



## GEORGIA COUNCIL ON AMERICAN INDIAN CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

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Date: November 10, 2025

Time: 11:30am

Meeting called to order by: Nealie McCormick

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### INVOCATION

Led by Royce McCrary

#### Council Members Present

Nealie McCormick, Chairman  
Rhonda Bennett  
Heidi Altman  
Maureen Meyers  
Royce McCrary  
Paul Brannen  
Terry Raber  
Christian Dane – Program Manager (non-member)

#### Guests Present

Sissee Kirkland  
Jacob Roe, Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee  
Mikkonopé Moonhawk  
Amanda Murphy, DFCS Policy and Regulation Unit

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting minutes for the meeting on September 12, 2025, were distributed for review. Heidi Altman moved to accept minutes; Paul Brannen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### PRESENTATIONS

#### TRIBE REPORTS

**Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe:** Provided by Chairman Nealie McCormick on behalf of Chief Vonnie McCormick.

- Contributed significantly in the GCAIC planning meeting at Sapelo.
- Ongoing tribal collaboration with the Aerospace Machinist Union regarding Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.
- Organization of the ball game ceremony held at tribal grounds.
- Progress toward securing two PIN interns for the summer 2026 program.
- Land acknowledgements given by the tribe at multiple high-profile events, including the Healthy Youth International Conference, American Nursing Association, and the Carter Center.



- Receipt of Governor's proclamation for Native American Heritage Month.
- Host of educational school days, with more than 650 students attending lessons on Muskogee and Cherokee history, following Georgia curriculum standards.
- Launch of the 53rd annual powwow with a gospel sing.

**Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee:** Provided by Rhonda Bennett.

- Rhonda gave presentations to the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Lincoln County Historical Society.
- The tribe launched a museum and Heritage Center in Dahlonega and is actively promoting local history.
- Rhonda noted that many in the community are still unaware that Georgia tribes exist and is working to increase tribal visibility and awareness.
- She described efforts to work with local schools and organizations to educate the public about tribal heritage.
- Rhonda confirmed the tribe's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Boy Scouts, ensuring they follow Eastern Cherokee cultural protocols.
- She and Jacob Roe addressed persistent challenges from Lamar Snead, who spreads misinformation and misrepresents the tribe, causing legal and reputational difficulties. She and colleagues discussed options for possible legal recourse.
- Rhonda mentioned attempts to involve other tribal members in the meeting, including plans for a member to speak about ongoing issues.
- She expressed a strong desire to improve the public's understanding of the tribe's history and identity within Georgia.

**Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council:** Provided by Paul Brannen.

- Tribal Funding: Inquired about the federal funding for Georgia's state-recognized tribes, noting that it is currently administered by the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, a nonprofit, rather than a Georgia state agency. He emphasized the need to explore pathways to have these funds managed within Georgia, which previously occurred through the Georgia Commission of Indian Affairs.
- Cultural Representation: Discussed recent issues involving Boy Scouts performing Native dances without tribal oversight. In response, the tribe has prepared letters of endorsement for local Scout troops, ensuring collaboration and cultural accuracy. He offered to provide drafts of these agreements.

**BUSINESS**

- A) None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A) Georgia's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan (2027-2036)
- B) Georgia Archives Native Symposium is November 15<sup>th</sup> where Dr. Maureen Meyers will present
- C) PIN anchor partnership with New South Associates housing interns for next three years.



- D) Christmas Wish Lists from tribes
- E) Chairman McCormick and Chief McCormick to speak at Georgia DPH Epidemiology Section
- F) Dr. Heidi Altman to speak with Emory University's Humphrey Fellows in spring 2026
- G) Missing Persons Day on May 16, 2026
- H) 2026 Council planning meeting to be held at Smithgall Woods State Park in October

#### ADJOURNMENT

Heidi Altman moved to adjourn meeting. Motion seconded by Royce McCrary. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:24pm.