

Pemayetv Emahakv, Inc.  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
December 14, 2017

Florida Seminole Veterans' Building  
Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation

Present: Marcellus W. Osceola, Jr., Mitchell Cypress, Manuel Tiger, Andrew J. Bowers, Jr., Christopher Osceola, Jim Shore, Elrod Bowers, Lee Zepeda, Suresh Geer, Shawn Ray, Brian Greseth, Michele Thomas, Marcus Briggs-Cloud, Alice Sweat, Jennie Shore, Helene Buster, Dixie Houston, Pete Hahn, Sue Jane Bert.

Chairman, Marcellus Osceola called the meeting to order. Sue Jane Bert gave the invocation. Michele Thomas conducted roll call. Chairman Osceola asked board members to review minutes from the August 18, 2017 meeting. Marcellus Osceola asked for questions or comments regarding the minutes. No questions or comments. Marcellus Osceola asked for a motion to approve resolution. Motion made by Christopher Osceola, seconded by Andrew J. Bowers, Jr. and was approved by unanimous vote.

Discussion Item –

**PEI Independent Auditor's Report**

Mr. Greseth reported there were no findings in the annual auditor's report. Christopher Osceola asked how PECS regenerated \$220,000.00 shown under school revenues. Suresh Geer responded that amount is a roll over from the previous year. The tribe's contribution is shown as a donation. If the donation is not spent the next year it is listed under the revenue column.

**School Update**

Mr. Greseth reported an idea the school is hoping to expand on is something called "a school within a school" program. This program would be for the Immersion Program students. Once they enter kindergarten, students would still be learning in Creek as well as in English. This would continue in first grade and so on. This concept would be much like a private school. This would allow us to use our non-certified Creek teachers for these classes. Manuel Tiger asked why our current Creek teachers are not considered certified. His opinion is any fluent speaker should be considered having a doctorate degree in that culture due to the fact there is no one else out there to teach our language and culture. Mr. Greseth agreed, but stated unfortunately that is not recognized by the state. Manuel Tiger stated getting our fluent speakers recognized by the state as certified teachers should be worked on. Christopher Osceola asked why our tribal government couldn't certify them. He stated we are a nation within a nation. Manuel Tiger asked if there may be a college that might be interested in working with our tribe to certify tribal elders? Mr. Greseth stated that is something he and Mr. Zepeda could look into. Marcus Briggs-Cloud stated the "school within a school" concept would not require a teaching certification. Manuel Tiger replied attaining teaching certifications for fluent speaking tribal elders would be beneficial to other tribal schools. Marcus Briggs-Cloud agreed. He also clarified these classes would be teaching all subject areas, not just Creek language and culture. Marcellus Osceola asked if we go with this concept how will it affect the budget. Mr. Greseth explained the advantage of this concept would be we could use our non-certified Creek speakers to teach, but there would be no FTE (Full Time Equivalent)

from the state. The current FTE is \$7,200.00 per student. The current Immersion Program has thirteen students. It wouldn't be a huge financial hit in the beginning, but over the years it would get bigger. Many schools have had dual language programs and students have done well until third grade. Third grade is when students begin taking the reading FSA (Florida Standard Assessment). If third grade students do not pass this assessment they are retained. Many times when students in dual language programs do poorly on this test, parents withdraw them from the program. If we do the 'school within a school' concept we could give students an alternative assessment, we wouldn't have to give them the FSA. We would love to expand the Immersion Program so we are looking into the future with this concept. This is the reason we are asking for a new building. We do not have to do this expansion, but we are looking down the road to when these students start kindergarten. Marcellus Osceola asked if the alternative assessment we would give students would be recognized by the state. Mr. Greseth answered with a yes, just like private schools. Marcellus Osceola asked Mr. Greseth to come up with a report on how and when this could affect the current budget. Marcus Briggs-Cloud stated it would not affect the school budget because these students are not currently generating any state funding.

Governance training. As Board of Trustees members you are required to complete four hours of governance training within ninety days of being appointed by the board. Mr. Greseth informed the board they could do the training on-line but he wasn't sure how effective that could be. Michele Thomas stated the training is very informative and the processes and rules are much different than we are familiar with. Mr. Greseth and Michele will provide some dates the trainer is available to do the training.

Drug testing. Mr. Greseth stated recently we have been made aware of several student social media posts showing drugs or drug paraphernalia. Christopher Osceola stated the school would not be permitted to test a student without parent consent. Mr. Greseth explained many students are student athletes and parents are required to sign a consent to drug test in the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) application. He also stated that very few Middle Schools' Athletic Programs drug test. Manuel Tiger feels PECS should drug test if there is a big drug problem. He also stated he does not feel we do have a big drug problem. Michele Thomas also reported the Seminole Police Department K9 Unit visits PECS on a monthly basis. She stated PECS wants to send a strong message to students that drugs are not tolerated. Manuel Tiger asked if the school staff is trained to see the signs of drug use. Michele Thomas replied yes and the information from teachers is then passed on to the SRO (school resource officer). Michele Thomas stated we have many students that smell of marijuana. With these cases the SRO is informed and she makes contact with the family. Marcellus Osceola stated he feels like it's almost accepted in our communities because nothing seems to happen in these cases. Mr. Greseth asked if he should look into drug testing more or hold off. Christopher Osceola stated if the parents get upset they will go to Andrew Bowers so it would be up to him. Andrew Bowers stated if parents come to him they pretty much know what his stand will be. Christopher Osceola stated he feels if PECS was to test all students, parents may be upset. He felt like some students do not do drugs and their parents wouldn't want anyone putting those thoughts in their heads. He suggested doing a parent meeting to hear how

parents felt on this subject. Andrew Bowers stated he and Larry Howard have always told the Seminole Police Department they would support them for doing their jobs.

Tutoring. Mr. Greseth would like the Board to consider PECS taking on the one on one tutoring program currently under the Education Department for students. Currently this is being out sourced and the tutoring company is charging the Tribe \$55.00 an hour, \$65.00 for a high school student. Many PECS teachers are currently providing the one on one tutoring services. Michele Thomas stated this would be an increase to the school's budget, but a savings to the Tribe's budget overall. Marcellus Osceola asked Mr. Zepeda to take a look at this proposal.

Job descriptions. Mr. Greseth was asked by Mr. Zepeda to provide job descriptions for all PECS positions. Mr. Greseth compiled the requested descriptions using the Ahfachkee School and Okeechobee School District descriptions. Mr. Greseth reported he would be hiring an Assistant Principal soon to assist him with administrative duties.

Current enrollment. Elementary has 205 students and middle school has 92 students. That puts us at 88% tribal/tribal descendant, 80% tribal. We also have 13 Immersion students.

In October, PECS participated in the National Indian Education Association Conference. They also honored Mrs. Jennie Shore the Elder of the Year Award. Mr. Greseth is now on their board. Our Varsity Volleyball team finished 10–3, our Junior Varsity went 7–1. In November, the PECS student body collected 1,900 non-perishable food items and donated them to local food pantries. Students participated in the Seminole Veterans' Program. In December, we opened our Santa Store. All proceeds go towards our Positive Behavior Program incentives. We also had our Annual Winter Festival for students and families. We also had our school float in the Okeechobee Christmas Parade. Our PTSO once again hosted the foster children residing at the Real Life Childrens' Ranch group foster home. Manuel Tiger asked if the school does a Christmas play for the community. Michele Thomas replied yes, PECS students perform at the Brighton Community Christmas party each year. Andrew Bowers asked how often PTSO meets. Mr. Greseth replied once a month.

Christopher Osceola asked the maximum school capacity. Mr. Greseth believes it is 400 students but he would have to figure that out by the square footage. Mr. Osceola stated he was just curious because the current school enrollment was at 300. He was just curious to how many students the school can accommodate. Andrew Bowers asked if someone from the tribal government side has visited PECS to discuss the new building plan. Mr. Greseth reported they will be visiting today to begin discussions.

### **Traditional Language and History Program**

Marcus Briggs-Cloud gave a few of his personal thoughts regarding drug testing and marijuana. Personally he stated he is a fan of marijuana and it's benefits but also stated he does not partake. He feels education on this matter is important. He also stated the

Immersion Program also had a student arriving to school each day smelling of marijuana. He felt it was important for the child to be in school each day for the language component, so they didn't address the marijuana issue. He feels there is some medical benefits to marijuana but feels most of our parents are not using it for those benefits. He stated he feels it is important to educate our youth of the benefits and harms of marijuana. Michele Thomas stated the School Nurse was asked to send home informing regarding the harms of second-hand marijuana smoke.

Marcus Briggs-Cloud reported students are currently taking semester exams. They had ten students exempt from taking the semester exam. If a student had an "A" for both grading periods they were exempt from the written exam, but not the oral exam. All ten students did well on the oral exam. Student Council elections and clothing contest took place in December. Immersion Program parents are now required to demonstrate TPI (Total Physical Response). They do this by videoing their interaction with their child and uploading the video on You Tube each week. Fifth – eighth grades are also using the TPI method, which excludes reading and writing. It's all verbal, repeating the statement four times and using body language. He also reported Mrs. Jennie received the Elder of the Year Award from the National Indian Education Association. In January, students will begin cooking during their Arts and Crafts classes. Marcus Briggs-Cloud gave his thoughts on performing plays for the community. He feels many times children are just memorizing words for performances. He knows parents like to see their children perform, but wants to make sure the learning is authentic and legit. Helene Buster again expressed the need for a new building. She stated since Hurricane Irma they have been operating the program with one less room due to storm damage. She feels the language and this program is very important. She strongly feels the program is working. Michele Thomas stated a staff person from STOF Planning and Development would be meeting with staff today to start the planning process. Andrew Bowers asked who would determine the cost of the new building. Suresh Geer stated the STOF Planning and Development staff would determine the needs and cost, then present the proposal to Council. Jim Shore stated the Planning and Development staff would design your dream building, and then see if Council will support it funding the project. It may have to be scaled down from there. The planner will design your dream building, and then take the design to the Construction Department for a cost projection. Andrew Bowers stated he feels the end users must be very involved from the beginning.

Motion made by Manuel Tiger to adjourn, seconded by Christopher Osceola. All approved.