

DELAWARE TRIBE OF INDIANS

**CONSTITUTION
AND
BYLAWS**

**Approved At General Council
November 6, 1982**

**Amended and Approved at General Council
November 5, 1983**

**Amended and Approved at General Council
November 10, 1984**

**Amended and Approved at General Council
November 5, 1988**

**Formally acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Interior,
Bureau of Indian Affairs on May 28, 1997**

**Amended and Approved by Referendum Vote
November 3, 2007**

**Amended and Approved by Referendum Vote
November 1, 2008**

TITLE I
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PART I – CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE		PAGE
1.	SUPREME AUTHORITY	4
2.	MEMBERSHIP	4
3.	RIGHTS OF MEMBERS	4
4.	GOVERNING BODY	5
5.	POWERS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL	5
6.	ELECTIONS	6
7.	VACANCY	7
8.	INITIATIVE PETITIONS	8
9.	AMENDMENTS	8
10.	RECALL OR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE	8
11.	ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	9
12.	JUDICIAL	9

PART II – BYLAWS

1. DUTIES OF OFFICERS	11
2. MEETINGS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL	12
3. INITIATIVE PROCESS	13

DELAWARE

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Delaware Tribe, also known as the LENNI LENAPE, in order to establish a more perfect form of government, preserve our heritage and powers of self-government, provide for the good and welfare of our people and to secure our rights and privileges as members, do hereby establish this Constitution and Bylaws for the Delaware Tribe.

DELAWARE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – Supreme Authority

The supreme governing authority shall rest with all Delaware Tribe members, eighteen (18) years of age or older who are registered to vote. Adult voting membership shall mean the “entire” voting membership of the Delaware Tribe of Indians in accordance with Article VI, Section 6.

All powers not granted to the Tribal Council by this Constitution and Bylaws are reserved for the members of the Delaware Tribe.

ARTICLE II – Membership

Section 1. The membership of the Delaware Tribe shall consist of all those persons whose names are included on the Delaware Indian per capita roll approved by the Secretary of Interior on April 20, 1906, and their descendants.

The Delaware Tribal Council shall have the power to enact ordinances, to establish rules and regulations governing membership, adoption, procedures for enrollment, and preparation and approval of an official membership roll. Provided: Nothing contained herein shall be construed to invalidate the presently existing membership roll or the membership of those persons enrolled prior to the effective date of this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE III – Rights of Members

Section 1. The rights of the members of the Delaware Tribe to hold religious beliefs, speak and write freely, and the right of the members to assemble and petition their government, shall not be disturbed.

Section 2. The Tribal Council shall not deprive any person of their liberty or property without due process of law, nor deny any member the equal protection of the laws.

ARTICLE IV – Governing Body

Section 1. There is created by this Constitution a governing body which shall be known as the Delaware Tribal Council.

The Tribal Council shall consist of seven (7) members; a Chief, Assistant Chief, Secretary, Treasurer, and three (3) members, all of whom must be eligible voters within the Delaware Tribe.

ARTICLE V – Powers of the Tribal Council

The Delaware Tribal Council shall have the following powers:

- A. To represent the Delaware Tribe and act in all matters that concern the general welfare of the tribe, and to make decisions not inconsistent with or contrary to this Constitution and Bylaws or the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.
- B. To negotiate and make contracts with Federal, State, and Local Government and individuals, firms or companies.
- C. To advise and consult with the Secretary of Interior or his representative on all matters and activities that may affect the Delaware Tribe and to make appropriation requests to the Bureau of Indian Affairs on any project / program beneficial to the Delaware Tribe.
- D. To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and fixing fees to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, or his authorized representative if required by Federal law.
- E. To cultivate, promote and encourage the culture and crafts of the LENNI LENAPE.
- F. To administer charity.
- G. To negotiate permits and leases, subject to approval of the Secretary of the Interior, if required by Federal Law, for business, homesite and other purposes, and generally to provide for the proper use and development of all Tribal lands, natural resources, and other Tribal property.

- H. To appropriate Tribal funds for Tribal purposes.
- I. To mortgage or otherwise encumber Tribal land and to borrow money from any source and pledge or assign chattels of future tribal income as security therefore with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his authorized representative if required by Federal Law.
- J. To enact ordinances to regulate the use of all tribal lands through zoning, taxation, or otherwise.
- K. To manage and control community / tribal property, enterprises, and other economic projects and programs of the Delaware Tribe, including, but not limited to, the establishment of housing and rental authorities, education programs and elderly programs, and appointment of planning, programming, and development committees.
- L. To authorize, charter, establish and regulate associations and corporations formed for the benefit of the Delaware Tribe of doing business upon Delaware lands.
- M. To establish rules to regulate its own proceedings, to appoint subordinate committees, commissions, boards, tribal officials, and employees not otherwise provided for in this Constitution and Bylaws and to prescribe their duties, salaries, and tenure.

ARTICLE VI – Elections

Section 1. Elections shall be held every second year the first Saturday of November. The Chief so elected and the three (3) Council members who receive the highest number of votes cast shall hold office for four (4) years; the three (3) remaining Council members shall hold office for two (2) years. Thereafter, each newly elected Council member shall serve four (4) years.

Section 2. Members elected to the Tribal Council shall take office at a meeting which shall take place the 1st Saturday after an election, at which time, they shall take an oath administered by the Chief. In the absence of the Chief, the Assistant Chief, or Chairman Pro Tem elected by a majority vote of the Tribal Council.

Section 3. The Tribal Council, after being installed in office, shall elect by majority vote from among its members, an Assistant Chief, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 4. Candidates seeking election to the position of Chief, Tribal Council, or Tribal Court, shall file with the Tribal Office in accordance to Title 4 of the Delaware Tribal Statutes.

Section 5. Elections shall be by secret ballot and conducted according to Title 4 of the Delaware Tribal Statutes. Absentee balloting shall be allowed.

Section 6. All Delaware Tribe members, eighteen (18) years of age or older, who are registered to vote, can vote in all elections and sign petitions.

Section 7. Public notice of the date of election and designation of polling places shall be given at least thirty (30) days and not more than forty-five (45) days prior to the date of elections.

Section 8. If the Tribal Council shall fail to give proper notice of the election, or in case a regular election has not been held, the Tribal Court, upon receipt of a petition signed by at least one hundred (100) registered voters shall call such election and shall give thirty (30) days notice, setting the time and place of the election.

ARTICLE VII – Vacancy

Any vacancy which may occur on the Tribal Council, because of death or resignation, shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining members. Vacancies occurring because of removal or recall shall be filled by a special election to be held within forty-five (45) days. Provided that if a vacancy created because of recall or removal occurs within one hundred eighty (180) days of the next regular tribal election, no special election shall be held, but the matter shall be held over and delayed until such next regular election.

ARTICLE VIII – Initiative Petitions

The members of the Delaware Tribe reserve unto themselves the power to initiate and pass resolutions and ordinances, and to change or modify resolutions and ordinances enacted by the Tribal Council, according to rules and procedures set forth in the Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

Section 1. This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by 2/3 majority of votes cast by eligible voting membership.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Chief to call for an election for the purpose of amending the Constitution and Bylaws when:

- (a) petition signed by at least one hundred (100) registered voters, setting forth the full text of the proposed amendments, has been filed with the Tribal Council Secretary, or
- (b) The Tribal Council, passes a resolution by a 2/3 majority vote, calling for an amendment to the Constitution.

ARTICLE X – Recall / Removal from Office

Section 1. If any elected member of the Delaware Tribal government is convicted of a felony or crime which involves dishonesty, his office shall be considered forfeited upon 2/3 vote of the Tribal Council by resolution, or by 2/3 of votes cast by eligible voting membership.

Section 2. Any member of the Delaware Tribal Council not in attendance of two consecutive, unexcused absences, at the regularly scheduled Council meetings, shall forfeit his office.

ARTICLE XI – Annual Membership Meeting

Section 1. A General Council meeting of the adult membership shall be held on a Saturday, during the month of November, at which time the Chief or his designated spokesman shall make a "State of the Tribe" address. Notice of this annual membership meeting shall be given by the Chief, not less than thirty (30) nor more than forty-five (45) days preceding the meeting. The General Council meeting shall be presided by the Chief and Tribal Council in accordance to Roberts Rules of Order. Resolutions or motions that rescind or effect previously adopted resolutions or ordinances passed by the Tribal Council must be approved by 2/3 of votes cast by eligible voting membership. Resolutions passed at the annual General Council meeting must be approved by 2/3 of votes cast by eligible voting membership. Resolutions or motions presented at the General Council meeting must be approved by 2/3 vote of the Tribal Council or 2/3 of votes cast by eligible voting membership in an election

Section 2. Committee Reports and other reports regarding the operation of Delaware Tribe programs and projects shall be presented as well as other business properly brought before the membership.

Section 3. A quorum of not less than 100 eligible voting members must be present to conduct and/or vote on any business.

ARTICLE XII – Judicial

There is hereby created a Delaware Tribal Court composed of five (5) members, all of whom shall be members of the Delaware Tribe of Indians and elected by the membership of the Delaware Tribe. The purpose of the court shall be to hear and resolve any disagreements arising under any provisions of this Constitution or any civil or criminal acts against the Tribe, members, or persons under the jurisdiction of the Delaware Tribe. The Council shall provide for a procedure which shall insure that any litigant receives due process of law together with prompt and speedy relief. These Tribal Judges may not hold any other positions within the Delaware Tribal Government or any committees appointed by the Chief or Tribal Council. The terms of Chief Justice and the Associate Judge, now holding the position from the 1982 election, will expire in 1986 and thereafter the Chief Justice will be elected for an eight (8) year term and the Associate Judges will serve four (4) year terms with elections every two (2) years in accordance with Article VI of the Delaware Tribal Constitution.

PART II
BYLAWS

DELAWARE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - Duties of Officers

Section 1. The Chief of the Tribal Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, shall preside over all meetings of the Council, perform all duties of a Chairman and exercise any authority given him specifically by the Council or by a General Council of the Tribe. The chief shall have the power to vote.

Section 2. The Assistant Chief, in the absence of the Chief, shall preside and shall have all powers, privileges and duties of the Chief. He shall have the power to vote at any meeting.

Section 3. The Council Secretary shall have charge of all tribal correspondence and it shall be his duty to submit promptly to the Superintendent of the Jurisdiction and other appropriate offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, copies of all minutes of regular and special meetings of the Council, as well as copies of all resolutions and ordinances adopted by the Council. He shall have the power to vote at any meeting.

Section 4. The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:

A. He shall accept, receipt form, keep and safeguard, all funds in custody of the Council. He shall deposit all such funds as directed by the Council and shall keep accurate records of such funds and shall report on all receipts and expenditures and the amount and the nature of all funds in his custody to the Council at regular meetings and at such other times as required by the Council. He shall not pay or otherwise disburse any funds in custody of the Council except when properly authorized to do so by the Council.

B. The books and records of the Treasurer shall be audited at least once a year by a competent auditor employed by the Council, and at such other times as the Council may direct.

C. The Treasurer shall be required to give a surety bond satisfactory to the Council.

D. All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and shall be countersigned by the Chief of the Council or by some other officer designated by the Chief.

E. If the Treasurer is a member of the Council, he shall have the power to vote at any meeting.

F. All other members of the Council may perform such duties as assigned

by the Council and have the power to vote.

ARTICLE II - Meetings of the Tribal Council

Section 1. At the first meeting of the Council, after a regular election, which shall be the first Saturday after election, new members of the Council will be inaugurated and take office, and the Council shall see that all Council members have a correct and clear understanding of the Constitution and Bylaws and the management of tribal affairs, as well as the rules for conduct of their own body.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held as designated in a resolution by the Council.

Section 3. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chief or special meetings may be called by the Chief upon the written request of three (3) or more members of the Council. Written notice shall be given to each Council member at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

Section 4.

A. In the conduct of business, Roberts Rules of Order shall apply except when they are inconsistent with the express provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. All regular meetings shall be open to all members of the Tribe. Tribal members may participate in the discussion with the consent of the Chief.

B. The order of business at any regular or special meetings of the Tribal Council shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order by the Chief
2. Prayer
3. Roll Call
4. Reading of Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Unfinished Business
6. Reports
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

C. Voting at the Council meetings may be by voice, but at the discretion of the Chief, or upon the request of any two (2) members of the Council, a secret vote may be taken.

Section 5. Matters of business for the Council shall be decided by a majority vote. A quorum (a number competent to transact business) of the Council shall be four (4) members, which may include the Chief or Assistant Chief.

Section 6. No Council member shall vote on any matter coming before the Council in which he has a personal interest or in which he or she would be personally enriched by the outcome of the vote, unless special consent is given by a majority vote of the remaining Council members.

Section 7. Each official, elected or appointed, shall take an oath of office, prior to assuming his duties, which shall be: "I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, that I will carry out faithfully and impartially, the duties of my office to the best of my ability, that I will cooperate, promote and protect the best interests of the Delaware Tribe in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws."

ARTICLE III - Initiative Process

The voting membership's right to initiate and pass legislation for the benefit of the Delaware Tribe shall be governed by the rules and regulations as follows:

A. The petition shall at the beginning contain a statement of the purpose of the petition in clear and concise language.

B. Petitions shall be typed and clearly set forth the proposed ordinance or resolution.

C. Persons signing the petition must print their full name, address and affix their signatures.

D. In determining whether the signatures are valid (those of registered voters), only those names which appear on the same page as the "Statement of Purpose" with the text of the resolution or ordinance, shall be counted. Names on blank pages will not be counted.

E. Prior to obtaining signatures, a copy of the petition shall be filed with the Council Secretary. Petitions not filed will be invalid.

F. A petition meeting the above rules and signed by one hundred (100) voting members shall require Chief to initiate an election within forty-five (45) days.

G. The Secretary shall verify the names of all persons signing any petition to verify their voting status.

T I T L E 1

C O N S T I T U T I O N
A N D
B Y L A W S

APPROVED AT GENERAL COUNCIL NOV. 1982

WE HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER THIS CONSTITUTION
SINCE THAT TIME. THIS REPLACED THE BYLAWS
THAT WERE AMENDED ON SEPT. 7, 1958.

TITLE 1

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PART I - CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE	PAGE
1. SUPREME AUTHORITY	1
2. MEMBERSHIP.	1
3. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS	1
4. GOVERNING BODY	1
5. POWERS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL	2
6. ELECTIONS	3
7. VACANCY	4
8. INITIATIVE PETITIONS	4
9. AMENDMENTS	4
10. RECALL OR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE	5
11. ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	5
12. JUDICIAL	5

PART II - BYLAWS

1. DUTIES OF OFFICERS	6
2. MEETINGS OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL	7
3. INITIATIVE PROGRESS	8

DELAWARE
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

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D. To employ legal counsel, the choice of counsel and fixing fees to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, or his authorized representative if required by Federal law.

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G. To negotiate permits and leases, subject to approval of the Secretary of the Interior, if required by Federal Law, for business, homesite and other purposes, and generally to provide for the proper use and development of all Tribal lands, natural resources, and other Tribal property.

H. To appropriate Tribal funds for Tribal purposes.

I. To mortgage or otherwise encumber Tribal land and to borrow money from any source and pledge or assign chattels of future tribal income as security therefore with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his authorized representative if required by Federal Law.

J. To enact ordinances to regulate the use of all tribal lands through zoning, taxation, or otherwise.

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Any vacancy which may occur on the Tribal Council, because of death or resignation, shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining members. Vacancies occurring because of removal or recall shall be filled by a special election to be held within forty-five (45) days. Provided that if a vacancy created because of recall or removal occurs within one hundred eighty (180) days of the next regular tribal election, no special election shall be held, but the matter shall be held over and delayed until such next regular election.

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(a) petition signed by at least one hundred (100) registered voters, setting forth the full text of the proposed amendments, has been filed with the Tribal Council Secretary, or

(b) upon a 2/3 vote of the Tribal Council, a resolution is passed, calling for an amendment to the Constitution.

ARTICLE X - Recall/Removal from Office

Section 1. If any elected member of the Delaware Tribal government is convicted of a felony or crime which involves dishonesty, his office shall be considered forfeited upon passage of a resolution by the Tribal Council, or by 2/3 vote of General Council.

Section 2. Any member of the Delaware Tribal Council not in attendance of two consecutive, unexcused absences, at the regularly scheduled Council meetings, shall forfeit his office.

ARTICLE XI - Annual Membership Meeting

Section 1. A General Council meeting of the adult membership shall be held on a Saturday, during the month of November, at which time the Chief or his designated spokesman shall make a "State of the Tribe". Notice of the General Council meeting shall be given by the Chief, not less than thirty (30), nor more than forty-five (45) days preceding the meeting.

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BYLAWS

DELAWARE BY-LAWS

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Section 3. The Council Secretary shall have charge of all tribal correspondence and it shall be his duty to submit promptly to the Superintendent of the Jurisdiction and other appropriate offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, copies of all minutes of regular and special meetings of the Council, as well as copies of all resolutions and ordinance adopted by the Council. He shall have the power to vote at any meeting.

Section 4. The duties of the Treasurer shall be as follows:

A. He shall accept, receipt form, keep and safeguard, all funds in custody of the Council. He shall deposit all such funds as directed by the Council and shall keep accurate records of such funds and shall report on all receipts and expenditures and the amount and the nature of all funds in his custody to the Council at regular meetings and at such other times as required by the Council. He shall not pay or otherwise disburse any funds in custody of the Council except when properly authorized to do so by the Council.

B. The books and records of the Treasurer shall be audited at least once a year by a competent auditor employed by the Council, and at such other times as the Council may direct.

C. The Treasurer shall be required to give a surety bond satisfactory to the Council.

D. All checks shall be signed by the Treasurer and shall be countersigned by the Chief of the Council or by some other officer designated by the Chief.

E. If the Treasurer is a member of the Council, he shall have the power to vote at any meeting.

F. All other members of the Council may perform such duties as assigned by the Council and have the power to vote.

ARTICLE II - Meetings of the Tribal Council

Section 1. At the first meeting of the Council, after a regular election, which shall be the first Saturday after election, new members of the Council will be inaugurated and take office, and the Council shall see that all Council members have a correct and clear understanding of the Constitution and Bylaws and the management of tribal affairs, as well as the rules for conduct of their own body.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held as designated in a resolution by the Council.

Section 3. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chief or special meetings may be called by the Chief upon the written request of three (3) or more members of the Council. Written notice shall be given to each Council member at least five (5) days prior to special meetings.

Section 4.

A. In the conduct of business, Roberts Rules of Order shall apply except when they are inconsistent with the express provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. All regular meetings shall be open to all members of the Tribe. Tribal members may participate in the discussion with the consent of the Chief.

B. The order of business at any regular or special meetings of the Tribal Council shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order by the Chief
2. Prayer
3. Roll Call
4. Reading of Minutes of Last Meeting
5. Unfinished Business
6. Reports
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

C. Voting at the Council meetings may be by voice, but at the discretion of the Chief, or upon the request of any two (2) members of the Council, a secret vote may be taken.

Section 5. Matters of business for the Council shall be decided by a majority vote. A quorum (a number competent to transact business) of the Council shall be four (4) members, which may include the Chief or Assistant Chief.

Section 6. No Council member shall vote on any matter coming before the Council in which he has a personal interest or in which he or she would be personally enriched by the outcome of the vote, unless special consent is given by a majority vote of the remaining Council members.

Section 7. Each official, elected or appointed, shall take an oath of office, prior to assuming his duties, which shall be: "I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies, that I will carry out faithfully and impartially, the duties of my office to the best of my ability, that I will cooperate, promote, and protect the best interests of the Delaware Tribe in accordance with this Constitution and Bylaws."

ARTICLE III - Initiative Process

The voting membership's right to initiate and pass legislation for the benefit of the Delaware Tribe shall be governed by the rules and regulations as follows:

A. The petition shall at the beginning contain a statement of the purpose of the petition in clear and concise language.

B. Petitions shall be typed and clearly set forth the proposed ordinance or resolution.

C. Persons signing the petition must print their full name, address and affix their signatures.

D. In determining whether the signatures are valid (those of registered voters), only those names which appear on the same page as the "Statement of Purpose" with the text of the resolution or ordinance, shall be counted. Names on blank pages will not be counted.

E. Prior to obtaining signatures, a copy of the petition shall be filed with the Council Secretary. Petitions not filed will be invalid.

- F. A petition meeting the above rules and signed by one hundred (100) voting members shall require Chief to initiate an election within forty-five (45) days.
- G. The Secretary shall verify the names of all persons signing any petition to verify their voting status.

RESOLUTION

I request the Delaware Tribal Council to approve this Resolution for presentation at General Council for Amendment to the Delaware Constitution.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE VI - ELECTION

SECTION 8 If the Tribal Council shall fail to give proper notice of the election, or in case of regular election has not been held, the TRIBAL COURT, upon receipt of a petition signed by at least one hundred (100) registered voters shall call such election and shall give thirty (30) days notice, setting the time and place of the election.

Replacing GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE to TRIBAL COURT

Patsy Martin

PATSY MARTIN
CHIEF JUDGE

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above resolution was adopted at a regular meeting of the Delaware Tribal Council, at Bartlesville, Oklahoma, at which time a quorum was present and voting, by a vote of 4 FOR and 0 AGAINST and ABSTAINING, on the 19 day of September, 1988.

DATED THIS 22 day of September, 1988.

Sally R. Farley

Sally R. Farley, Secretary
Delaware Tribal Council

Seal →