

OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND ETHICS

ETHICS INVESTIGATION REPORT

AUGUST 12, 2026

COMPLAINT NO: 2026-5-212
DATE FILED: May 22, 2026
COMPLAINANT: Confidential (CI)
RESPONDENT: Anthony Sequoyah (RI)

I. ALLEGATION

It is alleged that on May 21, 2026, Anthony Sequoyah engaged in inappropriate physical contact with the complainant while in the workplace.

II. BACKGROUND

Mr. Sequoyah was appointed Secretary of Operations for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in 2024. In this role, he oversees the Operations Division, which consists of five departments and twenty-three programs. The complainant is employed at Facilities Management, a program within the Operations Division.

III. RESPONSE

Mr. Sequoyah does not dispute that physical contact occurred but maintains that the interaction was intended as workplace joking and horseplay rather than inappropriate physical contact.

IV. RELEVANT CHEROKEE CODE SECTIONS

Section 117-45.1(a) Definitions

“(1) *Tribal officials.* Any person who is:

- a. A Tribal officer as defined in Section 1 of the Charter and Governing Document;”
- b. A member of Cherokee School Board as defined in C.C Section 115-8;”
- c. Serving as a member of an authority, board, committee, or commission, appointed by Tribal Council, the Executive Committee or Principal Chief, and who is subject to removal by the appointing authority;”

- d. Appointed by Tribal Council or the Executive Committee or Principal Chief, and who is subject to removal by the appointing authority, to carry out actions, provide guidance, or assistance to the Tribal Council, the Executive Committee or to a member of the Executive Committee.”

Section 117-45.3 Code of Ethics

“(i) Tribal officials shall respect and honor the customs and traditions of the EBCI.”

“(l) Tribal officials shall not act individually, jointly, or through another, threaten, intimidate, or discipline any person as reprisal for any legitimate action taken by the person.”

“(q) Tribal officials shall maintain or enhance the honesty and integrity of their respective offices; and safeguard the reputation of the EBCI as a whole.”

V. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The complaint was received on May 22, 2026, and was determined to be complete and within the jurisdiction of the Office of Internal Audit and Ethics. The complaint was sent to the respondent on June 3, 2026. A response was received from the respondent on June 25, 2026.

The Ethics Review Committee reviewed the complaint and response in a quarterly meeting on July 9, 2026, and approved for the ethics staff to proceed with an investigation. (See Resolution ERC 26-06).

Interviews were conducted to obtain more information and clarification about the event as stated in the complaint and response. Between July 29 and August 3, the following individuals were interviewed:

1. Complainant 1
2. Anthony Sequoyah, Secretary of Operations (Respondent 1)
3. Witness 1

Video footage of the alleged event was also reviewed.

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The respondent is a Tribal official as defined in Cherokee Code Section 117-45.1(a)(1).
2. The respondent is an enrolled member of the EBCI.
3. The complainant is an enrolled member of the EBCI.
4. The respondent served as the Secretary of Operations at the time of the allegation.

VII. ANALYSIS

The complaint alleges the respondent violated 3 sections of Cherokee Code Section 117-45.3. An analysis is outlined below.

It is alleged that the respondent failed to honor the customs and traditions of the EBCI. (Section 117-45.3(i))

Dismissed. There is insufficient evidence to substantiate a violation.

It is alleged that the respondent acted individually, jointly or through another to threaten, intimidate, or discipline any person as reprisal for any legitimate action taken by the person. (Section 117-45.3(l))

Dismissed. There is insufficient evidence to substantiate a violation.

It is alleged that the respondent failed to maintain or enhance the honesty and integrity of his respective office; and safeguard the reputation of the EBCI as a whole. (Section 117-45.3(q))

Violation. There is sufficient evidence to substantiate a violation.

The evidence obtained during the investigation established that inappropriate physical contact occurred between Mr. Sequoyah and the complainant. Video footage reviewed during the investigation corroborated the occurrence of that contact.

Although Mr. Sequoyah described the interaction as horseplay and stated that “he did not condone his actions,” the conduct was inconsistent with his duty as a Tribal official to maintain the integrity of his office and safeguard the reputation of the EBCI as a whole.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information obtained during the investigation, there is sufficient evidence to substantiate a violation of Cherokee Code Section 117-45.3(q). The Ethics Review Committee will assess a fine and further action if needed.

Report prepared by:

Jashuna Parker

Ethics Officer

8/5/2026

Date

IX. ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE REVIEW

This Investigation Report was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on August 7, 2026. By a majority vote the committee concluded that Mr. Sequoyah violated Cherokee Code Section 117-45.3(q), imposed a \$500.00 fine, and recommended that he complete harassment training in a timely manner.

I hereby certify that the above decision was approved by a majority of voting members of the Ethics Review Committee.

Jashuna Parker

Ethics Review Committee Chair

8/7/2026

Date

X. AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE REVIEW

This Investigation Report was reviewed by the Audit and Ethics Committee on August 12, 2026. By a majority vote, the Committee affirmed the decision and recommendation of the Ethics Review Committee.

This report will be forwarded to the Chief of Staff, Executive Office, Tribal Council and the Attorney General.

I hereby certify that the above decision was approved by a majority of voting members of the Audit and Ethics Committee.

Lori Lambert

Audit and Ethics Committee Chair

08/17/2026

Date
