

BOX 12

off. of Trib. Oper., 326

CCF-054-064

Area Director

- Resolutions, 1963

January 15, 1963

AIRMAIL

Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: Chief, Office of Tribal Operations

Sir:

There is forwarded to you Resolution Cho-11-62 which was adopted by the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Philadelphia, Mississippi, on December 11, 1962.

This resolution submits the views of the Tribal Council with respect to the location of the proposed high school in or near the City of Philadelphia rather than the Pearl River location.

Original copies of letters from Superintendent Lonnie Hardin and the Area Director of Schools, A. E. Caldwell, on this subject are attached also for your information.

I concur in the views of the Superintendent and the Area Director of Schools. I see no real justification for the extra expenditure which would be required to build a new school at a new location in Philadelphia. In my opinion, it would contribute little or nothing to the integration of Indians and non-Indians in the area and would not serve the purposes intended by the members of the Tribe seeking a new location.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Graham Holmes

Graham Holmes
Area Director

Enclosure

ML Wadley/es 1-15-63

cc: Education, MAO

Superintendent, Choctaw Agency

Administration

Choctaw Indian Agency
Philadelphia, Mississippi

December 17, 1962

Mr. Graham E. Holmes

Area Director, Muskogee, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Holmes:

Enclosed is Resolution Cho-11-63 passed December 11, 1962, at a special meeting of the Tribal Council. As is evident, the resolution is an appeal to the Washington office for consideration in locating the proposed high school in or near the city of Philadelphia, Mississippi, instead of the Pearl River location. Planning done to date for the construction of new high school facilities for this jurisdiction has been done with the understanding that such facilities will be located at Pearl River.

The Commissioner's letter of September 21, 1962, to Mr. Phillip Martin, Chairman of the Tribal Council, stated that all points of view would be considered in a discussion of this matter. The purpose of the resolution is to submit the views of the Tribal Council.

It is my understanding that tentative planning has this project scheduled for construction in fiscal year 1964. If this is true, there should be an immediate decision as to the location. If planning has advanced to the stage that location at a site other than Pearl River would cause considerable delay in construction of the facility, then I would recommend against delay. We are now operating under temporary arrangements and are making plans to do so through the 1963-64 school term, but I do not see how present facilities can provide space beyond that date.

My further comments will be devoted to observations and considerations that I feel should be kept in mind in rendering a decision.

As stated in the resolution, there is a feeling among some of the Tribal Council members that the Philadelphia location would provide a more favorable climate for the improvement of race relations, leading eventually to the acceptance of Choctaws into the public schools of this area. They argue that such action will be saying to the public that they do not wish

to be to themselves. This thinking no doubt is influenced by the fact that beginning the 1963-64 school term all public school facilities in Neshoba County will be located in or near Philadelphia. The county system now has under construction new facilities for both whites and negroes. If such location would accomplish this objection, I am sure there would be no debate; however, there are other Tribal Council members who do not share this optimism but feel that the effects might lead to the opposite feeling. This was brought out in the discussion of the resolution and is reflected in the voting. Out of eleven voting members, only six voted in favor. Five did not vote.

Item 5 of the resolution states that the present educational setup at Pearl River has certain limitations. I am not sure as to which limitations they were referring but there are at least two things I feel should be considered. First, I think the new facility will present a problem of congestion and overcrowding for the area now proposed. Secondly, exploratory work should be done to assure the availability of an adequate water supply. The present water system is hardly adequate for present operations, and there is some question as to whether or not an adequate supply can be developed from deep wells.

Present plans call for the use of the following existing facilities:

1. Farm shop
2. Forty-pupil dormitory
3. Kitchen and dining facilities.

The farm shop is adequate and no new facility needed if the high school is located at Pearl River. The forty-pupil dormitory now houses both boys and girls. Plans call for construction of an additional sixty-pupil dormitory which would be used for girls with the present one to be used by boys. Location at another sight would require some change in these plans. The present kitchen and dining room facilities are too small for present operation. I believe that there is some question as to the possibility of expanding present facilities. If another location is used, then entirely new kitchen and dining facilities would have to be provided.

There would no doubt be some advantages in administration by having the high school at Pearl River near the elementary school.

It should also be pointed out that there is sufficient area near the Agency for the location of the high school and that utilities such as water, sewer, gas, power and fire protection are available.

I have pointed out to the Tribal Council that they have requested a high school for many years and now that it is about to be realized it would

be tragic for them to let differences arise over location that would prevent their full support and use. They all assured me that this would not happen.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie Hardin
Superintendent

Enclosures

Tribal Programs

Area Director
Muskogee Area Office

December 31, 1962

A. B. Caldwell, Area Director of Schools

Location of Mississippi Choctaw High School

This has reference to Resolution Cho-11-62 passed December 11 at a special meeting of the Mississippi Choctaw Tribal Council. The objectives of the Resolution are of course sound if location of the new high school facility in Philadelphia would actually improve race relations. There is in my opinion no evidence that this objective would be accomplished and it is probable that the opposite effect would result. The location of a new high school in Philadelphia will not of itself promote athletic or other inter-group activities and might actually be a hinderance in this respect.

There is implication in the Tribal Council resolution that ultimately this facility might be turned over to the public school system. It should be borne in mind that no rural children are admitted to the city school system but attend other school facilities outside the city. Certainly if this is true with respect to the large numbers of rural children no exception would be made by the city of Philadelphia to admit rural Indian children. In other words, if Indian children are eventually admitted to the public schools they will be admitted as county children, hence would have to attend county schools. This being the case, the location of a school plant in the city of Philadelphia would be of no great advantage in the ultimate arrangements for public school attendance. As a matter of fact, whenever this problem has been resolved elsewhere, Federal funds have been sought to build additions to existing school plants and Indian school plants have been used for other public purposes if not needed for public school use.

The development of a building program within the Bureau of Indian Affairs is normally a long range activity. It usually requires several years to establish the need for facilities, determine the location and facilities needed, secure inclusion of these plans in the Federal budget, secure appropriation for the building and complete the plans and the actual construction. In the case of the Mississippi Choctaw high school, it was agreed several months ago that the high school at Pearl River should be included in the 1964 Budget. Later, because of the pressure for funds elsewhere, this project was eliminated by Plant Design and Construction but it was finally restored to the Fiscal Year 1964 Budget by the Central Office. It has yet to be acted upon by the Congress and certainly any local controversy with respect to the facility will be sufficient to cause Congress to substitute other projects concerning which there is no controversy. In other words, it is possible that any serious controversy concerning this project will be sufficient to postpone it indefinitely.

Funds were secured for a shop building and dormitory at Pearl River on the basis that these would be used for pupils in high school grades, i.e. grades 9 - 12. A gymnasium is contemplated at Pearl River for this same purpose. It is very doubtful whether a gymnasium would be built for an elementary school and certainly not large enough for community basketball and similar purposes. After several years of waiting we finally secured a very large graded athletic field at Pearl River. This is adequate for a large high school. It is doubtful if we would have as good an athletic field in Philadelphia and probably would have considerable delay in securing the funds for grading. To move the high school location to Philadelphia would necessitate a greatly increased construction budget and would eliminate any possibility of construction from 1964 fiscal year funds. The question is raised concerning the water supply. It is taken for granted that additional water facilities will be developed at Pearl River. The question as to the size of the kitchen and dining room at Pearl River will have to be a matter of study to determine whether it meets the standards being applied to other feeding facilities throughout the Bureau. If it is not large enough some adjustment will be made.

By way of summary, I am sympathetic with any movement which will help to break down the existing racial problem. I am not convinced that location of a high school in Philadelphia would have any material effect on this problem. I am convinced that much additional expense to the Federal government would result if a high school plant is constructed and operated in Philadelphia. Since this would involve a request for more funds than are now contemplated it is inevitable that a change at this time would greatly delay the construction of the new high school facilities for the Mississippi people. Therefore I recommend that the plans for construction of high school facilities at Pearl River be carried out as soon as possible.

A. B. Caldwell, Area Director of Schools

cc: Tribal Programs

RESOLUTION

Cho-11-63

WHEREAS: In keeping with the Tribe's resolution Cho-24-62, plans are being formulated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to erect new facilities for a full high school in Mississippi for the Choctaw Indian people, and

WHEREAS: We feel that a more prudent approach to such a building program should very definitely include a consideration to the thoughts and sentiment of those whom these facilities are destined, and that these people, namely; the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians be heard on this matter both as to its essential material elements and its location, and

WHEREAS: Without previous planning with this Tribal Council and agreement was reached at the Albuquerque, New Mexico conference held July 16, 1962, by the Area Director of Schools, Muskogee Area Office, and the former Superintendent of the Choctaw Indian Agency for the construction of a new high school building at the Pearl River Indian School, and

WHEREAS: This Council feels strongly that it has a definite stake and responsibility for any future plans of our education program for the Choctaw Indians of Mississippi, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: By the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians during a special called meeting held December 11, 1962, that the following facts and ideas be considered by the Washington Office:

1. Adopt an overall objective to achieve eventual assimilation into the public school system under honorable conditions. We are aware that this will not come about soon. Therefore, we submit these suggestions to establish a location more advantageous to accomplish the above objective.
2. Plan and design a new school plant to include facilities for grades seven (7) through twelve (12) and located at or around the Choctaw Indian Agency in Philadelphia, Mississippi. The fact that a new junior-senior high school located in the city limits would greatly benefit the public relations between the Indian and the non-Indian people. This would be brought about by inter-school activities such as, athletic and scholastic activities. For, it is through common interests and social events that greater understanding of our neighbor is made possible.
3. In the overall view of the objective, the fine structural character of the new junior-senior high school would make any city proud to have it as part of their public school system.

4. Aside from the above fact, the presence of these facilities in the city will be a greater incentive for the Choctaw people themselves to see that even a greater percentage of their children attend school. These new high school facilities will be a source of pride and respect for the Choctaw people. They will be a symbol of progress, and an attainment for a better educational and social level.
5. The whole issue of a new junior-senior high school arises from the fact that the present educational set up at Pearl River shows certain limitations. Since it is planned that new facilities come into existence, the motivation should not be new facilities for the sake of new facilities, but new facilities with an overall objective of eventual assimilation into public school system.
6. The fact that this objective will most probably be years in attainment, means that the new facilities in a new location will have been in good use for a definite number of years.
7. Time is precious for the sooner such a junior-senior high school comes into existence, the sooner will the overall objective be attained.
8. We emphatically state that the eventual assimilation of these facilities and their students into public school system come about through the re-education of the thinking and the joint cooperation of both the non-Indian and the Indian people. For, such is the state of affairs that this is the best and most beneficial manner of achieving this objective.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, as Secretary-Treasurer of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, certify that the Tribal Council of said band is composed of sixteen members of whom 11 members, constituting a quorum, were present at a meeting thereof duly and regularly called, noticed, convened and held on the 11th day of December, 1962, that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at such meeting by the affirmative vote of 6 members and that said resolution has not been rescinded or amended in any way.

Dated this 11th day of December, 1962.

Attest:

Phillip D. Hart
Chairman, Tribal Council

Ernest York
Secretary-Treasurer