

**TRIBAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
OF THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD INDIAN NATION, MONTANA**

Volume 23 Number 40
Council Chambers, Pablo, MT

Held: April 7, 2023
Approved: April 11, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom McDonald, Chairman; Len TwoTeeth, Vice-Chairman; Martin Charlo, Secretary; Ellie Bundy, Treasurer; Mike Dolson; Jennifer Finley; Carole Lankford; Jim Malatare; James “Bing” Matt; and Terry Pitts.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jennifer Trahan, Council Office Manager; James Steele, Sr., Sergeant at Arms; and Abby Dupuis, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to **order** at 9:08 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was opened with a **prayer** by Stephen Smallsalmon.

The **Buck Shot Drum Group** sang a flag song.

Chairman McDonald welcomed everyone to the quarterly council meeting and announced breakfast is being served in the conference room and Tribal Health Department is offering shingle shots, flu shots, and COVID-19 shots.

The floor was opened for comments from the elders.

Joe McDonald thanked the drum group. He congratulated council for working together so well. Joe thanked Jim for getting the work done on the pow wow grounds. Household toilets and showers do not work for those large events. **Chairman McDonald** commented Joe turned 90 and purchased his first new car.

Stephen Smallsalmon has been talking Indian at Nkwusm for 20 years and trying to get the language going. Nkwusm will have an end-of-the year pow wow in May and he would like the council to attend. There will be four drums at the pow wow, and he invited everyone to attend. The council works for the people and they need to help the membership.

Chairman McDonald mentioned the jobs that are available and the staff are here to give an overview of job opportunities.

Cynthia Matt, Personnel Department, reported there are a number of vacant positions, and she has some job applications available. The emergency hire jobs are for tribal members only, but the other positions are for anyone who wants to apply. CSKT has tribal member hiring preference. FIIP is looking for ditch riders. She has some government driving forms for anyone interested in applying. The drug policy was amended. Safety sensitive positions cannot test positive for marijuana. **Chairman McDonald** explained marijuana is now exempted from the prehire drug testing, except for the safety sensitive positions, and employees must refrain from being under the influence while employed. **Stephen Smallsalmon** asked why marijuana is legal now. **Chairman McDonald** explained the voters voted to make it legal by referendum. **Martin Charlo** commented it was a racist policy by the government and was imposed on us. It is an antiquated law and there is a lot of propaganda about it targeting minorities. Council took action to decriminalize marijuana. The pharmaceuticals have a lot of money fighting this. **Chairman McDonald** advised the State licenses the vendors that sell prescription, recreation, and over-the-counter marijuana products. The Tribes continue to research options. **Ellie Bundy** urged individuals to purchase products from the dispensary for safety reasons; there are concerns about off-the-street marijuana being laced with fentanyl. **Len TwoTeeth** clarified it is not legal to use or distribute marijuana on Indian trust lands, but it is legal on fee properties within the reservation.

Jeanne Christopher and **Carrie Antoine**, Early Childhood Services, discussed the workforce. ECS met with SKC Early Childhood Division and asked if it was possible to go forward with in-school programs for juniors and seniors that may want to work in early childhood and work towards their degree in early childhood. Ronan High School and Two Eagle River School are interested. They have one student from Two Eagle River School that will be starting soon. She is 18 years old so she can have a background check done. Those students under the age of 18 will need to have permission from their parents. Students can be duly enrolled in high school and Salish Kootenai College to earn a degree. ECS also identified a number of classes they will hold this summer for the staff parents that might be interested and the high schoolers. They will have classes for one week that is a three credit class. The staff members are paid to attend the class. SKC and ECS have worked to secure a grant so each participant will receive a \$500 incentive. They plan to have three classes throughout the summer months to ensure people are working toward their qualifications for a specific position. The staff has been busy with recruitment efforts and working with the schools. There are some grandparent positions available for the centers from Arlee to Polson. ECS has an agreement with SKC to waive the tuition for the staff and the program pays for them to attend one class per quarter. **Len TwoTeeth** mentioned active shooter training will be offered to all employees next week. Jeanne advised that all the ECS staff have attended that training. Cameras were installed in all the classrooms, and the doors remain locked all day and staff

must let the parents inside the building for safety reasons. The ECS staff have completed CPR training.

Ron Swaney, Robert McCrea and **Whitney Malatare**, Fire Control, announced the Division of Fire has several vacant positions that will be filled for the upcoming fire season, fuels crew, and fire suppression. **Chairman McDonald** expressed the need to have a stable and competent workforce going forward in today's fire environment and a workforce that has stable funding and adequate wages providing security and viable earning while promoting workforce sustainability and successional development of future leaders.

Whisper Camel-Means, Natural Resources Department, announced the department will be hiring 8 to 10 fish processing staff members on emergency hire for Mack Days. There are position descriptions available at the front desk today for anyone interested. There are positions available for the Blue Bay manager and campground workers, Wildland Recreation, seasonal customer service positions at the Bison Range, and the Aquatic Invasive Species stations/water craft inspectors.

Melinda Charlo, Indian Preference Office, mentioned the Indian Preference Office is located upstairs by the Personnel Department in the new tribal complex. The Ronan construction project is underway and flaggers are needed. Any certified flaggers can get signed up on the on-call list. More heavy equipment operators, truck drivers, and carpenters are needed. The Perma Bridge project will need carpenters later this season. Melinda certifies Indian-owned businesses to get preference for contracting with the Tribes. An RFP for supply for the bridge project is being advertised. The IPO assists businesses who are looking for workers and the office keeps an on-call list of laborers, drivers, operators, etc. CSKT has a memorandum of understanding with the Montana Department of Transportation to hire contractors from disadvantaged enterprises. Melinda can get a workshop scheduled, if needed. Applications are available on the tribal website and via email or mail.

Juliana Tanner, S&K Gaming, announced there are 42 seasonal workers needed for the Gray Wolf Peak Casino, Kwataqnuq Resort & Casino, and Big Arm Resort. Vacancies are advertised on Facebook and in the Char-Koosta News. It has been difficult to find employees to hire since the pandemic. New hires are provided with the necessary training for their position. The Chief Executive Officer was advertised and interviews were conducted, and Daniel Hansen was hired to fill the vacancy. **Carole Lankford** commented there are some individuals looking for a second job. Unless the Tribes increase the minimum wage, she wants council to look at changing the policy to allow employees to have a second job. Juliana responded that some tribal employees work 4/10s with the Tribes and work for S&K Gaming on the weekends. There was a question about the tips employees make being deducted out of their paychecks, so that is why there is so much

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turnover. Juliana explained if people are in a tip job and make \$100 in tips they get to take the money home, but it must be reported as income. Federal law requires tips to be reported as income. It could be an audit finding. Carole would like to take another look at it; this is what prevents people from sticking around.

Brad Pluff, Tribal Court, reported the Tribal Court has been attempting to hire a couple of clerks for several months. There are either no applicants or the selected candidates do not show up for drug testing. The Deputy Clerk and data input jobs are vacant. The clerk staff is one of the lowest paid jobs within the organization and he would like to get that changed. There were no applicants for the attorney judge. The code requires it be a tribal member. The vacancy was advertised three times. Brad spoke to some attorneys and placed them on a retainer, as needed, as a temporary solution. They are working on a Healing Court. They tried to get a meeting with Desiree Fox and it has been difficult to get everyone together due to their schedules. Dana Comes At Night is the Healing Court Coordinator and Brad is the judge. They will tour Tulalip's Healing Court in the next couple months. **Carole Lankford** heard there is a person needing treatment and the judge said the Tribes paid for an extended treatment for this person to go for three months and the aftercare. All the time she has been there she had never heard anyone say that before. Council has been hammering on the Tribal Health staff to do things for our people and she finally saw it. There are changes coming, but it is a slow process to change a big organization.

Dallas Hewankorn, Department of Human Resources Development, gave an overview of the Summer Youth Employment Program. The application deadline is May 18. The Summer Youth Career Fair will be on June 10. Youth will be aware of employment locations. Youth will be hired on a six-week contract and may be extended for two weeks if the job sites want it extended. The youth must be tribal members from a federally recognized tribe and at least 14 years of age by July 1. Applications are available out front. When inspectors visit the home they will prioritize what work needs to be done with the funding.

Jim Adams, Facilities Maintenance, announced the Facilities Maintenance Department is always looking for employees, techs, day/night workers, and groundskeepers. No degree is required for these jobs; people just need a good work ethic. They will be trained on the job.

Chairman McDonald reminded the audience that Tribal Health is offering the COVID-19 booster, flu shots, and shingle shots. Breakfast is being served in conference room.

The floor was opened for updates from the council members.

Carole Lankford sent blessings to Rich & Julie Janssen, who lost their son Jake. Jake was special needs and the family gave so much love to him. Jake enjoyed

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playing the Claw machine at DynoMart and Carole encouraged people to donate \$1.00 on the claw machine; the money will be donated. Woody Torosian, a tribal member, passed the law academy and he will be a Fish & Game officer. Davin Sorrell has a shop that sells marijuana. The Tribes are looking at the Watson property for an elder living facility or a youth facility. Council met with Congressman Zinke to talk about tribal issues. CSKT hosted a legislative reception in Helena. It gives us help when the legislature is going on. She volunteers at the Bread Basket. Carole went to the elders dinner at Gray Wolf Peak Casino and she hopes S&K Gaming continues those dinners for the elders. Carole attended the IDT team meeting with Forestry; the program is getting ready for timber sales. Carole attended the AMERIND meeting. There was a workshop with the courts and appropriate departments. The Tribes are working on the pow wow grounds to get the immediate needs addressed. They are looking to hire contractors to do the work. She testified before the House Resource Committee that was chaired by Representative Zinke. Carole talked about the budget, needs, and firefighter retention pay. The Forest Service gave \$20,000 bonuses to their folks; our people are certified and follow the same rules and regulations but were excluded from the retention bonus. There will be a consultation in Portland in the next couple of weeks. Council met with the Department of Interior folks about Public Law 280 and talked about what we are thinking after the county took action to withdraw from PL 280. They talked to those organizations about what they can provide to us if we take on this program. She thinks we should take it over. The county does not take into account underlying issues. Carole attends the elders meetings. Council is working on the transboundary tech mining issue with British Columbia.

Terry Pitts went to the state legislative reception in Helena. We have Shane Hendrickson defending our rights. Terry had a district meeting and the lack of water pressure was a concern. Bud Gillin looked into it and it was addressed. They had asked Law & Order to contact people in the community when they make their rounds in Dixon. They are working to complete the basketball courts and playground area, upgrade the roads, and install streetlights. He thanked Casey Sorrell and Brenda Bodnar for implementing services to the community. The Anita Matt Building now has a stove, refrigerator, and microwave, and they will celebrate the building and have a cleanup day. Terry hopes the Dixon School students can participate in the cleanup. Terry went to the 2023 National Educational Summit in Billings and CSKT had good representation there. He thanked Donny Wetzell, Jr. for having the vision to bring all these organizations together.

Martin Charlo went to Gonzaga for a language summit, which is changing the idea of how we teach the language and having an immersion-type learning process. Martin honored the Ronan girls wrestling team. They won the state championship this year and Tirza won the state title. The youth will revitalize our culture and bring us back to where we need to be. Martin gave Tirza a gift

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from the council for her outstanding achievements. It is an honor to serve the people and Martin does his best.

Mike Dolson thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and Stephen for the prayer. Selenium in Lake Kooconusa is a big issue and the fish are dying from tech mining. CSKT continues to work to address this problem. The Columbia River Treaty expires in 2024. The treaty controls the Columbia drainage. There is a lawsuit looking at the biological operations at the river. People are afraid to use the fish out of the Columbia River now. Mike has been dealing with Public Law 638 for contracting and compacting federal services. In the 1990s we started compacting and two years ago a law amended PL-638 to get the Tribes involved and access more services and employ more people across our region. Mike is working on the negotiated rulemaking. Mike's phone number is 406-880-5524 if anyone wants to contact him. Mike holds district meetings on the last Friday of the month.

Bing Matt thanked Stephen for the prayer and everyone for being here today. Council has been involved in a lot of matters. This spring they attended the Mansfield Metcalf dinner in Helena and Senator Tester was the guest speaker. They met with the Assistant Attorney General about Public Law 280, which is becoming an issue for the county, state, and Tribes. Hopefully things get better with that, but it is still up in the air and being dealt with in the legislature. Bing and Jimmy went to Arizona for a gaming board meeting. Last week they went to San Diego for the National Indian Gaming Association meeting. Council met with the Missoula County Humane Society regarding their dog ordinance and toured their facility. Council is getting the work done on both pow wow grounds in preparation for the upcoming celebrations. Bing attended the IDT team meeting with Forestry and they discussed broadband from Missoula to Kalispell. They also discussed the north buffer zone and there will be a small logging sale due to blowdown and beetles killing the trees. The Tribes are tracking the hunting bill that is in the legislature right now, which would open fee land on the reservation to hunting and the Tribes are trying to stop that from happening.

Jennifer Finley attended the Reservation Economic Summit in Las Vegas this week and she will provide the information she received to council next week. There are other facilities that could assist us with a nursing home and other needs on the reservation. Jennifer serves on the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission and there was discussion about how the tribes in Montana can promote and support each other. She will be attending the Montana Tourism meeting later this month. Sometimes it seems like things are not being worked on, but the council is working on them. Council is working on the solid waste issue and looking at options to address it. Council met with the Three Chiefs Culture Center staff about their needs and wants for the future and long-range planning. Council met with Lake County regarding animal control issues. The council toured the pow wow grounds. They are talking about using

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the grounds for other uses, such as emergency shelter and the grounds being equipped to handle that. The new Ronan Health Center will be opening soon. The Election Committee added three new nonvoting members (two from the community and one from the Legal Department), and will be hiring a part-time Election Aide so the upcoming election runs flawlessly and we have a fair election. The Tribes have been discussing Public Law 280 and what our departments are capable of doing; we always know what is best for our people. It is an opportunity to determine how best to serve and help rehabilitate our people instead of criminalizing people. As an organization she is proud that we have talked about measurable goals for each department. That will help provide better services to the membership. We had reports from schools on how they serve Indian students and she talked to Miranda about providing training to parents so they know how to advocate for themselves. It is valuable for parents to know their rights and how to advocate for their children. The council asked Tribal Health to do a patient survey to get feedback from the people that use their services. Jennifer and Len provided testimony on HB 2 on programs and funding. Jennifer is grateful for her colleagues and proud to serve with them. She keeps in mind at all times the most vulnerable people who cannot advocate for themselves.

Ellie Bundy announced May 5 is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons. Ellie provided testimony on bills for the MMIP task force, urged congress to fully fund law enforcement programs and services within in the reservation, and establish missing persons database. Ellie served on a roundtable and gave a presentation to the VA, and she will give a presentation at Providence. As of today, there are 172 missing people in Montana and 42 have identified as indigenous (24%). Promoting individual engagement and prevention are two important actions we can take. Partners across the reservation will host a 5K walk/run on May 6 in conjunction with the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons. They are looking for volunteers to help with the event. Ellie will be posting the flyer so people know about it. People can sign up to volunteer at journeytoamentalwellness.org. T-shirts will be sold to raise funds. There will be a separate T-shirt sale to help fund a headstone for Rosie Kenmille. Ellie thanked everyone that helped get this event going.

Jim Malatare thanked Stephen for the prayer, the drum for the song, and the membership for attending this morning. This tribal council works well together to improve services to the membership. The elders luncheon is very important. Jim attended the Public Law 280 meeting in Helena. Jim has been focused on finding a solution regarding the Lake County Landfill issue. People are struggling to get their permit to empty their trash, and they either cannot afford it or do not want to pay for it. Some people cannot haul their trash. Jim attended the Salish Language Conference in Spokane, and it was good to see the work they do with the children and the people that attend. Stephen told a Coyote Story. Jim went

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to Helena with Len; there are some grants the Tribes could probably use. He attended the Gaming Conference in San Diego; they are looking for ways to enhance our gaming. Jim would like to add some of the Class II machines they saw there in our casinos and he is interested in sports betting, but the Tribes would need to have a Class III gaming compact in order to do that. Jim talked about safety concerns regarding the Highway 93 corridor. Vehicles do not follow speed limits and it is a safety issue. The entire Highway 93 corridor is very dangerous, especially with the influx of people moving here. There are no left-turn lanes for people to turn and it is dangerous due to vehicles speeding. Jim would like to meet with the Montana Department of Transportation and do a tour to go over the safety issues. He is trying to find a way to address the fentanyl issue on the reservation. We are losing kids over it, and it bothers him every time he hears about an overdose. Kids need to be educated. Donna Richard is doing some work on it and he will be meeting with her. We need to figure out how to combat drugs. It is a real issue and has affected everyone's family, including his own.

Len TwoTeeth thanked everyone for being here. He was proud to announce this council is working wonderfully together, and the membership needs to know that. The council members get along and are on the same page on what it means to serve the people. The council is looking at how to improve services for the membership. Council acknowledges the accomplishments of the employees; they contribute to the success of our Tribes and it is important they are recognized for that.

Chairman McDonald did a joint address to the House and Senate, which was a difficult challenge due to the divisiveness. He encouraged them to listen to minority and diverse groups and recognize it is something they need to honor and embrace in their decision making in Helena. Tom encouraged everyone to be active voters; voters need to be engaged. CSKT continued working on Elk River Mining, cleaning up the Smurfit Stone site, and how we do land back on a bigger scale off the reservation. CSKT has been engaged with the Nature Conservancy about managing areas in a different way and returning land back to the Tribes at Primm Meadows. The Tribes are involved with trading of Forest Service and BLM off-reservation lands for obtaining ownership of various State owned lands on the reservation. Throughout our government we have many career employees who have helped us get where we are today.

Council recognized the following employees who recently retired: Bernie Azure – 01/05/23, Clayton Matt – 03/20/23, Levi Hewankorn – 03/30/23, and Don Cline – 03/30/23.

Council recognized the following employee who have 35 or more years of tribal government service: Laurence Kenmille – 02/07/1981, Nancy Schall – 05/05/1983, Albert Plant, Sr. – 06/22/1983, Gary Acevedo – 07/17/1983, Mike

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Durglo – 08/17/1983, Billie Felix – 12/04/1983, Albert McLeod – 03/28/1984, Ruth Swaney – 06/05/1984, Renee Camel – 06/18/1984, Bing Matt – 09/05/1984, Steve Ashley – 10/14/1984, Sue Lawson – 11/09/1984, Ed Dumont – 11/26/1984, Charles Morigeau – 03/15/1985, Abby Dupuis – 06/23/1985, Natalie Kenmille – 09/15/1985, Mark Padilla – 12/15/1985, Marie Torosian – 03/17/1986, Randy Ashley – 03/15/1986, Mona Ebensteiner – 03/31/1986, Lorraine Stevens – 04/26/1986, Gwen Clairmont – 05/01/1986, Greg Funke – 05/18/1986, CloAnn Westerman – 08/30/1986, James Westerman – 10/08/1986, Leonard Grenier – 11/10/1986, Micky Fisher – 01/17/1987, Barb Mann – 04/21/1987, Renee Joachim – 05/06/1987, Richard Burland – 06/12/1987, Donna Durglo – 11/09/1987, Donna Mitchell – 11/16/1987, Wanda Salomon – 11/23/1987, Loretta Caye – 12/02/1987, Sheryl Steele – 01/22/1988, and Steve McDonald – 01/26/1988.

The following the following individuals were recognized: **Bernie Azure** has been a long-term reporter for the Tribes. Len TwoTeeth acknowledged Bernie being a veteran and thanked him for his service. **Dennis Courville** was recognized for his years of service. Jessica Courville gave some background information on Dennis. **Dave Rockwell** was acknowledged for all the work he has done for the Tribes for the past 46 years. Stephanie Gillin acknowledged him for the work he did for the Bison Range. Dave wrote a book, created interactive DVDs, and digitized them. The Ronan High School Girls Wrestling Team was recognized for winning the state title for Class A & B. Coach Cameron Neiss thanked the community for supporting the team. Tarazi was the first tribal member girl to win a state wrestling title.

The **Buck Shot Drum Group** sang an honor song.

***** **Break** *****

Patricia Hibbeler, Director of Tribal Member Services, gave an update on the ARPA emergency home repairs. 300 applications have been received to date. A home inspector will be hired. The goal is to address houses with the greatest need first as they begin contracting for those projects. DHRD is running the program and is overseen by Tracie Couture and Patricia Courchane. People need to submit their application as soon as possible if they are in need of home repairs. Emergency home repairs and elders are the priority. The majority of the funds will be spent in 2023. **Carole Lankford** mentioned there were people on the list that had roof and mold issues and had been in the process for quite a while. She asked where they were in the process. The person had a contractor and she hopes the work will be done soon. Patti responded it is based on the urgency of the need. If people already have an application submitted it will be assessed and moved through the process.

Patricia Hibbeler, Director of Tribal Member Services, gave an update on the Ronan Health Clinic, which will be open soon. Phase one is set for a grand opening on May 4, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tours of the clinic will be offered. Tribal Health is moving in the furniture and equipment. It takes time to get the systems up and running. They will offer soft services with a limited number of patients while they test the system. It will be open for full service by mid-May. Phase one is being geared to women and children services. Specialty clinics will be brought in. Phase two will bring in new market tax credits and allow for an expansion to add physical therapy and fitness. New construction will begin in May and it should be completed in January. There will also be a drive-through pharmacy.

Patricia Hibbeler, Director of Tribal Member Services; and **Marie Torosian**, Three Chiefs Culture Center; gave an update on the Three Chiefs Culture Center, which will be moving to the former Pablo Bank building. The renovations will begin soon. Exhibits will be displayed upstairs and the curation facility will be downstairs. The vault will be renovated for storing artifacts. The upstairs vault will store the paintings, photo collections, and historic papers. Education classes will be held downstairs. There will be office space upstairs and downstairs. **Len TwoTeeth** suggested having some reflectors to show where the road and Three Chiefs are located. Marie will contact the Highway Department.

The floor was opened for comments from the audience.

Teresa Wall-McDonald and **Leroy Black** discussed the tribal priority resolutions for mental health, job retention, and addiction treatments. It is important for the membership to have access to treatment. Teresa and Leroy did some research. In October there was a total of 1,173 employees and only 266 of those signed up for healthcare, which is 20% of the employee base signing up for healthcare benefits. What is holding people back from signing up for that benefit is the cost of health insurance. Teresa advocated in the next budget cycle that the Tribes consider paying a larger share of the employee health insurance. It is important for job retention. If the Tribes paid a larger share of the health insurance cost, it would increase the number of health choices, increase revenues for the Tribal Health Department, and increase the third party revenues. Insurance programs offer webinars on mental health, wellness, and nutrition. **Len TwoTeeth** commented there are millions of dollars in the third party account and just having the money sit there does not benefit anyone. **Jennifer Finley** suggested having Joe Durglo provide some bullet points on the benefits of having health insurance and visit with Tribal Health about policy changes to make things easier for tribal members. **Patricia Hibbeler** commented that the department is following policies. There is a policy review and hopefully things will change in the future. Those policies were developed many years ago. The Tribal Health Committee should attack this issue. **Council** will continue discussions on this matter.

MOTION by Len TwoTeeth to adjourn the meeting.

Council **adjourned** at 1:13 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

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/sgnd/

Martin A. Charlo
Tribal Council Secretary