



## ATALM Local Planning Council April 28, 2026 Meeting Notes

### In Attendance

- Melissa Brodt
- Jeanne Brako
- Leanne Campbell
- Karen Condon
- Doresty Daniel
- Erin Fehr
- Susan Feller
- Sven Haakanson
- Lourdes Henebry-DeLeon
- Ty Johnny
- Nicholas Kager
- Jeanie Louie
- Tisa Matheson
- Bill Matt
- John Matt
- Gena Peone
- Annette Pierre
- Bobbi Rose
- Nonabah Sam
- Warren Seyler
- Dixie Stensger
- Kayla Tackett
- Jack Townes
- Tarisi Vunidilo

### I. Welcome, Susan Feller, ATALM President & CEO

- Opening Blessing, Bill Matt
- Meeting opened with introductions by each Council member followed by an overview of the discussion topics and how participants can provide feedback.

### II. The Best of Spokane

The following are the “not to be missed” experiences and places to visit that make Spokane special.

- Spokane Falls
- Historic Flour Mill
- Steam Plant Restaurant & Brew Pub
- Indigenous Eats
- Create list of “short drives” for attendees who have access to a car. Sites suggested include:
  - Riverside State Park
  - Bowl and Pitcher Loop Trail
  - Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden
  - Manito Park
  - Peaceful Valley Historic District
  - Drumheller Springs

### III. The Gold Standard of Indigenous Gatherings

The Council discussed moments from past gatherings (not just ATALM) that made them feel seen and respected. Ideas included:

- Gifts from tribes in the local area to attendees.
- Plenty of hot water for tea drinkers, in addition to the coffee provided.
- Photo area set-up to provide free headshots for attendees. This could be sponsored by ATALM's Emerging Professional Network. John Matt indicated that his niece is a photographer and he could ask her about availability/cost of providing this service.
- Photobooth for fun photos for attendees to take of themselves/with friends.
- Selfie spots at choice locations throughout the conference area.
- Educating conference attendees of the purpose/meaning of demonstrated dances, cultural protocols, etc.
- Graphic illustrator who observes sessions during the conference and illustrates the theme/concept.
- Raffle for local art. Area tribes contact their artists and ask them to donate a piece of art to be used in a raffle. Could limit the size of the art to make it easy for attendees to travel with back home.
- Tribes could donate items to go in the conference "swag bags".
- One-pager of each local tribe's history could be included in the program book.

### IV: Conference Theme

The Council voted on the following themes:

- Guided by Responsibility, Protected by Collective Strength
- 40,000 years / 250 years: Long Before, Long After
- On the Record: Long Before, Long After
- We Know What We Hold. We Know Who We Are.
- Grounded in Place, Sustained by Community; Caring for Place, People, and Memory Presence of Indigenous Knowledge

"Guided by Responsibility, Protected by Collective Strength" received the most votes.

### V. Conference Artwork

After thoughtful discussion of which piece of art most powerfully reflected the goals and vision of the conference, the piece *Women Warrior Black Star and Her Medicine Helpers* by George Flett was selected,

The selection prompted meaningful conversation, particularly surrounding the inclusion of the owl imagery, as owls are viewed in some Indigenous cultures as symbols associated with warning or death. Members of the Local Planning Council shared powerful perspectives in support of the artwork, explaining that within their culture the owl is understood as a messenger and a positive symbol.

The Council ultimately embraced the piece as an expression of creative sovereignty and the importance of honoring Indigenous cultural diversity and interpretation. John Matt will work with

members of the Local Planning Council to develop an explanation of the artwork to accompany its public release.

## VI. Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Council members discussed the following ideas for possible incorporation in the opening and closing ceremonies:

- Color Guard at the opening ceremony and retiring the colors at the closing. John Matt has contacts for Spokane Tribe Color Guard.
- Opening Ceremony Gifts to attendees: The Spokane Tribe would like to gift attendees with salmon, a customary gift from their community. The Coeur D'Alene tribe expressed interest in gifting each attendee a "Paddle Necklace".
- Consider doing a "closing circle" at the closing ceremony. Attendees would create a large circle around the room, similar to the Spokane Tribe's "Happy Dance" that is typically used as their closing dance at events.

## VII. Local Sponsors, Organizational Support & Volunteers

The Council discussed possible local groups who could help with conference prep, hospitality and overall sponsorship. Below is a short list of possibilities which will be discussed further at Council meetings.

- City of Spokane, Mayor's office
- Washington State Legislature/local Senate Democrats
- Spokane Tribe of Indians
- Kalispel Tribe of Indians (donation confirmed)

## VIII. Site Visits

- The group had a sample lunch at the Convention Center, followed by a tour of the meeting space.
- The group visited the Performing Arts Theatre but determined it is not the right configuration for the cultural evening.
- The group visited the Spokane Central Library.

## IX. Unfinished Business

- **Local Sponsors, Organizational Support & Volunteers**  
What local groups will help bring the conference to life and how do we bring them in? Who can we rely on to help with conference prep and local hospitality? What sponsors may step up to help subsidize the cost of events?
- **Unforgettable Evenings**  
What cultural experiences, foods, and protocols should be present at the two evening events?
- **Opening & Closing as Ceremony**  
What should be included in opening and closing moments (speakers, protocols, cultural elements)?
- **Pacific Island Delegation: Spokane Connections & Experiences**  
What local resources, places, and experiences should we be aware of to meaningfully welcome and support Pacific Island participants?

- **Big Ideas/Random Thoughts**

What will make this conference stand out? What have we not covered?