

The Connecticut General Assembly



Working Group to Examine the Taxation of
Federally Recognized Tribal Nations

MEETING NOTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2023

1:00 PM IN ROOM 1A OF THE LOB AND ZOOM AND [YOUTUBE LIVE](#)

Members in Attendance:

Jeffrey Beckham, OPM Secretary, Chair
Sen. Cathy Osten, Appropriations Committee
Rep. Toni Walker, Appropriations Committee
Rep. Maria Horn, Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Sen. Henri Martin, Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Rep. Holly Cheeseman, Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Rep. Eleni Kavros-DeGraw, Planning And Development Committee
Jody Cummings, General Counsel, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Betsy Conway, Senior Legal Counsel, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Jean Swift, CFO, Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Larry Roberts, Attorney General, Mohegan Tribal Nation
Chuck Bunnell, Chief of Staff, Mohegan Tribal Nation
Ronald McDaniel, Mayor, Town of Montville
Fred Allyn, Jr., Mayor, Town of Ledyard

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm by Secretary Beckham.

Secretary Beckham asked for a motion to approve the September 19, 2023 meeting notes. A motion was made by Rep. Horn, seconded by seconded by Sen. Osten. The motion carried.

Secretary Beckham then called on the team from the Mohegan Tribal Council to present their responses regarding the taxation issues being discussed. Mr. Bunnell offered opening remarks. He stated that the Mohegan Tribal Council is deeply committed to communication and transparency in this process, and it is in that spirit that he and Attorney General Roberts offer the insight through their presentation on the Mohegan experience. Further, he stated that the tribal

council is committed to finding solutions together with the membership of the working group that work for everyone and don't create unintended consequences, given the complexities of the issues being discussed. Mr. Bunnell shared that the Mohegan Tribal Council fully stands behind the elimination of dual taxation, while maintaining parity for the two federally recognized tribes. He stressed the importance of recognizing that there are agreements in place that need to be acknowledged and dealt with in efforts to work toward fair and equitable solutions.

Attorney General Roberts and Mr. Bunnell delivered the presentation on behalf of the Mohegan Tribal Council (MTC) (link to presentation is [here](#)).

Secretary Beckham offered comments for the record regarding his stance on making any changes to the status quo. He commented that the issues being considered by the working group pose a "considerable and undetermined" fiscal impact to the State. He spoke of the two year budget that is in balance and under the spending cap and his concerns regarding making any changes to the status quo. Secretary Beckham further commented that he has not prejudged the issues and will wait for the group to complete its consideration of information.

Following the MTC presentation and discussion, Secretary Beckham called on Mayor Fred Allyn to offer the perspectives of the Town of Ledyard (link to presentation [here](#)). Senator Osten asked Mayor Allyn to review the education numbers presented with School Superintendent Hartling, so that they reflect recent changes.

Ms. Conway requested that the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation be allowed to submit responses to some of the issues presented/discussed during the working group meeting.

Mayor Ronald McDaniel then offered perspectives on behalf of the Town of Montville (link to remarks [here](#)). Senator Osten asked for the follow-up information on the following items:

- Mayors McDaniel and Allyn to provide a status of in-fee land in their respective towns.
- Mr. Bunnell to provide information on the regional water system put into place by the Mohegan Tribal Nation.
- Mayor McDaniel to provide background information regarding the Southeastern CT Regional Resources Recovery Authority.
- Mayor Allyn to provide information regarding police incidents.

Ms. Conway stated that the focus of the MPTN is the taxation of non-Indian personal property. Additionally, she stated that each tribal nation has distinct issues of concern. Ms. Conway offered that both tribes have had difficult histories and that the MPTN faced litigation in each step pursued.

Representative Walker expressed her appreciation for the conversations shared to date. She shared her belief that the issues regarding equity are as important as the fiscal considerations.

Representative Horn asked that a future agenda item be a discussion of the implications of the congressional status of the Montville Agreement in order for the working group to understand the legal implications of such status and what options may or may not be considered by the State of Connecticut. Attorney General Roberts offered to address the issue at the next meeting.

Secretary Beckham charged the administrative staff with scheduling the next meeting in approximately 30 days.

Seeing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Keane
Appropriations Committee Administrator