

Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation

Quarterly Tribal Council Meeting Minutes

Date: July 9, 2026

Time: 6:35 PM

Location: Zoom

Call to Order

Chair W. A. (Tony) Hayes called the Quarterly Membership Meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Opening Prayer

Brice Watkins, Vice Chair offered the opening prayer, asking for wisdom, unity, and open hearts as members gathered to conduct the business of the OBSN Nation.

Roll Call and Quorum

Roll call was conducted by Tribal Administrator Vickie Jeffries. A quorum of the Tribal Council was established with Chair Tony Hayes, Vice Chair Brice Watkins, Tribal Council, Wanda Whitmore-Penner, and Beverly Payne.

Tribal Members Present: Barbara Martin, Anne Haith-Rico, Connie Jeffries, Connie Yarborough, Anna Jeffries, Kisha Jeffries, Catherine Cavalier, Samantha Cavalier, Brandon Cavalier, Crystal Cavalier, Toni Mingo, Kristen Hayes-Febres, Amber Hayes, Elsie M. Nash-Brown, Keshia Enoch, Beverly Graves, Tye Banks, Talaya Sexton, Tiara Pickard, Neely Matherly, Kam Watkins, Dominique Wilkins, Brittany Wilkins, Kasey Mebane, Esther Whitmore, Ed Saunders, Benita Raynor, Tramaine Jeffries, Sherea Burnett, Ramona Blackwell, Wilhelmina Pierce, Dante Bowman, Angela Wade, Lucius Bellamy, Kameron Rogers, Rachel Clay, Eddie Lambert, Isabelle Lambert, Shadow M. Roy, Courtnee Cox, Susie Enoch, Lawrence Dunmore, Cemia Brown, Chandrika Brown, Kimberly Griffis, Chekeitha Chambers, Angela McDouglass, Pamela Misura, Alecia Ashford-Taylor, and Sonya Melton.

Guests: Celeste Roundtree and Valerie Montroy, and Dr. Corey Roberts,

Chair's Report

State Legislative Update

- House Bill 224, which would have provided continued voluntary state support for North Carolina tribes, did not advance through the legislative process and was not included in the state budget.

- Although disappointed by the outcome, Chair Hayes stated that the Tribe will continue pursuing future funding opportunities.

North Carolina Tribal Recognition

- An update was provided regarding the Tuscarora Tribe's progress toward state recognition.
- Chair Hayes also reported that the Catawba Nation received unanimous approval from the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs for state recognition and now awaits final action by the General Assembly.

Lumbee Tribe Update

Chair Hayes informed members that the Lumbee Tribe had recently voted on whether to pursue gaming operations following federal recognition. The proposal did not pass.

No questions were presented following the Chair's report.

Tribal Administrator's Report

Tribal Administrator Vickie Jeffries presented the following updates:

Membership Enrollment

- The Membership Enrollment Commission met on July 7, 2026.
- Four (4) new tribal members were approved for enrollment.

Reconstructed Village Improvements

Updates were provided to improvements to the reconstructed village:

- Renovations to the 1930s tenant farmhouse have been completed, including a new roof and interior restoration.
- Interpretive signage has been installed at all three historic structures.
- Planning continues for installation of an interactive kiosk that will allow visitors to hear the history of the village.
- Lawrence Dunmore has agreed to provide the narration for the kiosk presentation.

41st Annual Powwow

Planning continues for the 41st Annual Powwow scheduled for **October 10–11, 2026**.

Confirmed participants include:

- Head Male Dancer – Ryan Dial (Lumbee)

- Head Lady Dancer – Idalis Dial (Lumbee)
- Master of Ceremonies – JD Moore (Waccamaw Siouan Tribe)
- Arena Director – Douglas Logan (Sapona)

Additional drums and participants are currently being confirmed.

No questions were raised regarding the Tribal Administrator's report.

Election Commission Report

Election Commission Vice Chair Lawrence Dunmore presented an overview of preparations for the 2026 Tribal Elections.

Election Date

The Election Commission announced that the Tribal Election will be held:

Saturday, September 26, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation Tribal Center

Voting Methods

The Commission confirmed that the election will utilize three voting methods:

- In-person voting
- Electronic voting through ElectionBuddy
- Mail-in voting

The hybrid voting model is intended to maximize participation among tribal members.

Voter Eligibility

Members were advised that:

- Enrolled tribal members who are 16 years of age or older on Election Day are eligible to vote.
- Eligible voters must appear on the official voter roll.

Voter Information Updates

The Election Commission announced that voter information updates will be accepted through August 15, 2026, after which the official voter roll will be finalized.

Members will receive forms allowing them to update:

- Mailing address
- Email address
- Telephone number
- Tribal identification information

Election Communications

The Commission announced plans to establish:

- A dedicated election email address
- A dedicated post office box
- A dedicated Google phone number

These communication methods are intended to ensure election inquiries remain separate from Tribal Office operations and preserve election integrity.

Candidate Information

The Commission reported that:

- Candidate nomination forms will include a biography section.
- Candidates will be encouraged to describe their qualifications, background, and reasons for seeking office.
- A public candidate forum is planned prior to the election to allow members to hear from candidates and ask questions.

Member Questions

Members asked questions regarding:

- Candidate qualifications
- Election timelines
- Ballot counting procedures
- Terms of office
- Security of election materials
- Communication procedures

Election Integrity

Election Commission Vice Chair Lawrence Dunmore continued his report by outlining the Commission's communication and voter outreach plans.

The Commission announced that additional election information would be distributed in the coming weeks, including detailed voting instructions, candidate eligibility requirements, nomination forms, and the official election schedule. Members were reminded that the 2026

Tribal Election will be held on Saturday, September 26, 2026, utilizing a hybrid voting system consisting of in-person, electronic, and mail-in voting.

To ensure efficient administration of the election, the Commission plans to establish a dedicated post office box, election email address, and Google phone number for all election-related correspondence. Election information, forms, and updates will also be shared through the tribal website, email, Facebook, and Instagram.

Members will be asked to verify or update their mailing address, email address, telephone number, and Tribal identification information. The Election Commission will use this information to prepare the official voter roll, with updates accepted through August 15, 2026.

Mr. Dunmore explained that all election correspondence received through the dedicated post office box would be handled exclusively by Election Commission members to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of the election process.

Election Commission member Rachel Clay provided additional information regarding election security procedures. She explained that only authorized Commission members would have access to the dedicated post office box and that election materials would remain secure until all Commission members were present to review them. She also described the process for updating voter records, coordinating with the Tribal Office to maintain accurate mailing lists, and encouraging members to submit their most current contact information to ensure they receive all election notices and ballots.

Members were encouraged to respond promptly to requests for updated contact information and to inform family members that Election Commission representatives may contact them to verify voter information. The Commission emphasized that these efforts are intended to improve communication, protect election integrity, and maximize participation in the 2026 Tribal Election.

The Election Commission responded that detailed election schedules, voting instructions, nomination procedures, and timelines will be distributed through future mailings, the tribal website, and electronic communications.

Dr. Corey Roberts – Language and Math App Update

Dr. Corey Roberts shared an update on a collaborative project with colleagues at Elon University to develop a mobile educational app for enrolled tribal members. The app is designed to help students in grades 3–8 strengthen math skills while simultaneously supporting Occaneechi language learning.

The project has been in development for approximately five years. Dr. Roberts explained that the app has already been translated into several languages, including Lakota. Because Lakota has extensive language documentation, the development team was able to use its terminology development process as a model. Working with language experts, Dr. Roberts is developing

approximately 114 new mathematical terms needed to fully adapt the app to the Occaneechi language.

Dr. Roberts expects to complete the language terminology by the end of August, with the completed app available to enrolled tribal members by the end of October. The release will include:

- The Number Delver mobile app
- An instructional video
- Written user instructions
- A vocabulary list of the newly developed math terminology

He emphasized that the project is intended to strengthen both mathematics education and language revitalization efforts. Dr. Roberts invited tribal members to contact him with questions either during the meeting or afterward via his Elon University email.

America 250 Report

Beverly Payne reported on the America 250 event in Hillsborough, NC, noting that it was well attended.

Adjournment

With no further business coming before the Tribal Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Submitted by Vickie Jeffries, Tribal Administrator (scribe)