

Dear Tribal Members,

We, the Executive Committee, understand there may be some confusion and concerns in the community regarding access to meetings and related documents. We hope this email provides you with some clarity regarding current events, operations of the Tribe, and our plans to serve you better.

As some may be aware, the Executive Committee recently undertook efforts to become a more transparent government for its citizens. Those efforts are part of an initiative called the Transparency Initiative. One important aspect of the Transparency Initiative is obtaining well-qualified legal counselors who specialize in tribal law, constitutional law, and federal Indian law and who can advise on ways the government can become more transparent with its citizens. Becoming more transparent is a balancing act where we must balance the interests of the people and the government's duty to protect the rights of the people. The rights of the people and duties of the government are set forth in the Tribe's Constitution and Bylaws, so it is imperative that we have well-qualified legal counselors who can ensure that the Tribe remains compliant with the Constitution.

Therefore, with the assistance of our legal counselors, and per their advice, we will be undergoing changes that we believe will better serve the citizens, which includes implementing laws and policies pertaining to access to meetings of the Executive Committee, use of the citizen portal, and requesting public information. During this process, you may experience interruptions and disruptions. One such disruption is limited use of the citizen portal while we work to implement Terms and Conditions for Use, which was a recommendation of legal counsel to give citizens access to public information. Please remember that these are temporary inconveniences and we are working as quickly as we can to implement new processes, systems, and technology.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time. The journey to become a more transparent government can sometimes be long, frustrating, and tedious. However, it is necessary to becoming a better government for the citizens. It is our hope that the Transparency Initiative will address many of the long-standing issues that citizens have experienced and voiced their concerns on.

Lastly, to provide you with a more direct answer, we offer the following statement:

The Executive Committee has not voted on any subject, topic, question, or matter related to minutes, resolutions, and other documents being made available to the public. As stated above, the current disruptions and interruptions are only temporary. Pursuant to Article XII of the ITKN Constitution and Bylaws, the Executive Committee still holds its mandatory monthly meeting, which is always open to the public. Ensuring that the monthly Executive Committee meeting is open to the public is a legal obligation that the Executive Committee ensures it follows. The Transparency Initiative's mission is to increase openness with citizens through technological means and other legal mechanisms created by neutral, independent, and well-qualified legal counselors. It is crucial that the Executive Committee follow the advice of legal counsel to ensure that the rights of citizens are protected and the Executive Committee continues to carry out its legal mandates.

All citizens have and will continue to have access to public information even during this time of change. Upon request, we can give you access to public information that we currently have available. We are working quickly to implement the new processes and systems that citizens can use to obtain access to government documents and meetings. Again, we appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have any questions or would like to request access to public information that we currently have available, please let us know.

Thank you,

The Executive Committee of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska