

# People First Initiative MMIP Council Meeting

Council Meeting Minutes  
Held via Zoom  
Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at 2:00 PM

1. Meeting called to order at 2:07 PM
2. Roll Call of Council Members Present:

Valerie Chadwick (Chair) (absent)	Lydia Heyward
Victoria Shanklin (Vice Chair)	Sam Vandergaw
Kim Guay (absent)	Malia Miller (absent)
Investigator Anne Sears for Commissioner Cockrell (absent)	Kendra Kloster
Mark Haglin for Darrell Hildebrand	Deputy Chief Sean Case
Heather Gottshall	

Non-council members present: Antonia Commack, Lisa Phu (Alaska Beacon), Azara Mohammadi, Eric Garcia AKNWRC, Alexis Savage, Michelle Demmert, and Jamiann Hasselquist.

3. Land acknowledgment by Vice Chairwoman Shanklin.
4. Approval of agenda; Vice Chairwoman Shanklin moved, Sam Vandergaw seconded, all in favor; approved.
5. Approval of minutes from August 9, 2022 council mtg: Lydia moved, Sam seconded; approved.
6. New Business: Reports from Sub-Committees (updates, discussions, challenges, questions).
  - i. **Interagency Cooperation** (Val, Tory, Debra O’Gara, Rick, and Steph Hopkins): Issues with getting everyone’s schedules in order. With a lot of confusion, a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting hadn’t been set yet. At the last meeting the working spreadsheet was shared - Tory helped set up Google Docs landing page for everyone to use to upload the matrix and other notes. They’ve listed some recommendations as draft for discussion for the school council as the council moves forward to finalizing the final report.
  - ii. **Public Awareness** (Heather, Tory, Kendra, Malia, Azara Mohammadi, Debra O’Gara, Rick Garcia, Jamiann Hasselquist, Milan Paquette): Their report would provide a list of membership and other recommendations to include in the final report – the 1<sup>st</sup> recommendation is public testimony (host listening session, and set-up a meeting before the end of the MMIP

council that is very inclusive.) Drafting a list of current resources. Will reach out to AVCP to get their permission to promote their list of non-profit resources. Another recommendation for final report is an outreach campaign to educate people that you do not have to wait 24 hours to report someone missing and to increase bulletins and photos of MMIP.

- iii. **Public Safety/Investigations** (Darrell, Lydia, and Rick): Lydia gave an update: First mtg was on 8/26. Some discussion included aligning the state procedures to the outline of Savanna's Act. Also discussed jurisdictions and how it impacts investigations, a little about State of WA website that the public is able to access (couldn't remember the name). Next mtg scheduled for 9/8. Had a question about Google Docs access.
- iv. **Data Collection** (Sam, Malia, Sean, Anne, Rick): Sam was unable to attend the last mtg. Announced that Anne Sears is no longer employed with Alaska State Troopers as she wants to remain retired. Has a couple of ideas he will bring up with Malia at the next mtg.

**\*\*\*Name of subcommittees is incorrect on the agenda. Chairwoman Chadwick moved to amend; Sam moved to accept.**

7. New business continued:

- a. Concerns subcommittee member count now that Investigator Anne Sears has stepped down. Asked for clarification on how this will be dealt with and how many committee members the council should have. Support staff Marianne clarified that there must be 11 voting members, now there is 10.
- b. Concerns with State administrative support and clear guidance and confusion on venue for in-person meetings. Chairwoman will provide a list to Marianne of concerns.
- c. Marianne clarified that admin support staff cannot access Google Docs – only members can. Kendra shared that her subcommittee has uploaded their notes in Google docs and organized it in a way that may help others with organizational ideas.

8. Old Business:

- a. Val's Matrix: In Google Docs that now everyone has access to.
- b. Timeline for Report: Final report due October 15<sup>th</sup>.

9. Public comments:

- i. Alexis and Jordan Savage, Palmer, Anchorage: Heading personal investigation into the death of their cousin, Fred Lee. Connected with Jamiann Hasselquist who invited her and her husband Jordan to this council mtg. Feels that the closing of Fred Lee's case is a big failure. Had to hire their own lawyer and private investigator. Will not give up on this case. Feels that nobody wants to hear them out but feels in their hearts that

the truth will come out. Has been working closely with Antonia Commack and commends her for her support.

- ii. Antonia Commack, Wasilla, AK: Advocating for Fred Lee's family. Feels that Fred's case is odd and it contains a lot of suspicious circumstances. Antonia also experienced having to fight the police department for justice. She advocated for her best friend and cousin who was murdered in Fairbanks. She feels that law enforcement is not giving their all to a native person who died in a suspicious matter. Believes that APD did not do the bare minimum investigation on Fred's case. They received records on Fred's case and it raised more suspicion. There seems to be a common theme all over Alaska that the bare minimum is not given to investigations for native people. Reports that she received a lot of push-back from Investigator Anne Sears who referred her and Fred's family to APD - explained that APD will not help since they had closed Fred's case. Their private investigator was able to provide more information than what APD was able to do themselves. Antonia is curious what this MMIP Council does and asked why it's so difficult to address these kinds of cases.
- iii. Jamiann Hasselquist, CCTHITA: Had a chance to talk to Alexis over the phone about Fred's case. Has been an advocate for MMIP and have seen neglect and mishandling of cases from law enforcement. Suggests that the Governor be aware of this. Believes that this country is very racist and native people are subjected to poor treatment. How can we change this and give everyone a fair investigation? Expressed that she hears the concerns from families of MMIP.
- iv. Michelle Demmert, Law and Policy Director with ANWRC and Asst. Professor at UAA Tribal Governance: When there are MMIP, there is an option for BIA to provide a second review of a case. She spoke with the State Coroner's Office and their manner of death determination is only as good as what the investigator reports says. She suggested that if there isn't assistance available, ask for Federal Government assistance. Tried to have a fatality review board but with the change of administration, that fell thru. Noted that the State of Montana tribes recognized that there's been issues with MMIP and created a review board to figure out what is lacking and what are the problems. Victim blaming is real and this needs to be addressed in investigations.
- v. Antonia Commack shared more about her cousin's death, Robin Green, as requested. Was murdered by the father of her children in front of her two young children. It took 5 years to get justice.

11. Next Meeting: Zoom only October 4, 2022 2pm-4pm

12. Meeting adjourned 3:13 PM; Tory motioned, Lydia seconded; adjourned.