

**REVISED**  
04/03/26



**MAINE INDIAN  
TRIBAL-STATE  
COMMISSION**

**MAINE INDIAN TRIBAL-STATE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**April 10, 2026 — 10:00 a.m. (remote via Zoom)**  
**Penobscot Nation, Indian Island**

Remote Viewing Access Available Via Public Live Stream:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@maine-tribal-state-commission/streams>

(If you are connecting remotely and wish to speak on an agenda item, 48 hours before the meeting, please contact Rachel Bell, Projects Coordinator at [rbell@mitsc.org](mailto:rbell@mitsc.org) or at (207) 271-6654 for the Zoom link.)

**A G E N D A**

			Page
10:00 a.m.	<b>1.</b>	OPENING	
	<b>2.</b>	Introductions, Quorum Declaration and Agenda Approval (*)	1
	<b>2.</b>	Election of MITSC Chair (prior term expired on January 25, 2026) (*)	2
	<b>3.</b>	Review and Approval of July 18, 2025, November 14, 2025, January 9, 2026, and February 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes (*)	7-19
	<b>4.</b>	Updating Bangor Saving Bank and Machias Saving Bank Signatories (*) <i>(Guest: Vicky Pouliot, High Impact Solutions)</i>	3-4
	<b>5.</b>	PORTLAND PRESS HERALD Freedom of Access Request (*)	25-30
12:00 p.m.		LUNCH BREAK	
12:30 P.M.	<b>6.</b>	Approval of 2026 Tribal Contribution Request Amount (*)	
	<b>7.</b>	Approval of Legislative Involvement Bylaws Amendments (*)	20-24
	<b>8.</b>	MITSC Financial Report	Separate Handout
	<b>9.</b>	MITSC Fishing Rules Amendments Update	
2:00 p.m.		ADJOURN	

(\*) Commission vote needed.

**Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission  
Tuesday, January 25, 2022  
Remote Meeting by Zoom  
With Audio Stream for the Public**

**Commissioners Present by Zoom:**

Joseph Barnes, Sarah Medina, Sandra Yarmal, Ezekiel Crofton-Macdonald, Darren Ranco, James Cote, Bob Checkoway, John Cashwell, Richard Rosen, Sam St. John, Bert Polchies

**Staff Present by Zoom:** Paul Thibeault (Managing Director), Rachel Bell (Projects Coordinator)

**Guests Present by Zoom:** Judson Etsy-Kendall, Representative Rena Newell, Michael-Corey Hinton

**Public:** By audio stream

**Review of Agenda**

The draft Agenda was reviewed. One item regarding the Remote Meetings Policy was deferred to the next meeting.

**Approval of Minutes-** Commissioners reviewed minutes from September 15, October 22, and December 21, 2021.

**Motion: James Cote made a motion to approve all three sets of minutes as drafted.**

**Seconded by Sarah Medina. Motion approved unanimously.**

**Financial Report-** Paul Thibeault summarized the written financial report and shared that spending continues to be below projections. He reported that the audit was done in early December and should be finalized early January. There were no questions.

**Managing Director Report-** Paul Thibeault referred Commissioners to the written report outlining administrative work and other projects that took place from November 17th to the present.

**Motion: James Cote made a motion to approve the Financial Report.  
Seconded by Sarah Medina. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Chairperson Vote:** Interim Chair, Bob Checkoway briefly summarized the recommendations made by the Administrative Committee to appoint candidate Newell Lewey as the chairperson for a four-year term.

**Motion: Bob Checkoway made a motion to appoint Newell Lewey as the new Chairperson. Seconded by Bert Polchies. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Sustenance Study Update:** Judson Etsy-Kendall provided an update on the present status of the Sustenance Fishing Study, a draft of which is nearly complete. Commissioners were encouraged to read this most recent draft of the report and offer feedback.

**Proposal to Approve Work Plan:** Paul Thibeault referred Commissioners to the Work Plan and proposed that they formally approve it.

**Motion: Bert Polchies made a motion to approve the Work Plan. Seconded by Bob Checkoway. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**LD 1626, Review Provisions that Would Directly Involve MITSC:** Reference was made to the staff-generated document summarizing the provisions in LD 1626 that would directly involve MITSC. It was discussed that the scope of this would be better suited for the focused attention of the Legislative and Policy Committee.

**Motion: Bob Checkoway made a motion to refer further discussion on provisions of LD 1626 that would directly involve MITSC to the Legislative Policy Committee. Seconded by Sarah Medina. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Update from Representative Rena Newell:** Representative Newell shared a list of upcoming bills involving Tribal-State relations which MITSC should be aware of and may want to take positions on.

**Holtrachem Case:** Bob Checkoway provided information on the current status of the longstanding Holtrachem case involving mercury contamination in the lower Penobscot. It would appear that both the Penobscot Nation and MITSC should have roles as stakeholders with respect to the remediation process. There was also discussion about recent and ongoing issue of PFAS-contaminated leachate from the Juniper Ridge Landfill making its way into the Penobscot River.

**Proposed Meeting Schedule:** There was a brief discussion of the proposed meeting schedule for the upcoming year, with a decision that the next regular meeting will be held in March. MITSC staff were directed to schedule this next meeting after first consulting with the new chairperson.

# Resolution of Lodge, Association or Other Similar Organization

BANGOR SAVINGS BANK  
 OLD TOWN  
 564 STILLWATER AVE  
 OLD TOWN, ME 04468-0000

By: MAINE INDIAN TRIBAL-STATE COMMISSION  
 PO BOX 386  
 OLD TOWN, ME 04468

*Referred to in this document as "Financial Institution"*

*Referred to in this document as "Association"*

I, JILL E TOMPKINS, certify that I am Secretary (clerk) of the above named association organized under the laws of STATE OF MAINE, Federal Employer I.D. Number 01-0492768, and that the resolutions on this document are a correct copy of the resolutions adopted at a meeting of the Association duly and properly called and held on 02/20/2026 (date). These resolutions appear in the minutes of this meeting and have not been rescinded or modified.

**Agents.** Any Agent listed below, subject to any written limitations, is authorized to exercise the powers granted as indicated below:

Name and Title or Position	Signature	Facsimile Signature <i>(if used)</i>
A. JILL E TOMPKINS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	X	X
B. ROBERT CHECKOWAY COMMISSIONER	X	X
C. VICKY POULIOT FINANCE CONSULTANT	X	X
D. _____	X	X
E. _____	X	X
F. _____	X	X

- (5) The Association agrees to the terms and conditions of any account agreement, properly opened by any Agent of the Association. The Association authorizes the Financial Institution, at any time, to charge the Association for all checks, drafts, or other orders, for the payment of money, that are drawn on the Financial Institution, so long as they contain the required number of signatures for this purpose.
- (6) The Association acknowledges and agrees that the Financial Institution may furnish at its discretion automated access devices to Agents of the Association to facilitate those powers authorized by this resolution or other resolutions in effect at the time of issuance. The term "automated access device" includes, but is not limited to, credit cards, automated teller machines (ATM), and debit cards.
- (7) The Association acknowledges and agrees that the Financial Institution may rely on alternative signature and verification codes issued to or obtained from the Agent named on this resolution. The term "alternative signature and verification codes" includes, but is not limited to, facsimile signatures on file with the Financial Institution, personal identification numbers (PIN), and digital signatures. If a facsimile signature specimen has been provided on this resolution, (or that are filed separately by the Association with the Financial Institution from time to time) the Financial Institution is authorized to treat the facsimile signature as the signature of the Agent(s) regardless of by whom or by what means the facsimile signature may have been affixed so long as it resembles the facsimile signature specimen on file. The Association authorizes each Agent to have custody of the Association's private key used to create a digital signature and to request issuance of a certificate listing the corresponding public key. The Financial Institution shall have no responsibility or liability for unauthorized use of alternative signature and verification codes unless otherwise agreed in writing.

**Effect on Previous Resolutions.** This resolution supersedes resolution dated \_\_\_\_\_ . If not completed, all resolutions remain in effect.

**Certification of Authority**

I further certify that the Association has, and at the time of adoption of this resolution had, full power and lawful authority to adopt the resolutions stated above to confer the powers granted above to the persons named who have full power and lawful authority to exercise the same. (Apply seal below where appropriate.)

If checked, the Association is a non-profit lodge, association or similar organization.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Secretary)*  
 JILL E TOMPKINS

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Attest by Other Officer)*  
 VICKY M POULIOT

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Attest by Other Officer)*

<b>For Financial Institution Use Only</b>	
Acknowledged and received on _____	(date) by _____ (initials)
<input type="checkbox"/> This resolution is superseded by resolution dated _____	
<b>Comments:</b>  	

**Powers Granted.** (Attach one or more Agents to each power by placing the letter corresponding to their name in the area before each power. Following each power indicate the number of Agent signatures required to exercise the power.)

Indicate A, B, C, D, E, and/or F	Description of Power	Indicate number of signatures required
A, B, C	(1) Exercise all of the powers listed in this resolution.	01
_____	(2) Open any deposit or share account(s) in the name of the Association.	_____
_____	(3) Endorse checks and orders for the payment of money or otherwise withdraw or transfer funds on deposit with this Financial Institution.	_____
_____	(4) Borrow money on behalf and in the name of the Association, sign, execute and deliver promissory notes or other evidences of indebtedness.	_____
_____	(5) Endorse, assign, transfer, mortgage or pledge bills receivable, warehouse receipts, bills of lading, stocks, bonds, real estate or other property now owned or hereafter owned or acquired by the Association as security for sums borrowed, and to discount the same, unconditionally guarantee payment of all bills received, negotiated or discounted and to waive demand, presentment, protest, notice of protest and notice of non-payment.	_____
_____	(6) Enter into a written lease for the purpose of renting, maintaining, accessing and terminating a Safe Deposit Box in this Financial Institution.	_____
N/A	(7) Other:	N/A

**Limitations on Powers.** The following are the Association's express limitations on the powers granted under this resolution.

**Resolutions**

The Association named on this resolution resolves that,

- (1) The Financial Institution is designated as a depository for the funds of the Association and to provide other financial accommodations indicated in this resolution.
- (2) This resolution shall continue to have effect until express written notice of its rescission or modification has been received and recorded by the Financial Institution. Any and all prior resolutions adopted by the Association and certified to the Financial Institution as governing the operation of this association's account(s), are in full force and effect, until the Financial Institution receives and acknowledges an express written notice of its revocation, modification or replacement. Any revocation, modification or replacement of a resolution must be accompanied by documentation, satisfactory to the Financial Institution, establishing the authority for the changes.
- (3) The signature of an Agent on this resolution is conclusive evidence of their authority to act on behalf of the Association. Any Agent, so long as they act in a representative capacity as an Agent of the Association, is authorized to make any and all other contracts, agreements, stipulations and orders which they may deem advisable for the effective exercise of the powers indicated in this resolution, from time to time with the Financial Institution, subject to any restrictions on this resolution or otherwise agreed to in writing.
- (4) All transactions, if any, with respect to any deposits, withdrawals, rediscounts and borrowings by or on behalf of the Association with the Financial Institution prior to the adoption of this resolution are hereby ratified, approved and confirmed.

**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 Diefenbacher-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.**

*Not for release until formally approved  
by the Commission*

**Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission Minutes**

**November 14th, 2025**

**Passamaquoddy Tribal Offices**

**22 Bayview Drive, Perry, ME 04667**

**Public Live Stream Provided**

**9:00 a.m. - State of Maine Judiciary Committee Meeting** (streaming). The Commission gathered to watch the Committee's discussion on "Recent Developments in Tribal Law in Maine and Overview of Proposals in LD 395 and LD 785."

**Commissioners Present (In person and by Zoom):**

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Rena Newell

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

**Guests Present:** Chief Pos Bassett, Vice-Chief Teresita Hamel, Rafi Hopkins (MITSC Consultant), Teresa Sighn (MITSC Fellow)

**Public:** By audio stream

**Meeting began at 10:04 a.m.**

**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. Commissioners reviewed the agenda and made no changes.

**Approval of Minutes:** Review and approval of the July 18, 2025 draft minutes were postponed due to a lack of quorum.

### **Update on State-Appointed Commissioner Vacancies:**

Chairperson Lewey reported that he had spoken with the Governor's Senior Legal Counsel, Jerry Reid, in July, but no progress had been made on new appointments.

### **Expiration of Chair's Term on January 25, 2026:**

There was discussion about the upcoming expiration of the Chair's term. Chair Lewey expressed openness to serving another term.

### **SEA RUN—The Audiobook Launch & Press Coverage Report:**

Rafi Hopkins and Rachel Bell shared a presentation of slides and videos from the event, including statistics they had gathered about its impact and reach. Rafi reported 54 people registered in advance, but approximately 90 attended. The event had 15 livestream viewers, seven volunteers, three commissioners and Chief Francis as a speakers, and three gubernatorial candidates in attendance.

Rachel Bell noted that three news stations covered the event, resulting in television features ranging from 2 to 8 minutes, and at least seven newspaper articles. The event significantly increased MITSC's online presence with 89 new newsletter subscribers, 2,200 new website visitors, and 283 plays of the audiobook on SoundCloud. The team considered the event a great success in raising awareness about SEA RUN's important message.

### **MITSC Financial & Staff Activity Reports [Jill Tompkins & Rachel Bell]**

Jill Tompkins provided comprehensive updates on MITSC's finances, grants, and ongoing projects. She reported that MITSC now has eight funding sources, including the state appropriation, tribal contributions, and multiple grants. She noted some challenges with accounting, as MITSC is not a 501(c)(3) and uses Cobscook Institute as its fiscal sponsor.

Rachel Bell reported on website updates and social media engagement.

Jill Tompkins discussed the ongoing development of the Wabanaki Cultural Competency Training for state employees. MITSC plans to create videos of each tribal community as part of the training materials. The project needs assistance from the tribal commissioners to identify cultural advisors and appropriate filming locations in each community.

## **Native Voices Rising Grant Project Update-- Wabanaki Food Sovereignty Through Sustenance Fishing Restoration [MITSC Fellow Teresa Singh]**

Teresa Singh shared a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the work she has been doing during her fellowship with MITSC. She explained her research comparing how sustenance/subsistence is defined across jurisdictions and identifying creative frameworks in tribal laws elsewhere. She presented her findings on legal remedies for contaminated fisheries, noting significant barriers in Maine due to the Settlement Act.

## **BREAK – Lunch**

## **Approval of Legislative Involvement Bylaw Amendments [Jill Tompkins]**

The Commissioners reviewed proposed bylaw amendments regarding the legislative committee. Jill Tompkins went over the changes highlighted in the materials. The committee members present agreed with the proposed changes, but formal voting was deferred due to the lack of a quorum.

## **Update on Wabanaki Studies Program Implementation [Brienne Lolar and Kaya Lolar]**

Brienne Lolar from the Department of Education and her daughter, Kaya Lolar, discussed Wabanaki studies curriculum development and the upcoming Youth Policy Initiative focused on engaging Wabanaki youth in policy advocacy.

## **MITSC Fishing Regulations Update [Commissioner Checkoway]**

Commissioner Checkoway provided updates on the MITSC fishing rules amendment process, noting progress on GIS mapping and emphasizing the positive state-tribal cooperation.

**Proposal for MITSC Report on Wabanaki Business Enterprises [Commissioner Checkoway]**

Commissioner Checkoway shared his idea for a potential research project on tribal business enterprises to highlight the economic contributions of tribal nations.

**Motion to go into Executive Session made by Commissioner Kramer. Seconded by Commissioner St. John.**

Vote: In favor, 5; opposed, 0. The Commission went into executive session for the remainder of the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.**

*Not for release until formally approved  
by the Commission*

**Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission Minutes  
January 9th, 2026  
Colby College Greene Block & Studios  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Convening Room  
18 Main Street, Waterville, ME 04901  
Public Live Stream Provided**

**Commissioners Present (In person and by Zoom):**

Robert (Bert) Polchies, Robert (Bob) Checkoway, Nels Kramer, Joseph (Joey) Barnes, Oshikiyol (Ezekiel) Crofton-Macdonald, Gordon (Nels) Kramer, Darren Ranco, Newell Lewey (Chair). Rena Newell appeared at 10:46 a.m.

**Commissioners Absent:** Sam St. John (absent due to a family member's passing)

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

**Guests Present:** David A. Green (President, Colby College), Jacqueline (Jackie) Terrassa (Caroline Muzzy Director, Colby College Museum of Art)

**Public:** By audio stream (in-person available)

**Meeting began at 10:08 a.m.**

**Opening:** Chairperson Lewey offered an honoring to the Creator.

**Introductions:** The meeting began with welcoming remarks from Jackie Terrassa, the Director of the Colby College Museum of Art, and Colby College President David A. Green. President Green emphasized Colby's commitment to community engagement and partnerships, and highlighted Wabanaki citizens who received degrees from Colby.

**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. Commissioners reviewed the agenda and made no changes.

**Approval of Minutes:** The July 18, 2025 and November 14, 2025 draft minutes were reviewed. No objections to the draft minutes were made. Approval of the minutes was postponed due to a lack of quorum.

**Expiration of the Chair's Term:** Commissioners discussed the process for addressing the chair's term expiring on January 25, 2026. Chairperson Lewey expressed willingness to remain in the role. The discussion concluded with plans to hold a special Zoom meeting on **Friday, February 20, at 10:30 a.m.** to address the chairperson's term expiration and other outstanding votes and approvals.

**Administrative Update:** Executive Director Jill Tompkins provided an update on the office relocation, noting that the lease at Cobscook Institute ends on January 30, 2026. The financial report highlighted challenges related to the QuickBooks transition, prompting the Commission to hire Vicki Pouliot of High Impact Business Solutions as a new bookkeeper. Pat Mallar will remain on until June 30, 2026, to support the conversion. Jill explained the ongoing process of digitizing MITSC archives. Plans include reviewing and digitizing materials at the State Archives while ensuring compliance with applicable privacy protocols.

**Update on State-Appointed Commissioner Vacancies:**

Commissioners discussed the four Governor-appointed vacancies. Commissioner Checkoway reported that Governor Mills indicated a preference for self-nomination, rather than having the Governor's Office identify candidates at this time. Chairperson Lewey suggested contacting the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions to inquire about advertising open positions. The group agreed to compile a list of potential candidates and reach out to individuals in the state's northern regions.

**Approval of Legislative Involvement Bylaws Amendments**

This decision was tabled due to a lack of quorum.

**Native Voices Rising Grant Project Update—Research Report on Tribal Municipal River Restoration and Co-Management Opportunities**

MITSC Fellow Teresa Singh has completed her fellowship and returned home to Australia. Due to the 16-hour time difference between Woollahra (Sydney) and Waterville, Teresa recorded a presentation for the Commission summarizing her findings from her

legal research project. Topics explored included an overview of municipal powers in Maine relevant to coastal areas, fisheries, and natural resource management, as well as the potential for Wabanaki Nations to utilize municipal powers—such as food sovereignty ordinances and climate resilience planning—to enhance control over and access to fisheries.

**BREAK – Lunch (12:20 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.)**

### **MITSC Economic Development Study Update & Introduction to Four Directions Development Corporation**

Matt Lewis, Director of the Four Directions Development Corporation, appeared by Zoom and delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining the organization’s work in economic development and community support within Wabanaki communities. He discussed Four Directions’ initiatives, including artisan grants, entrepreneurship centers, housing development, and improved access to capital. Mr. Lewis emphasized Four Directions’ commitment to respectful, reciprocal engagement, as well as its efforts to address housing needs, provide loans, and support tribal enterprises.

### **MITSC Fishing Rules Amendments Update**

Commissioner Checkoway provided an update on the Fisheries Regulation project, noting that progress on GIS map sharing continues.

### **Proposal to Eliminate “Indian” from MITSC’s Name**

Commissioners briefly discussed the possibility of removing the word “Indian” from the Commission’s name. Commissioner Polchies suggested replacing “Indian” with “Indigenous,”— which would preserve the MITSC acronym. Such a change would require legislative action, but it may be a path the Commission wishes to explore further.

**Meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m.**

**Next MITSC Meeting:** February 20, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., via Zoom.

*Not for release until formally approved  
by the Commission*

**Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission Minutes  
February 20, 2026  
Remote Meeting Via Zoom  
Public Live Stream Provided**

**Commissioners Present (by Zoom):**

Robert (Bert) Polchies, Robert (Bob) Checkoway, Nels Kramer, Joseph (Joey) Barnes, Oshikiyol (Ezekiel) Crofton-Macdonald, Gordon (Nels) Kramer, Darren Ranco, Rena Newell.

**Commissioners Absent:** Newell Lewey (Chair)

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

**Guests Present:** Vice-Chief Teresitia Hamel, Mi'kmaq Nation, Vicky Pouliot, High Impact Solutions

**Public:** By audio stream

**Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.**

**Opening:** Commissioner Bob Checkoway volunteered to chair the meeting due to the absence of Chairperson Lewey.

**Roll Call/Introductions:** Those in attendance on video introduced themselves.

**Review of Agenda and Declaration of Quorum:** Quorum was not declared. Commissioners reviewed the agenda.

**Re-Election of Newell Lewey as MITSC Chair**

Tabled due to lack of quorum.

**Updating MITSC Bank Account Signatories**

Tabled due to lack of quorum.

**Financial Report & Tribal Contributions**

Vickey Pouliot, High Impact Solutions, introduced herself and provided the Commission with a financial report.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Tabled due to lack of quorum, though the commissioners read over the draft of the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes and had no comments.

**132<sup>nd</sup> State of Maine Second Session Bills Overview**

The Commission reviewed the pending bills and discussed the process of submitting testimony and the ongoing challenges with this given the fact that full commission meetings require quorum and advanced notice. There was particular discussion about the section of

the omnibus bill which potentially tasks MITSC with additional responsibilities. Commissioner Rena Newell and Commissioner Ezekiel Crofton-Macdonald provided updates on the progression of the tribal bills from their perspectives working with the Wabanaki Alliance.

### **Update on Cultural Competency Training and Possible Photography Exhibit at the State House**

MITSC staff reported progress on the Cultural Competency Training and the process of working with respective commissioners and tribal leadership to identify a body of cultural advisors from each of the tribal communities.

Jill Tompkins introduced the idea of collaborating with the Maine Arts Commission to put together a photo exhibit at the State House featuring old photographs of tribal leaders with state leaders as well as Wabanaki Art. Commissioners expressed support for this idea.

### **Churchill Downs Lawsuit to Block LD 1164**

The Commission briefly discussed the recently filed lawsuit, *Oxford Casino Hotel, BB Development LLC, and Churchill Downs Incorporated v. Milton F. Champion, Executive Director, Maine Gambling Control Unit*, (D. Maine filed Jan. 23, 2026). MITSC will monitor the suit going forward.

### **Fishing Rules Amendments Update**

Jill Tompkins provided a brief update of the Fishing Rules Project and her recent communications with Jerrod Parker on the GIS mapping, which includes adding new water bodies. The commission discussed next steps.

### **State-Appointed Commissioner Vacancies**

Due to lack of quorum, this conversation, which would have required the commission to go into executive session, was tabled for another meeting.

### **Annual Report**

MITSC staff shared a draft of the 2025 Annual Report, which will soon be available in print and in digital form on the MITSC website.

### **Discussion of Mi'kmaq Nation formally joining MITSC**

Vice Chief Teresitia Hamel shared that the Mi'kmaq Nation is interested in formally joining MITSC. The group discussed the process of moving forward with this, given the fact that it would require a statutory change.

### **Proposal to Eliminate "Indian" from Commission's Name**

The Commission revisited a proposal to eliminate the word "Indian" from its name, but due to lack of quorum no formal action could be taken at this time.

### **Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.**

**Next MITSC Meeting:** April 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at Indian Island, Penobscot Nation.

## **Bylaws of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission**

*(As amended on ~~June 6, 2025~~ January 20, 2026)*

The Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission is established pursuant to the Maine Implementing Act (30 MRSA §6212.) The Commission serves as a joint tribal-state governing body with authority principally of an advisory nature.

### **I. Organization**

**A. Membership.** The Commission consists of thirteen full-voting members, six appointed by the Governor of the State, subject to review by the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary and confirmation by the Legislature, two each appointed by the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Passamaquoddy Tribe and the Penobscot Nation, and a Chair selected in accordance with the procedure specified in section I-E.

**B. Participation of Other Federally Recognized Maine Tribes.** All federally recognized tribes that do not belong to MITSC under 30 MRSA §6212 are invited to participate in MITSC as official observers.

### **C. Terms.**

1. Other than the Chair, each member appointed by the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, or the Penobscot Nation shall serve for a term of three years.
2. The first six appointments made by the Governor after November 23, 2024, the Governor will appoint two members for a term of two years, two members for a term of three years, and two members for a term of four years. Thereafter, each member appointed by the Governor shall serve for a term of three years.
3. Each member may be reappointed.
4. The Chair serves a four-year term, except when appointed for an interim term as specified in section I-E. The Chair may be reelected.

**D. Vacancies.** In the event of death, replacement, resignation, or disability of any member or the Chair, the appointing authority may fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

**E. Chair.** The Commission, by a majority vote of its twelve members, shall select a person who is a resident of the State to act as Chair. In the event that Commission members are unable to select a Chair within 120 days of the expiration of the Chair's term or the occurrence of a vacancy, the Governor of the State, after consulting with the Chiefs of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribes, shall appoint an interim Chair for

a period of one year or until such time as the Commission selects a Chair by a majority vote of its twelve members, whichever is sooner.

- F. Quorum; Vote.** Nine members shall constitute a quorum, and no decision or action shall be valid unless seven members vote in favor of such decision or action. No matter substantially affecting any particular government will be acted on without at least one representative from the affected government present.

In the event that a seat on the Commission becomes vacant for 3 months, either because a government has not filled it or a government has formally indicated that it has decided to suspend participation, then the MITSC will suspend the usual quorum requirements as follows until such a vacancy is filled:

Each vacancy will reduce the quorum, and the number of commissioners required to carry a vote by one.

The requirement that any potentially affected government(s) be present during the discussion and vote remains in place.

When the MITSC is operating under these circumstances the following process will be adhered to:

1. All governments and MITSC commissioners will be notified and apprised of the reasons when the MITSC operates at a reduced quorum.
2. As required under MITSC Bylaw II. D new questions or issues presented to the MITSC will not be acted upon until a subsequent public meeting. These pending decisions or motions will be sent to the governments and nonparticipating commissioners. The number of commissioners required to carry a vote may suspend this bylaw.

**G. Call of Meetings.**

1. **Regular Meetings.** The Commission shall meet no less than quarterly each year on such dates and locations as set by its members.
2. **Special Meetings.** The Chair or any seven members of the Commission may call a special meeting. There shall be seven days' notice given to the members prior to a meeting.
3. **Emergency Meetings.** The Chair may call an emergency meeting when a time-sensitive issue must be addressed or an immediate decision by the Commission is necessary. Notice shall be given in ample time in a manner reasonably calculated to allow public attendance. In the event of an emergency, local representatives of the media shall be notified by the same or faster means used to notify the Commission's members.

Tracks 1  
MRSA  
§406, Public  
Notice

- H. ~~In addition,~~ Notice of all meetings, including location, date, time, and the**

identity and phone number of a contact person who may be contacted for more information, shall be placed in the Legislative Calendar and sent to the Commissioners, Tribal Governors-Chiefs, Tribal Representatives to the Maine Legislature, and Tribal Ambassadors. Councils.

- I. Conduct of Meetings.** All meeting proceedings shall be open to the public. Only members of the Commission may request that an item be placed on the agenda for discussion. As to each agenda item, the Chair or another member will define the issue to be discussed, then members may discuss the item, then the Chair may open the discussion up to the public for their comments within the limits of available time, then further discussion may be held by members only, and then a vote may be taken. The Chair and the Commission members are expected to be physically present at Commission meetings, except when being physically present is not practicable. Circumstances in which physical presence is not practicable include:
1. An emergency, urgent issue, or illness;
  2. Temporary absence from the State of Maine;
  3. Significant distance a member must travel, or impediments to travel such as inclement weather; and
  4. Other circumstances as determined by the Chair.
- J. Remote Participation in Meetings.** Meetings may be conducted by remote methods in accordance with this section. "Remote methods" means use of interactive technology that enables meeting participation through live, two-way communication which may be audio-only such as telephone, or video and audio such as an online video conferencing platform.
1. When one or more members participate in a meeting remotely, the public will be provided remote access, and reasonable accommodations may be provided when necessary to provide access to individuals with disabilities. If an opportunity for public input is allowed or required during a meeting with remote participation, an effective means of communication between the members and the public will be provided.
  2. Notice of any Commission meeting with remote participation will be provided according to Section I(G). Additionally, notice of a Commission meeting with remote participation will state how members of the public may access the meeting remotely and a location for the public to attend in person unless there exists an emergency or urgent issue that requires an all-remote meeting as determined by the Chair.
  3. A member who participates in a Commission meeting remotely is present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

distribute copies of the requests to Commissioners. MITSC will not act upon motions relating to a request until a subsequent meeting, open to the public, is scheduled, publicly announced, and held. This bylaw may be waived only if, after a discussion of the underlying substantive motion, eight members of the Commission vote in favor of a procedural motion to proceed to an immediate vote.

**F. Participation in Legislative Activities**

As part of its role in advising the State of Maine Legislature, it may be necessary or desirable for the Commission to participate in the State of Maine's legislative process. The Commission may provide written and oral testimony at a public hearing, answer questions posed during a work session, or participate in meetings or informal negotiations intended to reach a compromise.

1. **Criteria.** It is necessary to establish guidelines for when the Commission may become directly involved in the legislative process. The Commission may participate in legislative proceedings when a bill:
  - a. Is submitted on the Commission's behalf;
  - b. May impact the Commission's statutory authority, responsibilities, funding, or operations;
  - c. Mentions the Commission in its text;
  - d. Involves subject matters within the Commission's authority, expertise, or work plan;
  - e. Has been identified as a tribal priority by tribal leadership, and a request has been made for the Commission to participate;
  - f. May affect all Wabanaki tribal nations located within what is known as the State of Maine;
  - g. Concerns a matter of interest to the Wabanaki nations and their citizens, and a request has been made by the Governor or legislative leadership of the State of Maine; or
  - h. Has been otherwise determined by the Commission to warrant its involvement.
2. **Legislative Committee and Procedure.**
  - a. Early in the legislative session, but not prior to cloture, the Commission will identify proposed bills that meet the criteria established by II(F) herein.
  - b. The Chair shall call a meeting to determine which bills the Commission

will participate in the legislative process. A quorum is necessary for a valid vote to be held.

- c. Following the Commission's decision on the bills it will address, a Legislative Subcommittee comprised of Commissioners shall be established.
  - d. The Legislative Subcommittee shall monitor the bills' progress and shall meet as necessary throughout the legislative session. The Legislative Subcommittee is empowered to make decisions on matters that require quick responses or actions. The subcommittee will report back immediately to the entire Commission by email. If more formal Commission direction or approval is necessary, the Chair may call a special or emergency meeting.
3. **Testimony.**

When the Commission has determined that written and/or spoken testimony is to be offered at a bill's public hearing, the Chair shall submit the testimony. The Chair may delegate the responsibility of providing testimony to a Commissioner with specific expertise on the bill's subject matter or to the Executive Director.

### **III. Operations**

- A. **Budget.** The Commission shall operate on a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year.
- B. **Per Diems and Expenses.** Services that are eligible for per diem payments shall include participation in Commission meetings and Commission committee meetings. For purposes of per diem payments remote attendance at Commission meetings and committee meetings will be treated the same as in-person attendance. Reasonable documented expenses will be reimbursed for Commission meetings and Commission committee meetings. Reasonable documented expenses for attendance by Commissioners at other MITSC-related proceedings and events will be reimbursed on request if authorized by the Chairperson or at a Commission meeting. Commission members shall be paid \$75 per day for their services and shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses including mileage at the applicable rate for business use of an automobile set by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. Upon the vote of the Commission, the Chair also may be paid a supplementary stipend for his/her services each month.
- C. **Personnel.** The Commission shall employ or contract with such personnel as it deems necessary and desirable in order to effectively discharge its duties and responsibilities. The Commission may establish a job description for its personnel.
- D. **Financial Reports.** At each meeting, the Commission shall receive from its personnel or the Chair a statement of current financial condition.



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## FOAA request

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**From** Reuben Schafir <rschafir@pressherald.com>

**Date** Mon 3/30/2026 10:37 AM

**To** Jill Tompkins <jill@mitsc.org>

Hi Ms. Tompkins

This is a request under the Maine Right-to-Know Law, Title I, MRSA Sections 401-410.

I am seeking copies of the following records:

All emails between MITSC staff, commissioners and staff of the Governor's Office related to vacancies on MITSC and/or possible appointments to the commission dated between 1/1/26 and 3/30/26.

If the records are in an electronic format, please send them in that format. If only paper copies are available, please make these records available for my review.

Please provide in advance a reasonable estimate for any costs, within the confines of the law, associated with complying with the request. The Portland Press Herald respectfully requests that any fees be waived as these records are in the public interest.

If you deny any part of this request, please notify me in writing within five working days, as required by law, and describe the document(s) being withheld and cite the statutory language on which you base your denial.

Please confirm receipt of this request and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Thank you in advance,

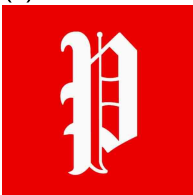
Reuben

**Reuben M. Schafir (he/him)**

Indigenous communities reporter

[rschafir@pressherald.com](mailto:rschafir@pressherald.com)

(c) 207-615-4843





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**FOAA Request Response**

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**From** Jill Tompkins <jill@mitsc.org>

**Date** Sat 4/4/2026 8:49 PM

**To** Reuben Schafir <rschafir@pressherald.com>

**Cc** Bob Checkoway <robert.checkoway@gmail.com>; Darren Ranco <darren.ranco@maine.edu>; Joseph (Joey) Barnes <josephb1968@hotmail.com>; Nels Kramer <gnkramer51@gmail.com>; Newell Lewey <newell.lewey@gmail.com>; Oshikiyol (Zeke) Crofton-Macdonald <zcroftonmacdonald@gmail.com>; Rena Newell <rena@wabanaki.com>; Robert (Bert) Polchies <n8v\_songwriter@yahoo.com>; samsjohn7@yahoo.com <samstjohn7@yahoo.com>; Teresita Hamel <thamel@micmac-nsn.gov>; Rachel E. Bell <rbell@mitsc.org>

**Bcc** Jill Tompkins <jill@mitsc.org>

1 attachment (6 MB)

2026.04.04\_Response to PPH FOAA Request w\_attchmts\_comprsd.pdf;

Dear Mr. Schafir,

Please find attached a cover letter and 15 email pdfs in response to your FOAA request of March 30, 2026. The Commission would like to state that even though it is providing this information to you, it is not waiving the right to retain other information (not related to this particular request).

I will forward the emails in electronic form separately.

Sincerely yours,

Jill

Jill E. Tompkins  
Executive Director  
Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission  
jill@mitsc.org  
(207) 726-8555

**New Address:**

P.O. Box 386, Old Town, ME 04468-0386

April 4, 2026

Mr. Reuben M. Schafir  
Indigenous Communities Reporter  
Portland Press Herald

RE: FOAA Request of March 30, 2026

VIA EMAIL TO: [rschafir@pressherald.com](mailto:rschafir@pressherald.com)

Dear Mr. Schafir:

On behalf of the Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission, I am responding to your email request sent on March 30, 2026. Your request, in relevant part, was as follows:

This is a request under the Maine Right-to-Know Law, Title I, MRSA Sections 401-410. I am seeking copies of the following records: All emails between MITSC staff, commissioners and staff of the Governor's Office related to vacancies on MITSC and/or possible appointments to the commission dated between 1/1/26 and 3/30/26.

If the records are in an electronic format, please send them in that format. If only paper copies are available, please make these records available for my review.

Please provide in advance a reasonable estimate for any costs, within the confines of the law, associated with complying with the request. The Portland Press Herald respectfully requests that any fees be waived as these records are in the public interest.

If you deny any part of this request, please notify me in writing within five working days, as required by law, and describe the document(s) being withheld and cite the statutory language on which you base your denial.

I am providing you the requested emails, however, the names of individuals who were suggested as potential candidates for the Governor's appointment to MITSC have been redacted in the emails and related attachments. The ground for redaction is that these names were considered by the Commission at its February 20, 2026 meeting in an executive session.

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A), a public body may deliberate in executive sessions on the

A. Discussion or consideration of the employment, *appointment*, assignment, duties, promotion, demotion, compensation, evaluation, disciplining, resignation or dismissal of an individual or group of public officials, appointees or employees of the body or agency or the investigation or hearing of charges or complaints against a person or persons subject to the following conditions:

(1) An executive session may be held only if public discussion could be reasonably expected to cause damage to the individual's reputation or the individual's right to privacy would be violated . .

Except for one person, none of the individuals suggested for possible appointment have been informed that they were suggested for the Governor's consideration. It would have been premature to contact the individuals until the Governor indicated that they were potential future appointees. Publishing their names would violate their right to privacy. Moreover, if an individual was named as a suggested potential appointee and he or she was not selected by the Governor, the rejection may be reasonably expected to cause damage to the individual's reputation." 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A).

Under Maine law, government agencies must disclose segregable portions of otherwise confidential records. *See, e.g., Guy Gannett Pub. Co. v. Univ. of Me.*, 555 A.2d 470, 470 (Me. 1989) (ordering disclosure of settlement agreement except for "one sentence" pertaining to the public employee's medical information, which is designated confidential by statute). Any confidential portions of an otherwise public record may be redacted. The Maine Freedom of Access Your Right to Know Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [website](#) advises, in answer to the question, "What happens if a public record holds some information that is open to the public and some information that falls within an exception to the Freedom of Access Act?" that "If the record [ . . . ] requested contains any confidential or excepted information, the custodian will decide if the confidential or excepted information can be adequately redacted or blacked out so that public access can be provided or if public access to the document should be denied." Accordingly, the emails and attachments requested have been provided but the names of the suggested potential appointees have been redacted.

Enclosed please find PDF copies of the relevant emails and attachments. There will be no charge for these copies. I will forward electronic copies of the unredacted ones as well:

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Parties to Email</u>
1	7/15/2025	Lewey to Reid, Reid reply to Lewey, Lewey reply to Reid, Lewey to Reid, Reid reply to Lewey,
2	8/20/2025	Lewey to Reid, replies
3	11/18/2025	Lewey to Reid, Reid reply to Lewey
4	1/17/2026	Jill Tompkins (Tompkins), MITSC Executive Director to Gerald/Jerry Reid (Reid), Senior Legal Counsel, Office of the Governor
5	1/20/2026	Tompkins to Reid-10:10 am
6	1/20/2026	Reid to Tompkins, Tompkins reply to Reid-2:56 pm
7	1/20/2026	Tompkins to Reid_mtg date_Zoom
8	1/22/2026	Tompkins to Commission with redacted memo
9	1/23/2026	Kramer to Tompkins_redacted
10	2/27/2026	Tompkins to Reid; copied to MITSC Chair and Commissioners, Vice-Chief Hamel (Mi'kmaq Nation MITSC Observer and Rachel Bell, MITSC Projects Coordinator
11	3/4/2026	Reid to Tompkins
12	3/4/2026	Tompkins forwarding 3/4/2026 email from Reid to MITSC Chair and Commissioners, Hamel, and Bell
13	3/24/2026	Checkoway to Tompkins forwarding Reid response
14	3/24/2026	Checkoway to Reid, Reid to Checkoway, Checkoway to Tompkins

Even though the Commission is providing you with these communications, it does not waive the right to retain other documents or information.

Sincerely,



Jill E. Tompkins  
 Executive Director  
 Maine Indian Tribal-State Commission

Attachments (13)