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CORPORATE CHARTER
OF THE
BLACKFEET TRIBE OF THE
BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION
MONTANA

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RATIFIED AUGUST 15, 1936



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS



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CORPORATE CHARTER OF THE BLACKFEET TRIBE OF THE BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION

A FEDERAL CORPORATION CHARTERED UNDER THE ACT OF JUNE
18, 1934

Whereas, the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana constitutes a recognized Indian tribe organized under a Constitution and By-laws ratified by the Tribe on November 13, 1935, and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on December 13, 1935, pursuant to section 16 of the Act of June 18, 1934, (48 Stat. 984), as amended by the Act of June 15, 1935, (49 Stat. 378); and

Whereas, more than one-third of the adult members of the Tribe have petitioned that a charter of incorporation be granted to such Tribe, subject to ratification by a vote of the adult Indians living on the reservation;

Now, therefore, I, Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me by the said Act of June 18, 1934, (48 Stat. 984), do hereby issue and submit this charter of incorporation to the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation to be effective from and after such time as it may be ratified by a majority vote of the adult Indians living on the reservation.

Corporate Existence.

1. In order to further the economic development of the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana by conferring upon the said Tribe certain corporate rights, powers, privileges and immunities; to secure for the members of the Tribe an assured economic independence; and to provide for the proper exercise by the Tribe of various functions heretofore performed by the Department of the Interior, the aforesaid Tribe is hereby chartered as a body politic and corporate of the United States of America, under the corporate name "The Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation."

Perpetual Succession.

2. The Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation shall, as a Federal corporation, have perpetual succession.

Member- ship.

3. The Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation shall be a membership corporation. Its members shall consist of all persons now or hereafter entitled to membership in the Tribe, as provided by its duly ratified and approved Constitution and By-laws.

Manage- ment.

4. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council established in accordance with the said Constitution and By-laws of the Tribe, shall exercise all of the corporate powers hereinafter enumerated.

Corporate Powers.

5. The Tribe, subject to any restrictions contained in the Constitution and laws of the United States, or in the Constitution and By-laws of the said Tribe, shall have the following corporate powers, in addition to all powers already conferred or guaranteed by the Tribal Constitution and By-laws.

(a) To adopt, use, and alter at its pleasure a corporate seal.

(b) To purchase, take by gift, bequest, or otherwise, own, hold, manage, operate, and dispose of property of every description, real and personal, subject to the following limitations:

1. No sale or mortgage may be made by the Tribe of any land or interests in land, including water power sites, water rights, oil, gas, and other mineral rights now or hereafter held by the Tribe within the boundaries of the Blackfeet Reservation. No sale of any other capital assets of the Tribe exceeding in value the sum of \$10,000 may be made unless approved by a majority vote at a referendum called by the Tribal Council as provided in Article IX of the Constitution of the Tribe.

2. No leases or permits (which terms shall not include land assignments to members of the Tribe) or timber sale contracts covering any land or interests in land now or hereafter held by the Tribe within the boundaries of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation shall be made by the Tribe for a longer term than ten years, and all such leases, permits, or contracts must be approved by the Secretary of the Interior or by his duly authorized representative; but oil and gas leases, or any leases requiring substantial improvements of the land may be made for longer periods when authorized by law.

3. No action shall be taken by or in behalf of the Tribe which is in conflict with regulations authorized by section 6 of the Act June 18, 1934, or in any way operates to destroy or injure the tribal grazing lands, timber, or other natural resources of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

(c) To issue interests in corporate property in exchange for restricted Indian lands, as provided in Article VII, Section 6 of the Constitution of the Tribe.

- (d) To borrow money from the Indian Credit Fund in accordance with the terms of Section 10 of the Act of June 18, 1934, (48 Stat. 984), or from any other Governmental agency, or from any member or association of members of the Tribe, and to use such funds directly for productive tribal enterprises, or to loan money thus borrowed to individual members or associations of members of the Tribe, provided that the amount of indebtedness to which the Tribe may subject itself shall not exceed one hundred thousand dollars, except with the express approval of the Secretary of the Interior.
- (e) To engage in any business that will further the economic well-being of the members of the Tribe or to undertake any activity of any nature whatever, not inconsistent with law or with any provisions of this charter.
- (f) To make and perform contracts and agreements of every description, not inconsistent with law or with any provisions of this charter, with any person, association, or corporation, with any municipality or any county, or with the United States or the State of Montana, including agreements with the State of Montana for the rendition of public services: *Provided*, That any contract involving payment of money by the corporation in excess of \$10,000 in any one fiscal year shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his duly authorized representative.
- (g) For the purpose of obtaining any loan, to pledge or assign any chattels purchased with the proceeds of such loans, or any income arising from activities of the Tribe financed by the proceeds of such loan, or any income due or to become due on any notes, leases or contracts taken as security for the reloan by the Tribe of the proceeds of such loan whether or not such notes, leases, or contracts, are in existence at the time, but no pledge or assignment shall be made to any person or agency, other than the Secretary of the Interior, without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.
- (h) To deposit corporate funds, from whatever source derived, in any national or state bank to the extent that such funds are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or secured by a surety bond, or other security, approved by the Secretary of the Interior;

or to deposit such funds in the postal savings bank or with a bonded disbursing officer of the United States to the credit of the Tribe.

- (i) To sue and to be sued in courts of competent jurisdiction within the United States; but the grant or exercise of such power to sue and to be sued shall not be deemed a consent by the said Tribe, or by the United States to the levy of any judgment, lien or attachment upon the property of the Tribe other than income or chattel specially pledged or assigned.
- (j) To exercise such further incidental powers, not inconsistent with law, as may be necessary to the conduct of corporate business.

Termination of Supervisory Powers.

- 6. Upon the request of the Blackfeet Tribal Council for the termination of any supervisory power reserved to the Secretary of the Interior under sections 5b, (2), 5f, 5g, 5h, and section 8 of this charter, the Secretary of the Interior, if he deems it wise and expedient so to do, shall approve such termination and submit it for ratification by the Tribe. It shall be effective upon ratification by a majority vote at an election in which at least thirty per cent of the adult members of the Tribe residing on the reservation shall vote. If at any time after ten years from the effective date of this charter, such request shall be made and the Secretary shall disapprove such termination or fail to approve or disapprove it within ninety days after its receipt, it may then be submitted by the Secretary of the Interior or by the Tribal Council to popular referendum of the adult members of the Tribe actually living within the reservation and if approved by two-thirds of the eligible voters, shall be effective.

Corporate Property.

- 7. No property rights of the Blackfeet Tribe, as heretofore constituted, shall be in any way impaired by anything contained in this charter, and the tribal ownership of unallotted lands, whether or not assigned to the use of any particular individuals, is hereby expressly recognized.

The individually owned property of members of the Tribe shall not be subject to any corporate debts or liabilities, without such owners' consent. Any existing lawful debts of the Tribe shall continue in force, except as such debts may be satisfied or canceled pursuant to law.

Corporate Dividends.

- 8. The Tribe may issue to each of its members a non-transferable certificate of membership evidencing the equal share of each member in the assets of the Tribe and may distribute per capita, among the recognized members of the Tribe, the net income of corporate activities including the proceeds of leases of tribal assets, including oil royalties over and above sums necessary to defray corporate obliga-

tions to members of the Tribe or to other persons and over and above all sums which may be devoted to the establishment of a reserve fund, and other expenses incurred by the Tribe for corporate purposes. Any such distribution of profits in any one year amounting to a per capita cash payment of \$100 or more, or amounting to a distribution of more than one-half of the accrued surplus, shall not be made without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

*Corporate
Accounts.*

9. The officers of the Tribe shall maintain accurate and complete public accounts of the financial affairs of the Tribe, which shall clearly show all credits, debts, pledges and assignments, and shall furnish an annual balance sheet and report of the financial affairs of the Tribe to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Tribal Council shall elect from within or without their number a Treasurer of the Tribe who, under their control and direction, shall be the custodian of all moneys which come under the jurisdiction or control of the Tribal Council. He shall pay out money in accordance with the orders and resolutions of the Council, and no disbursements shall be made without the signature or approval of the Treasurer. He shall keep accounts of all receipts and disbursements and shall make written reports of same to the Tribal Council at each regular and special meeting. He shall be bonded in such an amount as the Council by resolution shall provide, such bond to be approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The books of the Treasurer shall be audited at the direction of the Council or of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and shall be open to inspection by members of the Tribe or duly authorized representatives of the Government at all reasonable times.

*Amend-
ments.*

10. This charter shall not be revoked or surrendered except by act of Congress, but amendments may be proposed by resolutions of the Council which if approved by the Secretary of the Interior, to be effective shall be ratified by a majority vote of the adult members living on the reservation at a popular referendum in which at least 30 per cent of the eligible voters vote.

*Ratifica-
tion.*

11. This charter shall be effective from and after the date of its ratification by a majority vote of the adult members of the Blackfeet Tribe living on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, provided at least 30 per cent of the eligible voters shall vote, such ratification to be formally certified by the Superintendent of the Blackfeet Indian Agency and the Chairman of the Tribal Council of the Tribe.

Submitted by the Secretary of the Interior for ratification by the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in a popular referendum to be held on August 15, 1936.

HAROLD L. ICKES,
Secretary of the Interior.
[SEAL]

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 18, 1936.

CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (48 Stat. 984), this charter, issued on July 18, 1936, by the Secretary of the Interior to the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation, was duly submitted for ratification to the adult Indians living on the reservation and was on August 15, 1936, duly ratified and accepted by a vote of 737 for and 301 against, in an election in which over thirty per cent of those entitled to vote cast their ballots.

JOSEPH W. BROWN,
Chairman of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council.
C. L. GRAVES,
Superintendent, Blackfeet Agency.

