

Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission Minutes
July 18, 2025
Mi'kmaq Nation Tribal Offices
8 Northern Road, Presque Isle, ME
Public Live Stream Provided

Commissioners Present (In person and by Zoom):

Robert (Bert) Polchies, Robert (Bob) Checkoway, Nels Kramer, Joseph (Joey) Barnes, Sam St. John, Oshikiyol (Ezekiel) Crofton-Macdonald, Gordon (Nels) Kramer, Darren Ranco, Rena Newell (appeared late), and Newell Lewey (Chair).

Staff Present: Jill Tompkins (Executive Director), Rachel Bell (Projects Coordinator)

Guests Present: Chief Sheila McCormack, Vice-Chief Teresita Hamel, Naomi Paul (Treasurer, Mi'kmaq Nation), John Oulette (Mi'kmaq Tribal Council Member), John Dieffenbacher-Krall (MITSC Consultant), Katie Donlan (PhD. Candidate, University of Colorado),

Public: By audio stream

Meeting began at 10:17 am.

Opening: Chairperson Lewey offered an honoring to the Creator.

Roll Call/Introductions: Those in attendance, both in person and on video, introduced themselves.

Review of Agenda and Declaration of Quorum: Quorum was not declared initially. Once Commissioner Rena Newell arrived, the quorum was declared. Commissioners reviewed the agenda and made no changes.

Approval of Minutes: Review and approval of the June 6, 2025 draft minutes were postponed until later in the meeting due to a lack of quorum.

Update on State-Appointed Commissioner Vacancies:

Chairperson Lewey reported that he had reached out to Senator Marianne Moore about possible interest in serving on MITSC but had not heard back. He said he has had no recent communication with Jerry Reid. Commissioner Checkoway suggested reaching out to Edward French, editor of the Quoddy Tides in Eastport, Maine. Chairperson Lewey said he will connect with Commissioners Rena Newall and Joseph Barnes for their thoughts and input.

***Commissioner Newell joined the meeting remotely, and a quorum was achieved.**

Approval of Legislative Involvement Bylaws Amendments:

Commissioners reviewed proposed amendments to clarify the legislative subcommittee's role. Commissioner Crofton-MacDonald questioned whether the subcommittee's authority should be limited to monitoring and making recommendations to the full Commission. After significant discussion, a consensus was reached that the subcommittee will monitor legislation and, if a time-sensitive decision is needed, request that the Chair call a special or

emergency meeting. It was suggested that the legislative committee meet weekly while the legislature is in session. Jill mentioned that during the last legislative session she prepared summaries and the committee met weekly. Suggestions were made regarding the language in the bylaws, which Jill Tompkins will revise.

It was noted that this discussion will count as the required public hearing in preparation for a vote at the next meeting with forthcoming updates.

Revisiting Approval of Minutes: Having achieved a quorum, the Commission reviewed the June 6, 2025 draft minutes.

1. Motion to approve the June 6, 2025 minutes made by Commissioner Checkoway. Seconded by Commissioner Polchies. Vote in favor: 9; opposed: 0

Update on MITSC Archiving Project & Freedom of Access Act Training:

Jill Tompkins updated the commission on the collaboration with Fogler Library and the Maine State Archives, as well as on the development of record retention schedules. Representatives from the three groups met on July 16, 2025, at the Fogler Library to discuss next steps in processing the forty-five (45) boxes of MITSC materials. Jill distributed FOAA training materials for commissioners to read.

BREAK – Lunch provided by the Mi'kmaq Nation

MITSC Fishing Regulations Summit (8/28/25 – UMO Mitchell Center):

For the sake of the meeting's guests, Jill Tompkins explained MITSC's statutory responsibilities and the process MITSC is currently undertaking to update its fishing rules. Jill Tompkins and Rachel Bell discussed the upcoming fishing regulations summit to be held on August 28, 2025, at the University of Maine at Orono's Mitchell Center. Rachel Bell recently sent a formal invitation to the tribal biologists, and many have already agreed to attend. The summit will include the following topics for discussion: licensing, GIS mapping, identification of MITSC-regulated waters, fish stocking, and the designation of heritage waters. Commissioners noted the importance of printing regulations in a single rulebook for the sake of anglers.

Launching Plans for SEA RUN—The Audiobook:

The *SEA RUN* audiobook is nearing completion. A soft launch is planned for the Common Ground Fair with discussion of a possible official launch on Indigenous Peoples' Day. John Dieffenbacher-Krall (MITSC Contractor) made a presentation to the group outlining a proposed communications and media plan for the roll-out of the audiobook. Rafi Hopkins (MITSC Contractor) is ensuring accessibility for download. Rachel Bell and Rafi Hopkins will lead event planning and outreach in coordination with John and Jill.

Financial, Grant Projects & Staff Activity Reports:

Jill Tompkins reported on available grant funds. Some vendor bills are still outstanding, and the state allocation has not yet been received. She will submit the request and reconcile electronic transactions. Jill and Rachel shared updates on video production and administrative improvements. Commissioners were referred to the staff and financial reports contained in the meeting materials for additional details.

Proposed Meeting Schedule:

The Commission agreed to the following 2025-2026 meeting schedule:

November 14, 2025 – Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik (Gym/Cafeteria)

January 9, 2026 – Augusta

April 10, 2026 – Penobscot Nation

July 17, 2026 – Motahkomikuk (Indian Township)

October 9, 2026 – Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians

Next MITSC Meeting: November 14, 2025, Sipayik

2. Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Crofton-MacDonald. Seconded by Commissioner Polchies. Vote: In favor 9; opposed 0.

Meeting ADJOURNED.