



GEORGIA COUNCIL ON AMERICAN INDIAN CONCERNS MEETING MINUTES

Date: May 5, 2026

Time: 1:00pm

Meeting called to order by: Nealie McCormick

INVOCATION

Led by Royce McCrary

Council Members Present

Nealie McCormick, Chairman
Heidi Altman
Maureen Meyers
Frank Williams
Rhonda Bennett
Royce McCrary
Christian Dane – Program Manager (non-member)
Donald Kirkland – Senior Advisor (non-member)

Guests Present

Chief Vonnie McCormick, Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting minutes for the meeting on March 24, 2026, were distributed for review. Heidi Altman moved to accept minutes; Maureen Meyers seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

TRIBE REPORTS

Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe: Provided by Chief Vonnie McCormick.

1. Youth Camp
 - All preparations for youth camp are complete.
 - 12 youth are registered to attend.
2. Interns & Greenhouse
 - One of two interns has already arrived and the second will arrive this week with her camper.
 - Interns will be working at the greenhouse, where many vegetables are growing.



3. Meetings & Committees Attended

- Census meeting
- Native American Language Task Force – focused on preserving Native languages.
- NRCS elders board meeting – continuing work on native plants.
- Tribal language classes – ongoing work and support.
- AI meeting – attended to learn how AI can assist with grants and related tasks.
- Grant seminar
- State Independent Living Council – working on needs assessments for:
 - Transportation/rides
 - Voting accessibility
 - Accessible housing for people with disabilities

4. Events & Ceremonies

- Ongoing planning for the powwow scheduled for October 16–18.
- Recently held a ceremony despite heavy rain; it was well attended.

Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee: Provided by Tribal Chair Rhonda Bennett

1. Outreach & Public Education

- Gave a presentation at the Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival.

2. Community & Tribal History Projects

- Working with author Jason Wetzel on a three-volume history of the Cherokee in Georgia.
 - Wetzel will donate the full set to the tribe for sale in the museum and/or online.
- Collaborating with Native American artist Renee Waters (tribal member).
 - She is creating illustrations and paintings for the museum.

3. Continuity & Documentation of Cherokee Presence

- Identified an important evidence line for continuity of Cherokee families in North Georgia:
 - Many people listed on treaty rolls (1817–1819) show up later on Civil War muster rolls.
 - Legal race categories after removal were limited to white, Black, or mulatto, so Cherokee could not formally identify as Native, but:
 - They were still living on portions of the old treaty lands.
 - This pattern provides documentable continuity of Cherokee families in Georgia.
- Met with the Georgia Civil War Commission and the Georgia Committee for Civil War.
 - They have discussed helping with donations for tribal projects based on this work.

4. Political & Legislative Outreach

- Met or communicated with several elected officials:
 - Chris Dockery, Chris Gooch, and Andrew Clyde



- Received a support letter from Senator Raphael Warnock:
 - He stated he will support the tribe if a relevant bill comes to the Senate floor.

Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council: No report provided.

BUSINESS

- A) Heidi Altman moved to approve the allocation of \$700 for an annual subscription to Esri for an ArcGIS Online account. Rhonda Bennett seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- B) Heidi Altman moved to allocate up to \$2,000 to Archaeology in the Community. Royce McCrary seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- C) Heidi Altman moved to approve the proposed contract, to begin July 1, 2026, and end on June 30, 2027, for the Program Manager position assigned to Christian Dane and the proposed contract, to begin July 1, 2026 and end on June 30, 2027, for the Senior Advisor position assigned to Four Directions Strategies, LLC. Royce McCrary seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A) Georgia Tribe Night is August 15th.
- B) Next Council meeting on June 27th at Tama Tribal Town
- C) Smithgall Woods State Park – October 9-11, 2026
- D) DeKalb County Missing Persons Day at Avondale Estates Town Green: May 17th
- E) Christian shared updates about meetings with Legal Aid Atlanta and Positive Childhood Alliance.

ADJOURNMENT

Heidi Altman moved to adjourn meeting. Motion seconded by Royce McCrary. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:47pm.