

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

Volume 24 Number 29  
Council Chambers, Pablo, MT

Held: February 13, 2024  
Approved: February 15, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mike Dolson, Chairman; Tom McDonald, Vice-Chairman; Martin Charlo, Secretary; James Steele, Jr., Treasurer; Jim Malatare; Danielle Matt; and James “Bing” Matt.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jennifer Finley (National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Winter Conference – Washington, DC); Carole Lankford (AMERIND Meeting – Albuquerque, New Mexico); and Len TwoTeeth (Indian Health Service Budget Formulation Hearing – Washington, DC).

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jennifer Trahan, Tribal Council Support; and Abby Dupuis, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to **order** at 9:11 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was opened with a **prayer** by Martin Charlo.

The **Tribal Council Meeting Minutes** for February 8, 2024 were presented for approval.

**MOTION** by Jim Malatare to approve the Tribal Council Meeting Minutes for February 8, 2024, with corrections. Seconded by Tom McDonald. Carried, 6 for; 1 abstention (Mike Dolson).

The **agenda** was presented for approval.

**MOTION** by Tom McDonald to approve the agenda, with changes. Seconded by Danielle Matt. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

**Kaden Forman Webster**, Salish Kootenai College Student, introduced himself to council. He is observing the council meeting today as a requirement of his college class.

**Ruth Swaney**, Financial Management, informed council that William Brad Eneas visited with her regarding the Salazar settlement and the dollars that were appropriated for the water rights settlement. Mr. Eneas was concerned about the

Tribal Council Meeting Minutes  
February 13, 2024

council's action and authority to expend the money, and his belief is that some portion of the water rights settlement needed to be clarified. Ruth covered the basic information and Brad wanted her to present the issue to the council. Ruth did a summary for those settlement funds and provided that information to the council. The dedicated trust fund requires 8 or more council votes to act on those funds. **James Steele, Jr.** commented that the funding is the Tribes' portion of the Cobell case. When Salazar got settled, the tribes immediately paid it out, so our people saw those tribes pay out the funds. CSKT eventually paid out the funds. James recommended being more proactive in communicating with the membership. **Chairman Dolson** explained the settlement was to make the Tribes whole for the mismanagement of resources; it was not intended to make individuals whole. The Cobell settlement was to make individuals whole. Mike will follow up with Ruth about publishing information in the newspaper.

**Tom McDonald** would like the council to meet with Tribal Credit about the loan rates, especially for Tribal elders and low-income individuals. Tribal Credit will be scheduled on the agenda.

**Tom McDonald** discussed grant funding for two positions and requested council concurrence. CSKT is working with a large group of nonprofits that protect open space (fish, wildlife, scenic values, farm, ranching), and one of the outcomes of the workshop was to seek funding for a tribal staff person to work with nonprofit land trusts and nonprofit organizations and get language in easements to allow tribal member access into those properties. Two funding sources were identified and the Heart of the Rockies in Missoula wants to apply for that on our behalf. One position would be funded by them and housed with the CSKT. **Council** had no objection.

**Danielle Matt** discussed the opioid response for syringe exchange and Narcan access. It has not been completed and she wants to push accessibility the way the program was designed. The dispensers are located in a back office, even though it was approved in August. **James Steele, Jr.** responded that the issue was where to locate the dispensers. He recommended following up with Kathy Ross at Tribal Health.

**Martin Charlo** gave a report on the Western Montana Conservation Commission meeting he attended last week in Polson. Martin provided the welcoming remarks and land acknowledgement. The organization is a combination of two commissions. They are still drafting their bylaws. The Tribes need to look at the wastewater and septic systems. Lake County does not account for those, and it is unknown how many there are and their locations. There are many aging systems. Several counties have done a few treatment facilities. The Tribes should catalogue the septic systems.

**Miranda Burland**, Tribal Education Department; and **Mike Cutler**, Polson School District; presented the 2023-2024 Tribal Education Report. Highlights included the demographics and Smarter Balanced tests. Some of the scores are alarming. The state standardized tests are not designed for the schools in Montana. The attendance rate is a direct reflection of the test scores. Test scores could improve if attendance rates increased. Some students miss up to 50 days of school. Attendance is a shared responsibility between the school and the parents. The teachers attend professional development trainings. **Tom McDonald** mentioned staffing. 9% of the staff reports as Native American and the total population count is 37% Native American. He asked if the school has a goal to hire more Native American faculty members. Mr. Cutler would like to hire more Native American faculty but there are no applicants. The school attends the Indian Education Committee meetings as much as possible, and participates in the River Honoring. The staff will find out if the school is participating in the Lake Honoring. The school has some educators that will participate in the Tribal Civics curriculum. The Character Strong program and the Project AWARE are going well. The Polson schools are undergoing some construction projects. The school calendar was changed and the school will have a late start due to the construction.

**MOTION** by Martin Charlo to accept the 2023-2024 Tribal Education Report for the Polson School District. Seconded by Tom McDonald. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

**Velda Shelby** and **Janet Camel**, Economic Development Office, requested approval of a letter to the Ronan City Council to remove the agricultural exemption on the tribal property located on Mink Lane for AIG Meat Processing Plant development. In 2023, the CSKT approved and designated the site for a meat processing plant and compost site. EDO is in the process of completing an environmental review and processing documents to comply with AIG funding source approval. CSKT needs to change the land use category and conduct a survey. CSKT will receive the grant if they meet several conditions by March 1, 2024. There was discussion about DEWR using their betterment funding for the small canal pipeline project at the meat processing plant site.

**MOTION** by Tom McDonald to direct DEWR to use their betterment funding to put as a priority the small canal pipeline project at the meat processing plant site. Seconded by Martin Charlo. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

**MOTION** by Tom McDonald to approve the letter to the Ronan City Council to remove the agricultural exemption on the tribal property located on Mink Lane for AIG Meat Processing Plant development and survey. Seconded by Martin Charlo. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

\*\*\*\*\* **Break** \*\*\*\*\*

**Whisper Camel-Means**, Natural Resources Department, requested approval of the 2024 Bison Range fee schedule. 2,664 permits were sold in 2023. Last year the program increased the fee to \$20 for the day pass and \$60 for the annual pass. Whisper recommended the rates for the day pass and annual pass to remain the same this year. There was discussion about having different fees for commercial vehicles and educational vehicles. The proposed change would be: \$60.00 for a commercial guided tour vehicle, \$35.00 for a passenger van or bus, \$40.00 for educational bus with 16+ seats, and \$35.00 for educational vehicle with 15 seats or less. An educational annual pass price would be a one-time fee that covers all vehicles owned or operated by the organization for the year purchased. CSKT members are not required to pay to enter the Bison Range, and members of other tribes are considered nontribal members and are required to pay full price. **Tom McDonald** thought there was a demand/need for antlers for tribal member artists, and he suggested the staff reach out to vendors regarding raw materials.

**MOTION** by Tom McDonald to approve the 2024 Bison Range fee schedule. Seconded by Danielle Matt. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

**Whisper Camel-Means**, Natural Resource Department, informed council of the film *Singing Back Buffalo*. Council was invited to the premiere at the Big Sky Film Festival on February 24, at 12:30 p.m., and lunch with the filmmaker. Whisper will present a trailer of the film at a later date.

**Lynn Ducharme** and **Rusty Sydnor**, Natural Resources Department, requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss a departmental matter.

**Dan Decker, Lynsey Gaudioso, John Harrison, Melissa Schlichting, Shane Morigeau, Christina Courville, Zach Zipfel, and Chelsea Colwyn**, Legal Department, requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss legal matters.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

\*\*\*\*\* **Lunch** \*\*\*\*\*

**Dan Decker, Melissa Schlichting** and **Yolanda Page**, Legal Department, requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss legal matters. **Rick Eneas**, Tribal Executive Officer, was present for discussion.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

Tribal Council Meeting Minutes  
February 13, 2024

Council **adjourned** at 2:15 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

**CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES**

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Martin A. Charlo  
Tribal Council Secretary