

**International Bylaws for the  
Council for First Inhabitants Rights and Equality  
(Council FIRE)**

Declaration of Principles

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## **DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES**

The original inhabitants of the lands of North America have a long and proud history of caring for their elders, women, children, tradition, environment and all of the Creator’s creatures; however, they continue to lag behind in many benefits and advancements that are available to other people on these lands.

Council FIRE (Council for First Inhabitants Rights and Equality) supports the rights of first nations’ people to protect their traditions and histories, as well as to fully participate in the arena of jobs, health-care, education, and in building a bright future together with all people who share these lands today. We will work to educate all people to the issues of Native populations, and to encourage efforts whereby the needs and concerns of indigenous people can be addressed.

Our organization will work to unite tribal leaders and members, labor, religious, and community groups, elected leaders, and any individuals or organizations that share the goals of Council FIRE. We are committed to using our resources and energies to address the human rights issues of Native communities by raising awareness of inequities and conditions that constitute barriers to full participation in the larger society. We will also work to educate the greater population as to the contributions and leadership that Native people have delivered throughout the histories of these lands.

Council FIRE is created in the spirit of fairness and respect. It is resolved to the purpose of achieving social dignity, economic and political justice, and a decent standard of living to which all people are rightfully entitled.

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **Name**

This organization shall be known as the **Council for First Inhabitants Rights and Equality (Council FIRE).**

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of the Council FIRE shall be to work within the labor movement, and with other organizations who have compatible goals and ideals to:

- encourage voter registration, voter education and greater participation by Native populations in the political process,

- 1 • educate and raise awareness that encourages economic, social and legislative  
2 efforts that will advance respect, dignity and support of human rights for all,
- 3 • ensure equal benefits and protections for all people, regardless of national  
4 origin, sex, religion, age, race or sexual orientation.

5 Council FIRE will not endorse candidates for political office.

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7 **ARTICLE III**  
8 **Membership**

9 Any person who believes in fairness and justice for all people, and who is willing to  
10 abide by the By-Laws and Declaration of Principles of Council FIRE, shall be eligible to  
11 become a member by qualifying under the standards and requirements of this  
12 organization at the time of his/her application for membership.

13 Any member who is accepted by a State / Provincial council is eligible to participate in  
14 the business meetings of such council. For purposes of casting a vote in a State /  
15 Provincial or International election, a member must have a minimum of three (3)  
16 months in good standing. For purposes of running for an office on the International  
17 Executive Council (IEC), or for State / Provincial Council office, a member must have a  
18 minimum of two (2) years in good standing and be affiliated with, and endorsed by,  
19 their State / Provincial council in the case of running for a International Executive  
20 Council office.

21 All memberships shall be granted in accordance with the International By-Laws of  
22 Council FIRE. Memberships shall become active upon receipt of dues payment by the  
23 IEC.

24 Student members shall not be eligible to serve as International or State / Provincial  
25 council officers, but may serve on committees. Interference with their education runs  
26 contrary to our principles and objectives as an organization.

27 All members shall be entitled to attend membership meetings, shall have the right to  
28 voice and vote and will be recognized at such meetings by the presiding officer.

29 All members shall abide by these By-Laws, Robert's Rules of Order, and other internal  
30 rules as may be adopted by the IEC.

31 The appropriate State / Provincial chapter shall first address any cases of discipline or  
32 suspension. The IEC shall act as the Board of Appeals with the further right of appeal to  
33 the next International Membership Conference, a panel of three (3) members of the IEC  
34 may be appointed by the President to serves as the Board of Appeal, and present their  
35 findings to the full IEC for concurrence prior to rendering a decision. The IEC shall

1 conduct appropriate hearings no later than ninety (90) days after receipt of written  
2 charges from a minimum of two State / Provincial Chapter Presidents.

3 The IEC shall set the amount of dues, which shall be paid annually or as otherwise  
4 established by the Board. Organizations may be accepted as sponsors, at annual  
5 amounts established by the IEC. All memberships, and sponsorships, accepted during  
6 the first year of operation shall be designated as founding members / sponsors.

7 The IEC shall have the power to suspend / adjust the payment of dues as they deem  
8 appropriate. The member shall pay his/her dues directly to the IEC by March 31st of  
9 each year in order to be considered a member in good standing and eligible to run for  
10 office in their State / Provincial chapter or any other elected office. Where no State /  
11 Provincial Council exists, such member shall have the status of member-at-large with all  
12 rights under the Council for First Inhabitants Rights and Equality International By-laws.  
13 The IEC shall have the right to assign jurisdiction for an area where no State /  
14 Provincial Council exists, to an existing State / Provincial Council, or charter a State /  
15 Provincial Council, at its discretion.

16 Annual dues shall be set by the IEC, and be paid on an annual basis. The dues  
17 structure is established as follows:

- 18 • Student Membership \$15.00
- 19 • Senior (65 and over) Membership \$25.00
- 20 • Full Membership \$35.00
- 21 • Officers \$50.00

22 Organizations shall be able to join Council FIRE at the annual levels as follows:

- 23 • Affiliate \$1,000
- 24 • Supporter \$2,500
- 25 • Sponsor \$5,000

26 All memberships and organizations accepted prior to March 31, 2015 shall be  
27 designated as founding members / affiliates, as long as the membership / affiliate fees  
28 are up to date and the member / affiliate upholds the principals of Council FIRE  
29 contained in these bylaws.

30 The International office, by June 1 of each year, will provide the State / Provincial  
31 Council, if any, fifty percent (50%) of all dues received prior to March 31 each year,  
32 along with the names and contact information of those who paid dues.

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**ARTICLE IV**  
**International Executive Council**

1 Members of the IEC shall serve a four-year term of office. Past IEC Presidents shall be  
2 ex-officio members of the IEC, and serve in an advisory capacity only, with no voting  
3 rights other than as a member of Council FIRE, or on committees appointed to.

4 Until the International Executive Council is elected by the delegates to the first  
5 International Membership Conference of Council FIRE, successor Directors shall be  
6 elected each year at the annual meeting of the IEC by the affirmative vote of a majority  
7 of the Directors then in office

8 The IEC shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of eleven (11)  
9 positions, including the President, Secretary-Treasurer, Executive Vice-President and a  
10 minimum of four (4) Vice Presidents; the number shall be determined by the IEC.

11 To be eligible to run for one of the offices on the IEC, a member must be in good  
12 standing for the two consecutive years prior to the opening of the International  
13 Membership Conference where the elections will occur.

14 Any action which could be taken at a meeting of the Board may be taken without a  
15 meeting if a consent in the form of a record, which consent clearly sets forth the action  
16 to be taken, is executed by all the Directors. Any such record shall be inserted in the  
17 minute book as if it were the minutes of a Board meeting. For purposes of this Section,  
18 record means information inscribed on a tangible medium or contained in an electronic  
19 transmission.

20 The duties of the IEC shall be:

- 21 • The International Executive Council shall direct the affairs of the  
22 organization and shall be empowered to transact all necessary business as  
23 it deems in the best interest of the organization; including the authority to  
24 act on finances, policies and decisions as they determine to best  
25 contribute to the attainment of the overall goals and programs of Council  
26 FIRE.
- 27 • The IEC shall designate the work, duties and responsibilities of all  
28 Standing Committees, and any committees that are created
- 29 • The IEC shall have the authority to appoint vacancies in any elected  
30 office, except for a vacancy in the office of the President of the IEC, which  
31 shall be filled by the Executive Vice-President. Such appointments shall  
32 serve the remainder of the unexpired term.
- 33 • The IEC shall oversee and have authority over all State / Provincial  
34 Councils, and shall work to see that each State / Provincial Council is

1 operating within the guidelines of these bylaws, and all principles,  
2 directives, policies and operating guidelines of the organization.

3 Each four years, the members of the IEC shall be elected by the delegates at the  
4 International Membership Conference.

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6 **ARTICLE V**  
7 **Leadership Council**

8 There shall be a Leadership Council (LC) of Council FIRE, it shall consist of the  
9 members of the International Executive Council and all State / Provincial Council  
10 Presidents.

11 The LC shall meet at least one (1) time each year, in preparation for the annual  
12 membership conference; it shall meet more often if necessary as determined by the  
13 IEC. All members of the LC shall be automatic delegates to the International  
14 Membership Conference.

15 The LC shall coordinate the activities of all committees within the State / Provincial  
16 councils, review activities of the International organization and all State / Provincial  
17 Councils, review all organizational members and determine their alignment with the  
18 goals of Council FIRE, audit finances of the organization, and review performance  
19 toward goals.

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21 **ARTICLE VI**  
22 **Duties of Officers**

23 The President shall preside at all meetings. He/she shall be an ex-officio member of all  
24 Committees except a Nominating Committee; shall appoint the members of all  
25 committees; shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed in these By-Laws or  
26 assigned to him/her by the International Membership Conference, the LC or the IEC;  
27 and shall help coordinate the work of the officers and committees. The President shall  
28 sign, along with the Secretary-Treasurer, all checks or other instruments that allow for  
29 the disbursement of funds.

30 The Vice-Presidents shall act as advisors to the President and all committees. In the  
31 absence of the President, the Executive Vice-President shall perform the duties and  
32 exercise the powers of the President. In the event of a vacancy in the office of  
33 President for any reason, the Executive Vice-President shall automatically become the  
34 President for the unexpired term.

1 The Secretary-Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of the  
2 proceedings of all meetings; maintaining an accurate record of the membership;  
3 keeping a detailed record of all membership fees, donations and other sources of  
4 income, disbursements, assets, liabilities and any other financial transactions; shall  
5 report to International Membership Conference, the LC or the IEC as required. The  
6 Secretary-Treasurer shall sign such papers, instruments, drafts and checks as directed  
7 by the IEC; and shall perform all other duties incidental to the office or directed by the  
8 LC or the IEC. The Sec-Treasurer shall also prepare and file any required reports for  
9 the organization.

10 All funds and assets shall be deposited in a financial institution designated by the IEC.

11 Three consecutive unexcused absences to properly called meetings without proper and  
12 justifiable cause shall constitute grounds for the immediate vacancy of any elected  
13 position. Except for emergency meetings, a fourteen (14) day meeting notice shall be  
14 mailed to those required to be in attendance. The IEC may use video / teleconference  
15 capabilities to conduct meetings, or may conduct business without a meeting if a  
16 consent in the form of a record, which consent clearly sets forth the action to be taken,  
17 is executed by all the Directors. Any such record shall be inserted in the minute book  
18 as if it were the minutes of a Board meeting. For purposes of this Section, record  
19 means information inscribed on a tangible medium or contained in an electronic  
20 transmission.

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## **ARTICLE VII**

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### **International Membership Conference**

24 A International Membership Conference (IMC) shall be held annually, at a time and  
25 place determined by the Leadership Council. Each four years, this conference shall  
26 elect the members of the IEC.

27 The annual IMC shall allow for educational seminars, amendments to bylaws,  
28 propositions and Statements of support or opposition, and other items and issues as  
29 deemed appropriate for the good and welfare of Council FIRE and the principles of the  
30 organization.

31 Notice of the time and place for the IMC shall be served to members in good standing  
32 between forty and fifty (40 – 50) days in advance of the meeting. E-mail, posting on  
33 organization website, postal mailing, or other similar means of communication as  
34 normally used by the IEC shall serve to satisfy the notice requirement.

35 Any amendments or propositions to be considered at the IMC, must be approved and  
36 submitted by a recognized State / Provincial Council where applicable. If no State /

1 Provincial Council exists, such amendment or proposition must include the signature  
2 endorsement of no less than five members in good standing at the time it is sent  
3 certified mail, to the International office in care of the IEC Secretary Treasurer.

4 Amendments and/or Resolutions to be considered at the International Membership  
5 Conference must be received by certified mail to the Secretary-Treasurer of the IEC, no  
6 later than thirty (30) days prior to the starting date of the meeting. Within ten (10)  
7 days of receipt, the Secretary Treasurer shall forward copies of all properly received  
8 resolutions to the Executive Vice-President, who shall appoint and chair the resolutions  
9 committee. The resolutions committee will review all submissions and make a  
10 recommendation to the Leadership Council, who will determine the official stance of the  
11 organization. In the case of multiple submissions on the same topic, the resolutions  
12 committee shall have the authority to bundle them in a manner so as to create one  
13 proposal that will be acted on.

14 Late resolutions will be directed to the IEC, for determination as to whether the  
15 resolution will be considered by the Conference.

16 Special meetings may be called by the President or petitioned by at least one-third  
17 (1/3) of the members of the Leadership Council, stating the purpose for which the  
18 meeting is being called. Notice of such special called meeting shall be made in the  
19 same manner as the International Membership Conference. The only business that  
20 may be transacted at a special meeting is that for which the meeting was called.

21 Delegates to the International Membership Conference shall be elected by the State /  
22 Provincial Councils, and affiliated Organizations, based upon the formula contained in  
23 these bylaws. Delegates shall be entitled to voice and vote, and the concept of "One  
24 Person-One Vote" will be observed. Delegates must be full dues paying members in  
25 good standing, at the time of election. Neither the State / Provincial Council President,  
26 nor members of the IEC shall count against the allotted delegates for each State /  
27 Provincial Council.

28 Delegates may be assigned to committees as determined by the Leadership Council or  
29 IEC.

30 Election of delegates to the International Membership Conference will be based on the  
31 following formula:

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State / Provincial Councils

Up to 200 members	Two (2) delegates
201 to 500 members	Four (4) delegates
Each additional 250 members	One (1) additional delegate



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Affiliated Organizations

Affiliate Level	One (1) delegate
Supporter Level	Two (2) delegates
Sponsor Level	Four (4) delegates

International Executive Council of Council FIRE will not be responsible for the expenses of delegates to any International Membership Conferences, but may reimburse for certain expenses on a case by case basis as approved by the IEC.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
**Nominating and Election Committee**

A Nominating and Election Committee shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Leadership Council, at least sixty (60) days prior to the meeting where the elections will be held.

It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to recruit and accept nominations for election or re-election to the offices that are up for election. It shall also be the duty of this committee to conduct the election if necessary, to control the election process and certify the results. If necessary, the election shall be by a secret ballot, and the election committee shall prepare the ballots and maintain control throughout the process. Election ballots shall be maintained in a secure manner for one (1) year after the date of the election.

It shall be the responsibility of the Nominating and Election Committee to notify all members in good standing of the upcoming election details, at least thirty (30) days prior to the International Membership Conference.

Such notice shall be by mail or any other manner as is usually used to communicate with the membership, and shall state the following information:

- (a) Date of International Membership Conference;
- (b) Time and place of International Membership Conference;
- (c) Offices that are to be elected at the International Membership Conference;
- (d) Names and membership data for all nominees for the offices up for election.

No member of the Nominating and Election Committee shall be a candidate for any office that is being elected. In the event that any member of the Nominating and Election Committee shall become a candidate for office he/she shall immediately resign from this committee.

1 No member shall be eligible for election to a International or State / Provincial office of  
2 this organization unless he/she shall have been in continuous good standing with the  
3 International Council FIRE, and their State / Provincial council where possible for a  
4 period of twenty-four (24) months immediately preceding the election. Exceptions to  
5 this rule may be made up on request of the State / Provincial Council to the IEC, where  
6 good and welfare of the organization will be enhanced by an IEC decision to waive the  
7 time constraint.

8 A member in good standing is a member who has paid their dues by March 31 of each  
9 year. This criteria will not be applied to the establishment of a new State / Provincial  
10 council, or where none of the nominated candidates meet the criteria. In these cases  
11 the matter will be referred to the IEC for resolution.

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**ARTICLE IX**  
**Term of Office**

15 From the inception of Council FIRE, the initial International Executive Council shall serve  
16 until growth of the organization allows for the first International Membership  
17 Conference, where an election will be held for the offices. Thereafter, International  
18 Executive Council Members and Officers shall serve a term of four (4) years, starting on  
19 the first day of elections at the International Membership Conference, and shall  
20 continue to serve until their successors are elected.

21 The term of office for all officers shall be four (4) years, or less as may be determined  
22 by the IEC or State / Provincial Council as appropriate.

23 All properties and assets of the organization in possession of each outgoing officer must  
24 be relinquished to his/her appropriate successor, or to a designated representative of  
25 the International Executive Council.

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**ARTICLE X**  
**Standing Committees**

29 All Chairpersons and members of Standing Committees shall be appointed by the  
30 President with the approval of, and under the guidance of, the International or State /  
31 Provincial Executive Council as appropriate.

32 Each standing committee consists of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7)  
33 members who are in good standing with this organization. The leadership of each  
34 committee shall be elected by the committee, and shall serve a term of two (2) years.

1 Standing Committees may have subcommittees under their jurisdiction, upon approval  
2 of the State / Provincial or International Council as appropriate; there are no size  
3 restrictions on the subcommittees, but must be of a size that can be effective and  
4 efficient.

5 All committees shall meet at least quarterly, and keep records of activities and minutes  
6 of each meeting. Such records and minutes will be made available to the International  
7 Executive Council, or appropriate State / Provincial Council, upon request.

8 There shall be four (4) Standing Committees, as follows:

- 9 1. Human Rights Committee: shall address basic human rights such as  
10 healthcare, safety and the environment. It shall also address issues specific  
11 to women, elders, youth, veterans, and any other demographic as  
12 appropriate.
- 13 2. Education and Skills Committee: shall focus on issues related to jobs and  
14 training; they shall also work to encourage and develop a path whereby  
15 schools properly prepare students for a better and more secure future.
- 16 3. Communications and Outreach Committee: shall prepare and deliver  
17 messaging to members, tribes, Labor, communities and other organizations  
18 that impact, or could help with, the mission of Council FIRE; they shall also  
19 encourage feedback and action through use of website and other means of  
20 communication that may be available to it. This committee is also tasked to  
21 develop and enact efforts to bring in new members and supporters.
- 22 4. Strategic Resources and Special Issues Committee: shall study and prepare  
23 white papers and position statements on issues of importance to Native  
24 people and coordinate special projects such as voter registration. They shall  
25 also shall prepare and present recommendations for policy statements to the  
26 IEC and prepare annual reports as necessary, under the guidance and  
27 direction of the Secretary Treasurer.

28 Additional committees, as may be deemed necessary by the IEC, shall be appointed by  
29 the President with the approval of the Executive Board.

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## **ARTICLE XI**

### **State / Provincial Councils**

33 State / Provincial Councils of Council FIRE will be chartered by the International Office  
34 subject to compliance with the International By-Laws. State / Provincial Council  
35 membership guidelines and bylaws may not conflict with the International By-Laws,

1 must be approved by the IEC, and are subject to the International bylaws and policies  
2 of the Leadership Council and the IEC.

3 State / Provincial Councils shall also have standing committees as outlined in these  
4 bylaws, and affiliate with the appropriate AFL-CIO bodies at their respective locations.

5 State / Provincial Councils must fully comply with these International By-Laws and  
6 policy decisions of the IEC. Failure to comply will subject the State / Provincial Council  
7 to discipline and/or removal of charter by the Leadership Council, following investigation  
8 of the alleged failure to comply.

9 As determined by the IEC, local councils may be established within a State / Provincial  
10 where membership levels warrant it, and shall operate under the appropriate State /  
11 Provincial Council. However, only one State / Provincial Council may exist. Any Local  
12 Council must comply with all compliance guidelines as described for State / Provincial  
13 Councils and provide a written report quarterly to the State / Provincial Council as to its  
14 activities.

15 State / Provincial Councils shall provide a written report to the IEC quarterly. The  
16 report shall describe the activities of the State / Provincial Council, as well as those of  
17 any Local Council or committee that operate in its' jurisdiction.

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## **ARTICLE XII**

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### **Oath of Office / Membership**

21 To be administered by the presiding officer. Those taking the oath are to face presiding  
22 officer with hands raised to receive blessings of wisdom, tolerance and energy.

23 Officer(s) / Member(s) taking the oath shall repeat the following, after the presiding  
24 officer:

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Officer

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28 I solemnly promise to uphold the principles and policies of the Council for First  
29 Inhabitants Rights and Equality as defined by our declaration of principles and  
30 International by-laws.

31 I will carry out the duties and responsibilities of the office to which I have been  
32 elected, with integrity and to the best of my ability. I will conduct myself in a  
33 manner of respect for all others, and will uphold the aims, objectives and policies  
34 of Council FIRE.

1 I will turn over to my appropriate successor in office, at the close of my official  
2 term, all the properties and assets of the organization in my possession.

3 To all of this I give my sacred word of honor.  
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5 Member

6 I solemnly promise to uphold the principles and policies of the Council for First  
7 Inhabitants Rights and Equality as defined by our declaration of principles and  
8 International by-laws.

9 I will carry out the duties and responsibilities of my membership with integrity  
10 and to the best of my ability. I will conduct myself in a manner of respect for all  
11 others, and will uphold the aims, objectives and policies of Council FIRE.

12 To all of this I give my sacred word of honor.  
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14 **Article XIII**

15 **Meetings**

16 The Secretary-Treasurer, or designee, shall take minutes of all formal meetings of  
17 Council FIRE and any committees, and maintain them in a secure manner for a period  
18 not less than seven (7) years. The minutes are to include:

- 19 • Time the meeting began and ended.  
20 • Attendance sheet of all attendees, including officers and guests (may be a  
21 separate sign-in sheet that is attached).

22 An accurate record of the proceedings, including all motions and seconds and  
23 determination of same. Motions should be made in writing to maintain accuracy,  
24 signed by maker and second; in the absence of being submitted in writing, the  
25 motion should be recorded exactly as made.

- 26 ○ Motions that carry authority to spend over five-hundred dollars (\$500)  
27 should be passed by a division of the house, whereby raised hands should  
28 be counted and recorded.  
29 ○ All actions that authorize the expenditure of any money should be noted  
30 in the minutes, including the maker and second for the motion to spend,  
31 pertinent discussion that ensued, and the final acceptance or rejection by  
32 the membership present.  
33 • All communications received by the body should be read and attached to  
34 minutes. Any communication requiring action should have notation on  
35 communication and in minutes as to the action taken by the body.

- 1       • Details that are clear enough as to allow for determination, at a later date, of  
2       any business or discussions that took place – who contributed and what was  
3       their contribution to the issue.

4 Robert’s Rules of Order shall be used to ensure orderly conduct of business. Good  
5 effort should be made by the Chair of the meeting to see that members present are  
6 given a fair opportunity to voice their concerns, ideas, support or opposition to the issue  
7 being discussed.

8 Order of Business:

- 9       1. Meeting shall be called to order by the presiding officer, and the following  
10       statement is to be read:
- 11           • I declare this meeting now open to address the business of Council FIRE.  
12           I expect each person in attendance to conduct themselves in a manner  
13           that is respectful and free from personal attacks. Each person is  
14           requested to participate and listen fully, and to contribute on the topic  
15           that is under discussion at that time.
  - 16           • (Optional) a moment of silence where the Chair, or designee, calls upon  
17           the creator to bless the gathering with wisdom and tolerance as it works  
18           to fulfill the calling to serve the mission of Council FIRE.
- 19       2. Roll Call of officers and recognition of any guests;  
20       3. Membership report – new members since last meeting, rise or fall in  
21       membership, etc.  
22       4. Initiation of any new members and/or installation of officers.  
23       5. Reading of previous minutes, and action by membership body on report.  
24       6. Reading of financial report, and action by membership body on report.  
25       7. Unfinished business – where body acts on business that has previously been  
26       brought up in a meeting, where action was referred to committee, held for  
27       further clarification or information, etc.  
28       8. Committee Reports  
29       9. New business – where actions of the body are required on business that has not  
30       previously been decided by the membership  
31       10. Good and Welfare – all business, information, etc. that is for general purpose or  
32       education of the membership.  
33       11. Adjourn

These bylaws have been approved and adopted by the International Executive Council of the Council for First Inhabitants Rights and Equality.

Enacted on this date \_\_\_\_\_ ,

Witnessed by: \_\_\_\_\_

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