



To: Shella Bowlin, Secretary of State

From: Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief
Bryan Warner, Deputy Principal Chief; Cabinet; Sub-Cabinet; Mike Shambaugh, Speaker of the Council; Chuck Garrett, CNB of CEO; Molly Jarvis, Senior VP and CEO of CED; Brandon Scott, Vice President of

CC: Enterprise Communications, Jen Loren, Senior Director of Cherokee Film

Date: December 18, 2023

**MEMORANDUM DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO CHEROKEE FILM TO
ESTABLISH AN “INTERIM CHEROKEE FILM INSTITUTE” ADVISORY
BOARD” TO FACILITATE THE OPERATION OF CFI THROUGH THE END OF
CALENDAR YEAR 2024**

The purpose of this memorandum is to authorize Cherokee Film (CF) to establish the Interim Cherokee Film Institute Advisory Board to facilitate the immediate operation of CFI, from December 18, 2023, until December 31, 2024, unless extended by further action of this office or operation of Cherokee law.

I. BACKGROUND

The Administration has previously expressed strong support for Cherokee Film and the general effort to place Cherokee Nation as a leader in the film and TV industry. This, our policies injected tens of millions of dollars into the effort, supported by appropriations by the Council of the Cherokee Nation, along with other types of measures of support. This of course is against the backdrop of the preexisting fact that CF is part of Cherokee Nation Businesses, which is purely a creature of Cherokee Nation law and operates solely on that basis. In short, (1) Cherokee Film simply would not exist without the governmental action and support of the Cherokee Nation, and (2) CF has Administration’s full support.

a. Cherokee Film

Cherokee Nation’s filmmaking ecosystem, Cherokee Film, is Cherokee Nation’s collective effort in filmmaking, storytelling and content creation.¹

¹ See <https://cherokee.film>, retrieved December 15, 2023

The mission of Cherokee Film (herein CF, and formerly known as “Cherokee Film Office”) is to reclaim Cherokee and Native narratives by increasing representation across film, TV and other media industries while creating an ecosystem that supports production and drives economic activity in the Cherokee Nation. Its portfolio includes four branches – Cherokee Film Productions, Cherokee Film Studios, Cherokee Film Commission and Cherokee Film Institute – and represents more than 30 full-time employees.

CF operates as a unit within CNB, led by Jen Loren, up a chain of command that concludes with CEO Chuck Garrett. Mr. Garrett reports to CNB’s board of directors, all of whom are subject, by tribal statute, to appointment and confirmation by the CNB shareholder representatives: the Principal Chief and the Council of the Cherokee Nation. The shareholders, or course, are the Cherokee people. In view of this, it is easy to understand the governmental interest present in any and all activities of Cherokee Nation Businesses, even something as facially innocuous as a volunteer advisory body.

b. Cherokee Film Institute

Cherokee Film Institute (CFI) was created by CF in 2024 to further CF’s mission to educate the next generations of film and media professionals in Oklahoma, a state that is quickly becoming a top film and TV destination, especially for indigenous-focused content. Under CFI, the tribe is investing in a long-term strategy to create educational and workforce opportunities aimed at removing the barrier for Native Americans to enter the industry and create a sustainable workforce in and around the Cherokee Nation reservation.

In order to help effectuate the mission of CFI, CF has engaged an outside consultant with deep ties in the film and TV industry. Per the consultant’s recommendation, an advisory body of stakeholder and experts is needed to help guide CFI’s work. Accordingly, CF has proposed an advisory board to serve this function. The absence of such an advisor board would erode the significant investment Cherokee Nation, via CF, has made to increasing education and training opportunities for the Cherokee people to work in this growing regional industry. The consultant is engaged for a period of one year, with the most significant work occurring in 2024. In these exigent circumstances, thoughtful yet quick action is warranted.

II. Authority of Board and Commissions, Cherokee Nation’s Governmental Interest

All boards, commissions, advisory bodies and task forces acting in the interest of the Cherokee Nation derive authority from the Constitution and laws of the Cherokee Nation and no other authority. The Constitution does not expressly prescribe exhaustive rules for such bodies, speaking incidentally to their existence and describing in detail only two such bodies (the Election Commission and the Registration Committee). The Constitution does vest executive authority in the Office of Principal Chief. The Council possesses the authority

to enact laws and resolutions. Taken together, and by practice, various statutes relating to specific boards and commissions as well as “public bodies” subject to freedom of information, open meetings laws and member appointment and confirmations have been enacted. In addition, this office has established the practice of establishing some internal advisory bodies by executive order, typically not operating as “public bodies” with the meaning of Cherokee Nation’s Freedom of Information Act, but adhering to certain public disclosure requirements.

All of this makes clear that we are required by law, as well as practice and principles of good government, to tread carefully in matters of boards, commissions, tasks forces, etc. Here, a “Cherokee Film Institute Advisory Board” could be created by action of this office or by act of council. Inasmuch as the CFI advisory board will not deal in matters that create regulations, policies or expend Cherokee Nation funds or otherwise bind or commit Cherokee Nation, the board is in the nature of an internal advisory body under past practice of this administration and not a public body within the meaning of FOIA. Accordingly, it is with the authority of this office to authorize Cherokee Film to establish this body by unilateral action delegated to CF.

To balance Cherokee Nation’s governmental interest in this board, my delegation should extend on a temporary basis and, by this memorandum, subject to disclosure to the Council and the general public.

III. Determination and Direction

CF is authorized, for the reasons set forth above, to establish the “Interim CFI Advisory Body” on the following basis:

1. Interim CFI Advisory Board (ICFIAB) exists and operates under the authority of this memorandum from December 18, 2023 to December 31, 2024.
2. ICFIAB members will be named by CF, provided a majority of members are citizens of the Cherokee Nation and the selections are based on creating a board with an appropriate balance of relevant professional expertise, with written justification for each selection provided to the Office of Principal Chief on or about the date of selection.
3. ICFIAB is not a “public body” within the meaning of FOIA, but should adopt the following practices in the name of transparency:
 - a. Coordinate any public statements or any other matter related to media through Administration via VP of Enterprise Communications Scott for approval.
 - b. Provide reasonable notice of ICFIAB to Administration and Speaker Shambaugh via Secretary of State Bowlin, Deputy Secretary of State Montgomery and Assistant to the Principal Chief Camerin Fite James.

- c. Provide reports to the Office of Principal Chief and the Speaker of the Council, routed to Secretary of State Bowlin and Deputy Secretary of State Montgomery and Assistant to the Principal Chief Camerin Fite James on no less than a quarterly basis.
- 4. Be advised that this memorandum, with CF's list of ICFIAB members attached, will be made available for public review on Cherokee Nation's website as a "public notice" beginning the week of December 18, 2023.

CHEROKEE

FILM INSTITUTE

To: Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief
From: Jen Loren, Senior Director of Cherokee Film
Bryan Warner, Deputy Principal Chief; Cabinet; Sub-Cabinet; Mike Shambaugh, Speaker of the Council; Chuck Garrett, CNB of CEO; Molly Jarvis, Senior VP and CEO of CED; Brandon Scott, Vice President of
CC: Enterprise Communications.
Date: December 22, 2023

Cherokee Film Institute has received and reviewed the Principal Chief's December 18, 2023 Memorandum and have established an Interim Cherokee Film Institute Advisory Board. Board Membership is as follows:

1. **Industry - Amber Valletta** *Cherokee Nation citizen, Oklahoma Ex-Pat, CA resident*
 - a. *Supermodel*
 - b. *Actress*
 - c. *Member of SAG-AFTRA*
2. **Higher Ed - Brad Carson** *Cherokee Nation citizen, Tulsa resident*
 - a. President, [University of Tulsa](#)
3. **ATL - Faith Phillips**, *Cherokee Nation citizen, Locust Grove Resident*
 - a. Screenwriter/Novelist who has benefitted from CFC scholarships and opportunities
 - b. Member of the [Native American Media Alliance \(NAMA\)](#).
 - c. Teaches Creative Screenwriting at Stilwell High School
4. **BTL - Meagan Ferguson**, *Cherokee Nation citizen, Tulsa Resident*
 - a. Costume Designer, IATSE Member, [IMDB Pro](#)
 - b. Was a participant in the hit TV show "Project Runway"
5. **IATSE - Laura King**, *Non-Native, Texas-based*
 - a. IATSE, Local 484 (OK/TX Business Manager)
 - b. Rep for IATSE members who are residents of Cherokee Nation

6. At-Large Industry Member – Sunrise Tippeconnie, Comanche Nation citizen, Oklahoma City-area Resident

- a. Sunrise is a professor of Film and Media Studies at University of Oklahoma
- b. He is the current lead programmer at deadCenter Film Festival
- c. Sunrise is also experienced on the crew side of the film industry as an electrician, gaffer, and more ([IMDB](#))

7. Education Stakeholder – Tony Heaberlin, Non-Native, Tulsa-area resident

- a. Chief Communications Officer at [Tulsa Technology Center](#) (LinkedIn [profile](#))
- b. His duties include supervision of the district's public relations, government relations and economic development efforts