

Chairman Smokey
July 3, 2023

Changing The Washoe Tribe Constitution and Bylaws

Planning Report

The Washoe Tribal Council has recently made the decision to move in the direction of recreating a Constitution Committee. The Tribal Council does see the need for change, as our Washoe Tribal Constitution and bylaws are very old and outdated. This has been known and talked about amongst Washoe Tribal Members for a long time, with our last amendments to the Constitution being in the early 90's.

Much of the Constitution contains direction/directives on how the Washoe Tribe must perform specific actions in order for Washoe Tribal Council decisions to be legally binding. Those clauses which require the use of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are no longer valid, as the BIA themselves no longer perform those duties. We have been in operation using rules and regulations that were created to hinder the progress of our Washoe people. From the specific order of business during meetings, to limiting our own jurisdiction boundaries, have all been proven to be a detriment to the Washoe Tribe. The time for change is now.

How do make this change? The Tribe has come through many attempts to change the Constitution throughout the years and none of them have been successful. My approach to champion these efforts forward will not be the same as those of the past. We must learn from where our shortcomings were in the past attempts. The new committee must be willing to educate themselves and be able to share that education in a way that all of Washoe Tribal membership will understand. The committee will be doing a lot of reading and researching.

Without any current operating procedures, this committee will have to creating the operating structure from the ground up. As the Washoe Tribal Chairman, I will oversee the

building of the committee and provide the technical assistance, and provide resources to become successful.

In order to implement the committee in a timely manner, the start will be as follows:

- Five (5) committee seats will be available for Washoe Tribal members, over the age of 21
- These seats will come from One (1) Washoe Tribal member from each community and one from off reservation.
- Three (3) committee members will make a quorum for official decision making. If three cannot be obtained, then Two (2) members and the Chairman can fulfill the quorum.

This is only to get the committee operational, additional rules, policies, and regulations will be voted on for approval by the committee. It has been proven within the last few years that getting volunteers to participate in the subcommittees of the Washoe Tribe has been troublesome, so there may be some changes made to accommodate creating a successful committee.

I will be holding an initial meeting, open to all, to explain the needs we have in creating the committee. This meeting will also to be an attempt to gain interest from Washoe Tribal members. Our Washoe history shows that the people have always stepped up to do their part to contribute to survival, and success of the Tribe. This is one of those times. Updating the Washoe Tribal Constitution and Bylaws is long overdue and we have the perfect opportunity to make change that would better the lives of all Washoe people. I look forward to the success in our new and improved Constitution Committee!