

The regular meeting of the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was called to order at 9:30 a.m., April 11, 1961, by Chairman Phillip Martin.

Invocation was given by Dempsey Morris, followed by a roll call by the Secretary-Treasurer of the Council, Emmatt York. (Fourteen members were present for the meeting:)

Members Present:

Ebin Bell, Bogue Chitto
Dempsey Morris, Bogue Chitto
Mose Thompson, Bogue Chitto
Hughey Nickey, Bogue Homo
Mary Lou Farmer, Conehatta
John Lee Gibson, Conehatta
Murphy Solomon, Conehatta
Claddie Bell, Pearl River
Emmett York, Pearl River
Bilbo John, Red Water
Tom Isaac, Red Water
Tom Ben, Standing Pine
Berkley York, Standing Pine
Phillip Martin, Tucker
John C. Allen

Members Absent:

Joe D. Isaac, Pearl River

Chairman Martin: As I wrote a letter to you a couple weeks ago telling you that our Area Director is planning to be here. He did have time to come and we are happy to have him here. (The chairman presented Mr. Paul L. Fickinger, Area Director and Mr. R. E. Herndon to the council.)

Mr. Fickinger: In the first place, I have been trying to come down here. It seems like something comes up all the time. Friday, I was called and they wanted me to come to Albuquerque, They had a meeting for me to attend. I told them I was not going to change it this time so here I am. There are a number of items that I would like to talk with you about, if we have the time to do so. You have a number of resolutions which have been sent to me, which I have not taken action on because I have been wanting to come down here. In connection with them, I think it is easier to do it in person than by correspondence. It isn't done satisfactorily when you are doing it all by mail. You don't have the opportunity of back and forth exchange. I know you have been wondering why I have not taken action. That is my story.

I think you have been moving ahead very nicely and you are accumulating some money in your treasury that is to your credit and you have been very frugal in your expenditure of your funds and that is one reason you have a balance to your credit. With that you were able to do things that you wanted to do. I want to compliment you that it will be beneficial to the membership of your tribe. The latest figures to your credit is \$179,690.74 and the interest and accruals of interest is \$6,202.53.

stop when you pay for this.

Mr. Vance: We have discussed the repair obligation that the tribe has in regard to the Public Health facilities. We are also going to have to take in added repair. We have said in these other places about money to take care of the repairing. We also discussed who is to take care of the repair. We need to know if the money for this added repair is going into local depository or back into the Treasury when the public health facilities are put in and the tribe increased the tent accordingly.

Emmett York: I think the only thing public health is worrying about is whether the tribe will take responsibility.

Mr. Fickinger: It seems you have to dip into your tribal funds so I suggest to let the money go back into the treasury and budget it out, since nothing definite is decided on where the money is going.

Mr. Vance: Is it the thinking of this group about this idea of added room?

The Council did not take a vote, but agreed that the individuals be allowed to add a room in order to have room for public health facilities.

Chairman Martin: If you councilman think this is a good resolution, now is the time to act on it.

Mr. Vance: This resolution was drawn up taking into consideration that the individuals are not able to take care of the added expense based on his ability.

Emmett York made a motion to adopt the resolution Cho-27-61, seconded by Tom Isaac and thirteen (13) members voted in favor. There were no opposition, but Tom Ben did not vote.

Mr. Fickinger: Now, I want to talk a little about the educational program. I think that some very fast strides have been met in the past few years. You now have facilities in the communities that I believe that there will be a classroom big enough for every Choctaw child who is within reach of the area to attend. That wasn't true a number of years ago. One of the reasons why some of these facilities were not made available earlier, it was hoped that the public school facilities would be available to the children of the Choctaw tribe. After the supreme court's decision, which brought this thing so far to the front and it is kind of like, when you want to do something when you are told not to do it and you don't want to do certain things when you are told to do it. Today I would like to talk very frankly with you people. I know that some individuals who have been in contact with you people. They have been in contact with Chairman Martin, J. C. Allen, and Emmett York. They would like for us, the BIA, to get into a position where we in turn would try to force the issue in courts of getting Choctaws into the public schools. I don't mention any names because you know who I am talking about. Seriously I think it would be a mistake at this time. Even if the govern-

ment is successful in doing that, the effect on the children, the relationship that sort of thing would not be good. It would be a painful thing.

I think it needs time of gradually working out. This is my feeling. It is based on a very good experience in education work into feeling of human relationship. With that in mind, we built classrooms facilities in your different communities so that you have now facilities to provide with the earliest education program for the Choctaw children. It means segregated schools, yes, it means entirely Indian schools. I hope that in that school though, we are able to provide you with teachers who have the human kindness in them to help in sympathy with the children. It is not surprising that one or two did not turn out just exactly as we hoped, that a human nature in you are the situation. I believe you have very capable staff and I believe sincerely that they are interested in the welfare of the children. You have to help. You have to send your children to school. If your children do not go to school, do not get an education, they are not going to be better off than some of your members of the tribe.

We recognize that you have long bus routes and you have to extend those bus routes in order to pick up those children. It is hard on those youngsters to travel that kind of distance. I know also that some of you feel that you should have a full high school on this reservation and in that feeling you have been aged and abetted from various sources. There is the feeling of not only myself, but of others that certainly at this time for a full high school on the Choctaw reservation, if it is desirable. Then, you are faced with the situation of adequate resources. There are going to have to be people to take care of the resources, to take care of the work and your children when they grow up. Somebody is going to have to leave here in order to make a living. We may get industry here. Even if we do get industry, it is still going to be exhausted supply for labor. Some of you have gone to schools like Chilocco and Haskell. There is not a better school today than Chilocco and Haskell. The teaching, students, and equipment is good. This is why we have not put a high school here. They are closing schools in Oklahoma because they need to go to high school. They are able to go to a place where they can get the best training in living. We are proposing and we are going to get the money by July 1st so that we can provide for dormitory facilities on these reservations. The plan as we figure is for five-day dormitory so that they can be with their parents on weekends and bring them back on Monday or Sunday night, whichever the case may be. This will eliminate the present day boarding home care program. We will say the proposal is for dormitory at Pearl River, Conehatta and Bogue Chitto. The proposal also is to increase grade levels at Conehatta and Bogue Chitto up through the eighth grade and perhaps the ninth grade. The dormitory will be a 40-bed type--20 beds for girls and 20 beds for boys. Whatever staff is employed will be responsible to work with your children in home living, helping them to learn how to live gracefully. It is designed for not more than four to stay in one room. The dormitory will be a cottage-type and the children will have to assist in the morning, noon and evening meal, and have a regular family-style meal. They can learn how to do those things. That is the thinking at the present time. I will be happy for

you to raise questions that you want to raise. It would still mean that those students who have to have 7-day week have to be taken care off in other boarding schools like Chilocco, Hdskell or Sequoyah because we are not equipped in these five-day dormitory here. This will; however, help cut down on these bus routes. I, myself, would hate for my children to have to ride long distances to go to school.

Chairman Martin; You have heard from Mr. Fickinger a statement concerning our education problem. As you all know, he is the administrative power for our group. We, as a member of the Tribal Council or an individual Indian, have the right to express our feelings on this education problem, which will have an effect on us and our children. The house is open for a general discussion on this subject. It is my feeling that what we need most is quality education. We have now good school, plants and qualified teachers, but we still lack quality education. You say that we probably will not get a high school in Mississippi. In connection with that, what concerns the Indian people most is why should our children travel 1,000 miles in order to obtain a high school diploma? The way I feel about it is that we should be provided with a high school in Mississippi or be integrated into local public school. I personally feel that concrete efforts should be made to provide public school. As you know, we have children in public school now so we can't say that we are barred from attending public school in Mississippi. The price of education is high, but I know the United States Government is big enough and strong enough to do something about our situation here. I also feel that any construction of dormitories should be at one location; preferably at Pearl River Junior High School. A build up at one location could easily be changed into high school should it be proven necessary. On this proposal of three dormitories and increasing grade levels will mean that we will have three junior high schools. To educate some people, it is a high price, but the place of it is high price. If we are going to spend a lot of money to make it move, the government of the United States is big enough or strong enough to do something about our situation here. I don't mean by that we have to go through courts, we can start with local people, governor, legislature on down.

Mr. Fickinger: Actually, in some of those schools, we have seventy-five different tribes; some from all over the United States. It would not be a local situation. I think you have made a headway in Meridian and I believe that we can and wherever we can we ought to. These other schools are big enough that they are equipped with facilities that they are ready for life. They have help in getting placed for jobs. One difficulty is that you do not have classroom facilities. They have facilities for high school in these other places, among other things, than we have it here. I am not saying that there will not be a high school here in Mississippi. There may not be a need for a high school.

Berkley York: Today I have a problem. I am living on individual land which my daddy got at one time. It isn't enough to even turn around, but one thing I can say is, that is my home. I have had help from the government. I have a

belief in high school at Haskell. My son had a pretty good name there. I never been in his classrooms at Haskell, but I know how it is at Standing Pine. Instead of spending all that money for dormitory and such, we ought to be spending it on a high school here.

Cleddie Bell: When it comes to education, I want to say one thing. Let's don't tear our schools. We have a fine school at Pearl River. I think many of the tribes in other places will send their children to our schools if we built what little junior high we have. I think we ought to keep it as one fellow said, if our children are just taught they can do anything. Maybe that is the lack that we have. On the other hand, building the dormi- tory at three places, if you just have one big dormitory for the girls and one big dormitory for boys, it would serve the purpose. I think we all should pull together for big dormitories and if we can't get that, we'll take what they give us. We appreciate what the government is doing and have done for us. I always regret that I didn't finish school; therefore, I always wanted my children to have better education. I have a girl that will go off to school if it isn't provided for here. It is my personal thinking, we are not trying to interfere with what they are trying to do. We maybe saying we want a high school all along, but they say there is not enough children to justify. Take Haskell, they only started with fourteen (14) students and look where they are now. I ask that we not tear up our junior high as we have up to date. Let us work hard to build up.

Emmett York: Before the decision of the supreme court, and I think a whole lot of it, but I would like to ask this question. When will the people living around here and the government will ever find out that we are not negroes. We know that this segregation is for negroes. Are we taken as negro race of people, by the United States? Let's take it that we are living in Christ's country. In the eyes of God, all human are created equal. God told the world, gave his begotten son not only to love God, but to love one another. Do you think we can actually live together and love one another? If we cannot practice what we preach, then I think we better quit practicing preaching. We are not their enemies. We have given, taken away from us and still we have not raised an arm. We just sit here and take it. When we ask for a little learning where we might be close to home, they won't allow us. Mr. Fickinger mentioned what Mr. Kennedy said. I also remember him saying that, "Don't never negotiate with fear, but don't never feat to negotiate!" I don't like to force anybody. I would like to fuss. I don't think there should be a force in this. I think this thing can be worked out. The Congress of the United States does not bar Choctaw, that all the Indians who are in the United States becomes citizens of the United States. I think most of the public schools are because of fear, but I think we better start thinking about more fear that is to come. Let's put in our mind, we don't have to tear up anything. We are an Indian and we always are going to be Indian. When government are doing things for Indians, are we going to have to do everything white man's way? I don't think it should be that way. We have our say, but still that doesn't mean we could not come to an understanding. That is one of the most effective thing whenever

we start anything. You have resentment; therefore, there is a weakening. At this thing where our children are going way off to school, You hate for your children to ride buses. We hate for our children to travel 1,000 miles to finish high school. Everybody has said that what Choctaw needs in Mississippi is education and economic. As a citizen of one community, I don't think that we should look at it that way. I will say a little on that school. As you said about Chilocco and Haskell, they are good schools. I attended one of them and that they are. I don't know what is wrong here, but being on the Guidance Committee I have tried to work with these people trying to see where the wrong is. Five years ago we talked about this public school. Our tenth graders wasn't eligible to enter high school even at Meridian. I do know cream of the crop is in the teaching force. I am sure people who have taught in the public schools are teaching the government schools. Then, why is it our students finishing tenth grade is not eligible to enter high school. I think that part is to hold government expense down. With that kind of school, we are not going anywhere too much. We have the best school, but still I don't know how many of these present tenth graders are eligible. I am hoping that it will raise, no more than 3 or 4 is eligible to enter Meridian.

Mr. Fickinger: I am not proposing to tear down your school. Actually, these dormitories will replace these boarding home. Now, I hope that you don't have to send anybody away to Haskell. If you don't have this. If they do want this kind of specialized training in Haskell, they have to go. They get the best that is offered at those places. I would hope that we could get them at a lower grade. Why are they not eligible to go to Meridian? That is not a likely situation. They did not have the same advantages with the number of Indian child who is not attending and they have not been able to learn how to compete with them in the classrooms and things of that nature. The fact remains that they are going to have some time to come with segregated schools because there is no place for those future children to go, but they cannot go to public school because they are not equipped. Nobody will be happier than I when the Indian children can be placed in the public schools.

Mr. Vance cited some of the schools where the Bureau of Indian Affairs has asked for admission of Indian students and they have refused. He said that in each case, there was just one member of the Board of Directors who refused or opposed it. He also mentioned that he has spoken to the Governor about the matter and he did not object.

Cleddie Bell: Whatever reason they are not accepting our children, they should tell us. That way we can work toward correcting whatever it is.

Emmett York: Some of the children came here at this agency have been turned down and they came to me about it.

Cleddie Bell: If you add additional grades to these schools, this will tear down our Pearl River School.

Mr. Vance: I think it is wonderful to open up and talk about this thing. Only then do we know how everybody feels about the thing.

Mr. Fickinger: Why don't you, education committee, with the Superintendent or someone visit some of these public schools?

Chairman Martin: I think some of us will go, but only representatives from the council. I think it would take more effect that way.

Mr. Vance: I think that is a good idea.

Chairman Martin: In regard to college, they go by semester. If they qualify for one semester, they get to continue getting the grant.

Mr. Fickinger: Our grant covers by semester and it covers approximately 90% of their expense.

Mr. Herndon: The Credit Department will give loans if it is recommended for the full four years and the loan doesn't draw interest until you finish and start working.

It was mentioned by Mr. Sampsell, Relocation Officer that the reason Rudy York is not eligible for Adult Vocational Training is that he is not living on tribal property.

It was commented that Congress has a bill in now that, if it is passed it will change this regulation where a person not living on tribal property may be eligible for training.

Reading of Resolution Cho-29-61 - 1962 Budget estimates.

RESOLUTION

Cho-29-61
4-11-61

WHEREAS: Article 7, Section 1, Part E. Constitution and By-laws of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians authorizes the Tribal Council to appropriate available tribal funds for the benefit of the Band or any community, and

WHEREAS: A study of the financial needs for operation of the Tribal Programs for the Fiscal Year 1962 has been made by this Council, and

WHEREAS; The Council has reviewed the 1962 Budget estimate and request that the following budget figures be substituted for the estimate submitted in Resolution Cho-24-60, and