sorenson, supported by Director McKechnie, to approve Resolution 2025-158, Re-appoint Audit Committee Member Saluja.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Audit Committee recommends reappointing Dr. Madan Saluja, with the approval of the Board of Directors, for a four-year term, expiring July 2029.

Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaunt, to approve Resolution 2025-159, Sawyer Village Internal Financing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby authorizes Sawyer Village to enter into a ten-year note from the Housing Authority in the amount of \$1,500,000 at an annual interest rate of 5%.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes the Government CFO and the CEO of Enterprise Operations, in conjunction with an authorized representative of the Housing Authority, to execute any loan documents necessary to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes the Government CFO and the CEO of Enterprise Operations to execute any necessary budget modifications administratively to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director Causley-Smith, supported by Director Borowicz, to approve Resolution 2025-160, Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee Appointment.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McKechnie, to amend to make Chairman Lowes the Representative and Director Sorenson the Alternate.

Without objection, go on 5-minute recess.

No objection.

Moved by Director Gravelle, to amend to make Director Sorenson the Representative and Director Payment the Alternate.

Chairman Lowes ruled this out of order; already a motion on the floor.

Moved by Director Borowicz, supported by Director McKerchie, to call for the vote.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to call for the vote fails with Directors' Sorenson, McKerchie, Borowicz, Gravelle supporting; Directors' Lee, McKechnie, McRorie, Payment, LaPlaunt, Causley-Smith, Barbeau opposing.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to amend fails with Directors' McKechnie, Payment, McRorie, LaPlaunt supporting; Directors' Borowicz, Causley-Smith, McKerchie, Gravelle, Barbeau, Sorenson, Lee opposing.

Moved by Director LaPlaunt, supported by Director McKechnie, to amend to make Chairman Lowes the Alternate and Maria Mongene the technical advisor.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McKechnie to Table.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to Table fails with Directors; Payment, McKechnie supporting; Directors' Sorenson, Barbeau, Lee, McKerchie, Gravelle, Borowicz, LaPlaunt, Causley-Smith, McRorie opposing.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to amend passes with Directors' McRorie, Lee, Payment, McKechnie, Gravelle, McKerchie, Causley-Smith, LaPlaunt, Barbeau approving; Directors' Borowicz, Sorenson opposing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Sault Tribe Board of Directors nominates the following persons to the Tribal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, to serve while maintaining their current position as a member of the Tribal Board of Directors and Assistant Housing Director:

Bridgett Sorenson, Director – Representative

Austin Lowes, Chairman - Alternate

Mariea Mongene, Assistant Housing Director – Technical Advisor

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director Sorenson, supported by Director LaPlaut, to approve Resolution 2025-161, Approving MOA Mackinac County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby approves the MOA between the Tribe and Mackinac County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby authorizes the Tribal Chairman or his designee to execute the MOA with Mackinac County.

Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve Resolution 2025-162, Award Automated Comfort Controls Contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors hereby desires to approve the freezer/fridge replacement contract with Automated Comfort Controls for the Sault Tribe Elderly Building.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby authorizes and approves the replacement contract with Automated Comfort Controls for the total sum of \$79,675.00 not to exceed \$80,000.00.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby authorizes and approves the Tribal Chairman, or his designee, to execute any and all documents including as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the terms, conditions and intent of the resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaut, to approve Resolution 2025-163, Award Ryno Renovations Contract.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors hereby approves entering into a contract with Ryno Renovation for the complete replacement of the roof and gable siding located at the Sault Tribe Elderly Building.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes and approves funding for the contract in the amount of \$220,000.00, not to exceed \$230,000.00 (NTE).

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes the Tribal Chairman, or his designee, to execute the contract with Ryno Renovation and any and all documents necessary and appropriate to carry out the terms, conditions, and intent of this resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve a Resolution, Amending Resolution 2024-45.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to table.

Without objection, table.

No objection.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McKechnie, to approve a Resolution, 2025 At Large Tribal Voter Registration Drive.

Moved by Director Causley-Smith, supported by Director Sorenson, to refer to the Election Commission.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to refer carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve a Resolution, Seeking Land Claims Fund Reimbursement from the City of Lansing for Land Purchase Associated with a Lansing Land Acquisition and Place said Funds Back in the Land Claims Fund to Increase Annual Elder Dividend.

Moved by Director Sorenson, supported by Director Lee, to Table until next workshop.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to table carries with Directors' LaPlaunt, McRorie, McKerchie, Lee, Causley-Smith, Barbeau, Sorenson, Gravelle, Borowicz supporting; Directors' McKechnie, Payment opposing.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director Payment, to approve a Resolution, contribute \$50,000 of Sault Tribe Cultural Enhancement Funds for Anishbemowin Language Instruction at Nokomis Learning Center Located in Okemos, MI.

Moved by Director Lee, supported by Director Sorenson, to table.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to table carries with Directors' Lee, Sorenson, LaPlaunt, Causley-Smith, McKerchie, Barbeau, Gravelle supporting; Directors' McKechnie, McRorie, Payment, Borowicz opposing.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McRorie, to approve Resolution 2025-164, Support a Two Branch Separation of Powers and Request the US Department of Interior Conduct a Final Review and Schedule a Secretarial Election to Amend the Sault Tribe Constitution.

Moved by Director McRorie, supported by Director McKechnie, to amend to have legal also draft a 3-branch government separation of powers based on the 2012 version of the tribe's constitutional convention committee.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McKechnie, to call for the vote.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to call for the vote fails with Directors' McRorie, McKerchie, McKechnie, Payment supporting; Directors' LaPlaunt, Lee, Causley-Smith, Barbeau, Sorenson, Gravelle, Borowicz opposing.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to amend carries with Directors' Causley-Smith, Sorenson, McRorie, Borowicz, Barbeau, Lee, LaPlaunt, Payment, McKerchie, McKechnie approving; Directors' Gravelle opposing.

Moved by Director McRorie, supported by Director McKechnie, to amend to also have legal develop a pros and cons list of each separation of powers and send out a survey to the membership.

Roll Call Vote: Motion to amend carries with Directors' McKerchie, Borowicz, Payment, LaPlaunt, Sorenson, McKechnie, Causley-Smith, McRorie, Lee, Barbeau approving; Directors' Gravelle opposing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby votes to direct Tribal Legal to prepare two amendments to the Sault Tribe Constitution and By Laws that creates a two-branch separation of powers and a three-branch separation of powers to include a legislative and judicial branch substantially consistent with the final work product of the Tribe's Constitutional Convention Committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tribal Legal has at least 30 days to form a pros and cons list of each separation to send out to the members along with a survey sent out to the members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tribal Legal has at least 120 days to prepare a resolution for the Board to request a Secretarial election for this purpose.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that at the expiration of the 120 days, if the Tribal Legal so requests additional time to prepare said Constitutional Amendment, they will be granted up to an additional 30 days.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries with Directors' McRorie, Lee, Payment, McKechnie, McKerchie, Borowicz, Causley-Smith, LaPlaunt, Barbeau, Sorenson approving; Director Gravelle opposing.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaunt, to approve Resolution 2025-165, Approving Contract Orchard LIS.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors hereby approves the contract with Orchard LIS for the Health Division for \$349,436.60 plus additional monthly fees as detailed in the attached RIS.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director LaPlaunt, to approve Resolution 2025-166, Authorization to Enter into a Contract with M&D General Contractor.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves awarding the General Interior contract to M&D General Contractor up to \$2,182,496, which \$682,496 is out of the Sawyer Village account balance and \$1,500,000 from the STHA note, to complete this project. Final acceptance of the proposal and execution of the contract will be contingent on the final approval of the STHA Note.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby authorizes the Chairman of the Tribe, or their designee to execute any and all documents as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out the terms, conditions, intent, and administration of this Resolution, including but not limited to the ability and authority to implement any budgetary changes administratively without the need for formal Board of Directors budget modifications.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes the Chairman of the Tribe, or their designee, to enter into and execute the contract and any supporting documents with M&D General Contractor to fulfill the intent of this Resolution.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries with Director Causley-Smith abstaining.

Without objection, handle all committee appointments together.

No objection

Moved by Director McKechnie, supported by Director McRorie, to approve Maria Larson's appointment to the Food Sovereignty Committee with a term expiring in February 2027; Holly Spark's appointment to the Unit 1 – Sault Elder Subcommittee with a term expiring in September 2027; Kathleen Egart's appointment to the Elder Advisory Committee with a term expiring in July 2029.

Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director LaPlaunt, supported by Director Payment, to authorize the HR Director to negotiate an offer and to hire the General Counsel with negotiated conditions within the parameters discussed at the workshop.

Moved by Director Payment, supported by Director McKechnie, to assign a Resolution number; Resolution 2025-167.

Motion carries unanimously.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians hereby authorizes the HR Director to negotiate an offer and hire the General Counsel with negotiated conditions within the parameters discussed at the workshop.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director LaPlaunt, supported by Director Sorenson, to appoint Ashley Samuelson as Interim Human Resources Director not to exceed a period of six months with compensation pursuant to the Tribe's Interim Appointment Policy.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries with Director Payment opposing.

Moved by Director LaPlaunt, supported by Director Sorenson, to appoint Mariea Mongene as Interim Housing Director not to exceed a period of six months with compensation pursuant to the Tribe's Interim Appointment Policy.

Roll Call Vote: Motion carries unanimously.

Moved by Director McRorie, supported by Director Sorenson, to direct legal to review the Lake Superior Academy vs Bitcoin Mining case and bring options to the Board on how they can support.


Motion carries unanimously.

Without objection, meeting adjourned.

No objection.

Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Date: 8/5/25

Secretary: 
Kimberly Hampton

Others Present: Lona Stewart, Ashlee Mielke, Bill Connolly, Ryan Mills, Jessica Dumback, Joseph Street, Damien Hopper, Clarence Hudak, Jen Clerc (Z), Kara Reno (Z), Dan Doyle (Z), Mariea Mongene (Z), Andrew Lane (Z), Helen Wilkins (Z)