

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

Volume 24 Number 20  
Council Chambers, Pablo, MT

Held: January 5, 2024  
Approved: January 11, 2024

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jennifer Trahan, Tribal Council Support; Dan James, Sergeant at Arms; and Abby Dupuis, Recording Secretary.

**Brad Pluff**, Tribal Court, conducted the swearing in of the newly elected Tribal Council members Martin Charlo, Mike Dolson, Danielle Matt, James “Bing” Matt, and James Steele, Jr.

The meeting was called to **order** at 9:35 a.m. Quorum established.

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

The **Dancing Boy Drum Group** sang a flag song.

**Tom McDonald** informed the membership that the Tribal Council wants to remain as a solid team and they spent much time deliberating on the officer positions.

The floor was opened for nominations for the officer positions.

**MOTION** by Carole Lankford to appoint by acclamation Mike Dolson as the Chairman, Tom McDonald as the Vice-Chairman, Martin Charlo as the Secretary, and James Steele, Jr. as the Treasurer. Seconded by Len TwoTeeth. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

**Tom McDonald** thanked the people for the past two years for allowing him to serve as Tribal Chairman. It was a great honor and he looks forward to serving as the vice-chairman this next term. The officer positions are subject to change during the terms of office. Tom reminded the membership that breakfast is being served this morning.

**Tom McDonald** thanked the workforce for providing services to the membership. **Council** recognized the following individuals who have recently retired: Catherine Bodnar, Tribal Health Department; Edward Dumont, Law & Order; and James “Lloyd” Jackson, Tribal Health Department.

**Council** recognized the following individuals for 25 or more years of service: Rochelle Allison, Tribal Health Department; Lisa Koetter, Two Eagle River School; Mary Charlo-Crumley, Probation; Michel Kenmille, Two Eagle River School; Henrietta Conko, Department of Human Resources Development; Victor Stevens, Division of Fire; Lissa Peel, Natural Resources Department; Laura Stevens, Tribal Health Department; Gwenetta Hewankorn, Department of Human Resources Development; Margaret Goode, Probation; Pat Nomee-Songers, Tribal Education Department; Shannon Wagner, Tribal Forestry Department; Tara Matt, Tribal Gaming Commission; Mona Haynes, Tribal Court; Joe Vanderburg, Tribal Forestry Department; Tammy Matt, Tribal Health Department; James Clairmont, Fire Control; Mary Alexandar, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority; June Kuntz, Tribal Health Department; Alexandar Felix, Department of Human Resources Development; Darnell Auld, Department of Human Resources Development; Jennifer Trahan, Tribal Council Support; Diane Matt, Department of Human Resources Development; Benjamin Asencio, Law & Order; Gene Lozeau, Tribal Health Department; Lynn Ducharme, Natural Resources Department; Carla Matt, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority; Christine McDonald, Natural Resources Department; Dorothy Birney, Kootenai Culture Committee; Cynthia Bras-Benson, Natural Resources Department; Craig Pablo, Natural Resources Department; Wendy Askan, Two Eagle River School; Joe Santos, Natural Resources Department; Joseph Santos, Natural Resources Department; Jeffrey Clairmont, Natural Resources Department; Miranda Burland, Tribal Education Department; Honora Dusty Bull, Contracts & Grants; Shirley Trahan, SQCC; Charles Morigeau, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority; Matthew Linsebigler, Department of Human Resources Development; Rhea Gates, Department of Human Resources Development; and Allan Bunce, Tribal Forestry Department.

The **Dancing Boy Drum Group** sang an honor song.

**Tom McDonald** announced the Tribal Health Department is offering shots for the flu, shingles, and COVID-19.

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

**Tom McDonald** turned the meeting over to Chairman Dolson.

**Chairman Dolson** thanked the membership for voting him back into office and the council members for selecting him as the Tribal Chairman; he appreciates the support he has received.

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The floor was opened for comments from the Tribal Elders.

**Jo Morigeau** informed council that she has signed up for LIHEAP twice and has been denied due to being over income. Jo asked if the income guidelines could reflect the Social Security increases. **Chairman Dolson** did not know what the LIHEAP guidelines are, but the council can look into it. **Carole Lankford** thought the council used to set those guidelines, and now the council does not even see those. There may be an opportunity for the council to set those guidelines. When Energy Keepers, Inc. took back the low-cost block there was supposed to be money coming to the Tribes to pay for the power costs for elders and those in need. She would like to know where that is. It is a tough time for everyone and she would like that looked into. **Teresa Wall-McDonald** commented in the past that the Tribes received both state and federal LIHEAP funding and the poverty schedule used in the application was decided as an internal decision. Teresa assumed when CSKT did the application, the council approved it. Mission Valley Power had recommended that the poverty scale be expanded to include more individuals, due to the rate increase that took effect on January 1. She assumed Patti and Patricia are in charge of setting those guidelines. **James Steele, Jr.** would like to figure out a way that prevents individuals from being penalized when they make a little more money. The council needs to look into that and make those changes. James wants to discuss it further next Monday. **Len TwoTeeth** stated the discussion previously was this is revenue that is derived from the low-cost block and these funds should be applied to the membership across the board to everybody instead of setting guidelines, because those funds belong to the membership. Len does not want to pick and choose who will benefit from this. **Chairman Dolson** advised we need to look at the federal guidelines and the council will look into this matter. **Tom McDonald** stated we needed to quantify what that rate increase was for every household and residential meter payer to refund them or get that increase back to them. That is the exercise the financial team was looking at and it was not income based. Greg Spahr will be providing a report on that to the council.

**Stephen Smallsalmon** sang a song and told a story about going to the Quequesah's at midnight on New Year's to shoot. There have been a lot of changes and he would like things from back then to be brought back, such as the rifles instead of having fireworks. Stephen would like to have the Jump Dances and Medicine Dances continue. He thanked the council for the Elders payment he received. When Stephen needs money he is told the check will be issued on Monday. The council needs to help the membership today instead of waiting until tomorrow. It is a new year and people should be happy. Stephen would like the council to help the elders; that makes those elders happy. He wanted to know when we would be getting some new buildings, such as the Long House, Three Chiefs, and his sweat house, and he would like it done now. Stephen wanted to know when he would be getting his new sweat house. Stephen thinks the elders should be respected.

The floor was opened for comments from the council members.

**Tom McDonald** thanked everyone for supporting the council and the staff and for supporting him when he served as chairman. He looks forward to assisting the council do their duties. Tom tries to be respectful to everyone when they voice concerns. Tom reported there are so many things the council is involved with to increase services and manage resources. Speaking up for the fish and wildlife resources was his career before serving on the Tribal Council. Tom felt a tragedy was occurring in the Kootenai River and he spent a lot of time fighting the Kootenai Dam Falls proposal. We saw water quality degradation in the Elk River showing up in the fish; they were missing gill plates and lower jaw, and there were reproduction issues in all of the fisheries in that river and into Montana and Idaho. CSKT raised concerns in 2012. With the concurrence of this council, resource specialists, Kootenai Band of Idaho, British of Columbia, and nonprofit organizations that could lead an initiative to make the Canadian mine company remove and reduce selenium in that waterbody. We received the attention of Trudeau and Biden and got some commitments from the Canadian government and British of Columbia to reduce the selenium pollution from the river. We did not know how it was affecting our people eating those fish from that river. Tom is proud of our staff and the council members that worked on that issue. The CSKT and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho worked hard on this issue. Persistence prevailed and we are looking at stringent guidelines coming forward between us and Canada. The commission looks at pollution issues from one country to another. That commission provides the information and recommendations for solutions, and we will proceed in that direction. We have a treaty with Canada to prevent warfare. We can utilize that tool in the future to come to solutions to reduce that pollution and eventually prevent it from that waterbody. It speaks to all those beings that we are concerned about, such as fish and wildlife, who are part of our family. He does not want any impacts to our treaty rights and aboriginal territories. It is an international win for us in this particular scenario. Tom looks forward to implementing the solutions to prevent pollution in those waterbodies.

**Jim Malatare** wished everyone a happy new year. He went to a gaming meeting in Las Vegas with Bing Matt, and Jim and Len TwoTeeth went to the Tribal Leaders Council meeting to push for Medicare and healthcare issues for Indian people throughout Montana. Jim has been working with tribal members on issues they have, such a fire that an elder suffered. He wants to see if we can get tribal members the help they need with the programs we have. Jimmy enjoys working with the membership and getting some relief for the issues they face.

**James Steele, Jr.** thanked the membership for their confidence in him to serve the St. Ignatius District. James was elected from the Arlee District the first time he served on council. When he was the Tribal Chairman, the one time the council

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received a standing ovation at the quarterly meeting was when we were fighting Governor Schweitzer. We did not do what he wanted his way so he was not our friend anymore. James encouraged the council members to say so when it is appropriate. When we have a republican party passing laws that are interfering with women and their doctor, that is not right. The State wants to put their noses between our women and their doctor, and that is none of their business. When we see the State and the United States passing laws that interfere with a person's personal life and who they embrace as a partner, that is none of their business. We are a blessed people with three tribes and we have a blessed land, and we get fought with over that every day. We have to explain who we are on our own land. We did not choose that; it was forced upon us by the federal government. We have to educate the people around us. Each one of us has the responsibility to protect these mountains, water, and everything we have here. It is important for every tribal member to vote. We have had women and men give up their lives to give us the right to vote. James is proud of his colleagues. He wished everyone a happy and blessed year.

**Jennifer Finley** is grateful to be here and serve the membership. This past quarter she met with tribal members to hear their concerns. That is the meat of her work; she is here to serve the membership to make our community better in any way she can. Jennifer uses her skillset as a poet, mother, and grandmother to serve the membership. It is humbling to be able to do such important work every day. She attended the National Congress of American Indians Annual Convention and serves as vice-chairman for the region, serves on the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission and works on projects to benefit Indians, and she was appointed to the Polson Police Commission. Jennifer has a heart for service. She is who she says she is personally and professionally, and she lives where she says she lives. Jennifer does this job to be of service to her community. She attended a lecture at George Washington University on tourism. CSKT is doing innovative things and she is proud to present the work our staff has done. Everyone here that works for the Tribes help tribal members and that makes us stronger. Jennifer looks forward to the year ahead and all the opportunities she has to make a positive difference for our people.

**Bing Matt** wished everyone a happy new year and he was happy to see everyone here today. He appreciated the membership voting him back in office. Bing wants to continue helping the people and address their concerns. He attended the Inter-Tribal Timber Council meeting last quarter and stays involved with S&K Gaming. Tom McDonald continues to be involved with fish and bison issues. The Tribes work with the Park Service and the livestock people regarding bison. More tribes are going to get involved in the bison issue. It was good to have Tom serve as Chairman because he is very knowledgeable in the issues. Mike is also knowledgeable and will do a good job in that position.

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**Len TwoTeeth** thanked the cooks for preparing breakfast this morning. He acknowledged the service provided by Ellie Bundy and Terry Pitts and he thanked them for their service. There are a lot of issues we will be tackling and one important one is Medicaid Expansion, which expires in 2025. The council met with the governor and made sure he supports Medicaid Expansion. It is unknown how things will turn out in this political atmosphere and it is important we are involved in the next legislative session. Another important issue is Public Law 280. There are a lot of unknowns. The council will be meeting with our staff and making sure that we all have a clear understanding where we are going with it. Len advocates for us to police our own people and make sure there is adequate treatment available for them instead of jail. We need to look at healing our people. We have lost a lot of people due to drugs. We hear how families are impacted by overdoses every week. We need to do more. Another exciting project he looks forward to is getting a store in Elmo. It will have a profound impact to our people in Elmo. Len is happy the council has supported his efforts in achieving that goal. He congratulated the officers and thinks it will be a fun and interesting year. He learns something new every day. Len wished everyone a happy new year. Len does not want to forget those who are alone during the holiday season and he asked everyone to keep those people in their prayers.

**Martin Charlo** commented that this is the time of year to be quiet and we do our lodges and pray for our year. Martin was sad because his parents were unable to be here today. We need to look out for the people that have no voice, the homeless population, and our people in jail. The homeless problem is everywhere. We have a warming center and a tiny house project, which will help. Addiction, mental health, and homelessness are usually tied together. Incarceration does not fix the mental health and addiction issues. He is appreciative of the people that support him and voted for him. Voting is very important and we need to exercise our strength at the ballot box. We need to be involved in local, city, county, and state elections. We are not used to people in the elections looking or thinking like us, and we need to elect Natives to local elected positions. Our enrollment has declined the last 4 years. This is an issue that has been brought up and discussed. If we do not do something soon, our membership will continue to decline and eventually we will not have a membership, so we need to look at options for our future. He appreciates our language teachers and culture programs. Martin does his best to continue his father's songs and what his family does. It is important to bring a cultural voice to the council; all our decisions should be based on generations to come. We stand on the shoulders of giants. Our leaders on these walls. We have the opportunity to do great things, but we let personal issues and vendettas get in the way of that. There is so much negativity out there and we need to put it aside to accomplish great things for our people. He hopes our three distinct tribes work together to be stronger.

**Danielle Matt** thanked everyone for this opportunity and her community for their support. Daneille looks forward to learning this new role and she hopes she can serve the membership well.

**Carole Lankford** commented that this is not a job; it is a responsibility and she thinks serving on the Tribal Council is an awesome responsibility. She is humbled and honored to serve the people. Shelly Fyant is running for House District 91 in the legislature. Carole thanked Shelly for running for office and encouraged everyone to vote for her. Carole has been working on the tiny homes project. There are tiny homes applications available at the Department of Human Resources Development office. Carole is working on the skatepark project. Leroy Black obtained 1,000 signatures on a petition and Whitney Williams and Jeff Ament do skateparks in various states. The communities raise money and Whitney and Jeff raise the remaining funds. The plan is to have skateparks in Ronan, Arlee, Pablo, and Hot Springs. There is money for all the communities to have a skatepark, except some of the funds for Dixon were spent on other projects. Carole is saddened for the people that have lost loved ones.

**Len TwoTeeth** acknowledged Joe McDonald. Joe used to attend every quarterly council meeting. His death was a huge loss to our community and had a profound impact on education. Joe was a huge part of our Tribes. There was a moment of silence to honor the memory and accomplishments of Joe. **Chairman Dolson** worked with Joe for 20 years and enjoyed every minute of it. **Tom McDonald** thanked everyone for their condolences, thoughts, and memories. Joe was Tom's boss for at least 66 years and it was a privilege to be his son. Joe was a role model and leader for Tom's family and the community.

**Tom McDonald** appreciated Terry Pitts stepping up and filling the vacancy for the Dixon District. Ellie Bundy did a great job working on the MMIP issue. He thanked them for their work. The Tribes have various boards that are an extension of the council. When we talk about improving services and meeting the needs of our people, those boards are critical to accomplish that for our future. Tom thanked the folks who have served on those boards and he thanked Teresa for stepping up when needed.

**Chairman Dolson** is happy to represent the council and the people. He promises to do the work. Mike wants to focus on jobs for everyone, education, and our children. The children are our future. Mike wished everyone a happy new year.

**John Harrison**, Legal Department, gave an update on a proposed Montana state ballot initiative, I-193. This initiative is a citizen's initiative from an individual residing on the reservation. It prohibits the State Fish & Wildlife Commission from enacting hunting regulations to impose a prohibition on a landowner's right to hunt on their property, even within an area otherwise closed to state licensed hunting. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission has closed Montana Indian

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reservations to state licensed hunting, so this initiative would allow hunting by state licensed hunters on private property located within a reservation. Landowners hunting on their own property within a closed area such as an Indian reservation would be required to be licensed by the state and would still be subject to state regulated bag limits and means of take. The language was submitted to the Attorney General's Office and went through a facial legal review. During that process, the CSKT submitted comments to the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General passed it as sufficient for ballot initiative requirements but noted the Tribes' opposition. It went to the Montana Secretary of State, who reviewed it and sent it to an Interim Committee of the Montana Legislature. The Interim Committee with jurisdiction over this subject was the Environmental Quality Council (EQC). There was a hearing by the EQC on December 6, 2023, and the Tribes strongly opposed the ECQ supporting the proposed initiative. There were two proponents of I-193 at the hearing and there was a large number of people in opposition. The EQC vote on whether to support I-193 resulted in an 8-8 tie, thus the initiative was not supported by the EQC and that vote will be noted on ballot signature gathering pages. The initiative is in the signature-gathering process now and needs 5 percent of the number of registered voters from the 2020 gubernatorial election to qualify for the 2024 ballot. The 5 percent must come from at least 34 Montana State House Districts. The Tribes oppose I-193 and will continue to monitor it. If this initiative passes, it will mean the Fish & Wildlife Commission could not close reservation lands to hunting big game on private property located within a reservation, and it will most likely result in immediate litigation if the Tribes want to challenge it. The Tribal-State Bird Hunting and Fishing Agreement that has been in effect since 1990 would be jeopardized. Some nontribal members do not support the initiative because they want to continue bird hunting and fishing on the reservation. **Tom McDonald** commented that this would jeopardize our fish and wildlife resources management and the State could lose millions of dollars. CSKT relies on Montana to help co-manage our resources off the reservation. This initiative would apply state-wide in all closed areas, and does not just affect Montana Indian reservations. It is the start of privatization of Montana wildlife. It is important for the public to be educated on this issue.

**Marie Torosian, Looshie Charlo, Geri Hewankorn, and Nadia Adams**, Three Chiefs Culture Center, gave an update on Three Chiefs. Three Chiefs holds classes in the arts and teaches the language, beadwork, sewing, and native games. They have a curation facility and a museum to exhibit artifacts of our people. On September 6, 2020, The People's Center was broken into by an arsonist and was burned, and the majority of the collection was destroyed. The fire was started in the repository and many items were lost. Nancy Fonicello is a conservator that was recommended by the Smithsonian, and she is working to restore the items that survived the fire. After the fire occurred, the offices and museum were temporarily relocated to St. Ignatius. They quickly outgrew that facility and then moved to the bank building in Pablo. The building is still



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undergoing renovations to meet their needs and the building does not have any emergency exits and only has a chairlift. The staff is concerned why nobody is listening to them. The staff is knowledgeable and knows their stuff, and they do not understand why they are not the authority and need outside direction. The program has applied for and received grants to supplement its budget. More signage is needed. The staff provided a list of their concerns and suggestions to their Director. Three Chiefs supports local artists. **Stephen Smallsalmon** stated he supports Three Chiefs. Stephen does a lot of beading, and it was easier for him to shop in St. Ignatius. He would prefer Three Chiefs be located in Arlee or St. Ignatius. There is no road to access Three Chiefs and he suggested the Tribes build their own road. Stephen has heard the Tribes are going to build some new buildings and he wanted to know when that would be happening. Stephen would like the Tribes to get the white buffalo back. **Jennifer Finley** would like to support what the staff wants to do. She understands a consultant was brought in, but the staff should be the leaders instead of a nonmember. It is disrespectful to ignore the staff's concerns and suggestions. The Three Chiefs staff is doing a good job. **Tom McDonald** would like more information on the Three Chiefs' sales in the Char-Koosta News. The council took action two years ago to move the Bison Range Visitors Center on the top of Ravalli Hill, and that included the suggestion that Three Chiefs be located there. It would give the business more exposure and would be centrally located. It is important for people to have access to supplies. **James Steele, Jr.** asked if there was a policy regarding artifact donations to the Tribes. He knows of an individual that wants to donate an artifact. James suggested having an artifacts ordinance if one does not already exist. Marie did not know if the Tribes had a policy or not, but Three Chiefs has a process and presented a collections policy for council approval and it is currently undergoing legal review.

**Marie Torosian** asked everyone to say a prayer for her mother, whose 86th birthday is tomorrow.

The floor was opened for comments from the membership.

**Ruth Swaney** appreciated Martin Charlo's comment about the time of year we are in. There are many things going on in the days to come. We are to be quiet and careful and take great care of our children. There is vulnerability and risk, and we need to be mindful of that. When Ruth is critical it is not because she has a personal beef with anyone. She asked the leaders to think of things that way. Ruth has watched the constitution in action and up close. We must follow it until it gets changed. Article III of the Constitution states the representation of the Tribal Council districts. It says Jocko Valley, not Arlee, and that needs to be changed. It states Mission, not St. Ignatius, and we should not say St. Ignatius. It states two councilmen each from the Jocko Valley and Mission and one representative from Ronan, Pablo, Elmo - Dayton, Hot Springs - Camas Prairie, and Dixon. If we do not do community-based representation, then it needs to be

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changed and voted on by the membership. The Tribes cannot pass a law that conflicts with the constitution. Ruth talked about enrollment. Changing enrollment would not get her or her children enrolled because they are already enrolled. The Constitution and Bylaws can be amended provided that 30% of those entitled to vote do vote in favor of it or by petition. Bing Matt had commented that the Tribal Council is here to do what the membership wants, but that is not accurate; they need to do things for the benefit of the Tribes and our future. Ruth wanted to know how many tribal members are too many and how many are not enough. CSKT should do a demographic study. That information is important for the council to know. Ruth looks forward to seeing what Danielle Matt does on the council. Teresa Wall-McDonald has a heart for this Tribe and the people. Ruth had to wait over three hours to speak today, and the quarterly council meetings are for the membership. Council needs to relieve themselves of dealing with program issues and let the high-paid staff deal with them. The concerns brought up by Three Chiefs has a high-paid person in charge of the program that needs to be held accountable and handle these types of issues.

**Sam Barnaby** has prayed for several months for the comments made by Ruth Swaney about the constitution. A lot of people make fun of Sonny Lozeau when he talks about the constitution, but what he says makes sense. Sam hopes the at-large council seats get fixed. He wants to run for council in two years, but he does not want to run against Carole Lankford in the Ronan District. We need to remember where we come from. Sam wants to be a part of this Tribe and he continues to apply for jobs but does not get hired because he is over-qualified. We need to be here for each other and not be just for ourselves. His auntie has had sewage issues at her house for years, and the council member that lives near her does not even speak to her or say hi. When Sam applies for jobs, the tribal programs only want to pay him bottom dollar and all he gets is lip service. Harriet McDougall has been in need of a new home and he wanted to know if the council has done anything to help her. The council is a representative of the people and they need to represent the membership and not just their families. Sam has the same issue with LIHEAP that Jo has. The program used to help him regardless of his income and now he does not receive any assistance. The council needs to help the membership instead of just helping themselves and they need to do what they said they would do when they ran for office. Sam wants the remaining payout from the Salazar funds. That was the membership's money and it was not meant for the council to do whatever they wanted to with it. Sam talked about the five nontribal members who became tribal members and are now the executive board who make the big bucks and took all the power. We will be non-existent if things do not change in the future. Native Americans all have the same dark skin. This was our land and we are the indigenous people, and yet we let them run the show because we do not want to step up. People working for the membership need to do their due diligence across the board. Sam thanked his parents for the blood quantum so he could be enrolled in CSKT. Sam came

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back from Helena four years ago and has been involved in the culture since he moved back. Sam played a recording of him singing a song. He wants the Tribal Council and boards to be accountable. Sam asked Mike to find a place in his heart for the Pend d'Oreille and Camas Prairie people and not just Hot Springs, and he asked the council to do what is right ethically. Sam extended his condolences to Tom McDonald for the loss of his father Joe.

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

**Shelly Fyant** stated Everett and Denise Fyant are her parents, and she grew up in Arlee. She wished the council representatives good luck in this difficult job. There are important issues facing the Tribes, such as Public Law 280, the environment, water, fish, animals, plants, and the membership. The council members need to develop a thick skin. Shelly announced her candidacy for House District 91 as a democrat, which covers Lake, Sanders and Missoula Counties. There is a new map due to redistricting. Joe Reed used to hold this position. During the last legislative session there were proposals to abolish reservations and allow hunting on fee lands within the reservation. Many of the legislators know nothing about treaty law and we need equal representation. There are voter registration cards available in the lobby. The election will take place in November 2024 and people will be voting for the president, senator, a new federal congressional position, and the House District seats. Shelly is running unopposed right now but there is still time for people to run for office. People can support Shelly by hosting a meet and greet for her. The Snyder Act was approved 100 years ago which allowed tribal members to vote.

**Gwen Nicholson** announced her candidacy for Senate District 46. Daniel Tenenbaum will not be running for office again. Chad and Barabra Nicholson are her parents. Gwen has deep connections with the reservation and Missoula and she spent a lot of time in Valley Creek. She has worked as a freelance journalist, a policy worker, and a lobbyist. Gwen wants to bring good things back to the people and the land. She wants to defend the Medicaid Expansion and expanding healthcare access, improve housing, childcare, and supporting programs that support tribal communities and tribal sovereignty. Montana needs to honor the duties it has to the sovereign nations within its borders and build up these communities.

**Teresa Wall-McDonald** spoke out of concern and love of the organization and the people we serve. Teresa was concerned that in 2018 the council helped craft and enact resolutions to focus the organization in common goals. The purpose of those resolutions was to focus on the health and wellness to the organization, such as mental health, addictions treatment, job opportunities, and homelessness. The executive team was supposed to report on those resolutions on a systemic basis and provide the status of those initiatives. A baseline needs to be established and there should be a report on the progress made each year.

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Accountability was mentioned today. Council needs to set the stage for accountability and establish a baseline. Each quarter the council should receive an update on the resolutions and the baseline. There is a tremendous investment in the executive team. She only saw one executive team member at today's meeting. The team should set the performance and baselines. In 2018, the Tribes completed 58 fee-to-trust transactions and that is because they had a baseline and goal. Teresa encouraged the Tribal Council to determine how they manage the resources, funding, and the executive team. There needs to be a baseline and then people need to be held accountable. Transparency is important.

The floor was opened for closing comments from the council members.

**Carole Lankford** wished everyone a happy new year.

**Danielle Matt** commented today has been a learning experience and she appreciates the opportunity to be here.

**Martin Charlo** wished everyone well.

**Len TwoTeeth** thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and he encouraged the membership to keep the council accountable.

**Bing Matt** enjoyed hearing from the membership and he appreciated their input.

**Jennifer Finley** thanked the membership for being here today, those who spoke up today, and those who ran for council. She also thanked Terry Pitts and Ellie Bundy for their service. Jennifer knows enrollment will continue to be discussed. Jennifer is a tribal member and her children are tribal members, and that affects how she does her work. Teresa's thoughts on accountability is very important and it starts at the top, and the hard conversations need to be had. She hopes more people become engaged in tribal politics. There was a very low voter turnout so she hopes more people will vote in the future.

**James Steele, Jr.** thanked Ruth Swaney and Teresa Wall-McDonald for their comments. 20 years ago when he was on the council they had not received one budget report and departments did not know what their budgets were for an entire year. At the end of that fiscal year a whole bunch of resolutions came in to adjust the budget. James was uncomfortable with that because they had not received any budget reports. That was one of his goals when he became chairman and a budget ordinance was developed and monthly reports were instituted. We need to be familiar with the constitution. It was not created by the Tribes, but we adopted it. James does not like having to go the federal government for approvals. We have been successful in governing ourselves. We had a president that wanted to be a dictator. The upcoming election is important. We have an individual running for president that has been indicted. It is important for

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everyone to vote. They took the rights away from women to decide their healthcare with their doctor and they took away the rights of the LGBTQ community. We received a report on our hunting rights on our reservation. The Justice of the Peace is pushing for that. People died for us to have the right to vote.

**Jim Malatare** thanked the membership for being here today and for their comments, and he wished everyone a happy new year.

**Tom McDonald** thanked everyone for being here and to those who spoke. Tom thanked the cooks for the meal. Many of the issues brought up have been a work in progress for a long time. We proposed 14 amendments to the constitution. It is in need of many revisions. Tom acknowledged Shane Hendrickson, Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent, for being here today. The council looked at the reorganization two years ago. He thanked Teresa for her insights. It is important to have measurable goals and a survey of what the membership wants. We need to determine whether that reorganization is working and make any needed changes. We need to set the bar and the standard. Montana used to be a strong democratic state but that has since changed. We need to empower people to vote and provide education on issues.

**Len TwoTeeth** acknowledged Steve Lozar for being here today.

**Mike Dolson** wished everyone a happy new year.

**Sam Barnaby** talked about accountability and his concern about transparency. Sam asked about the COVID monies that were supposed to be allocated to the membership. **Chairman Dolson** advised the ARP-A funding needs to be allocated by December 2024.

**Gene Felsman** expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the Tribal Council and Salish Kootenai College for the opportunity he has had since 1978 when he came back to the reservation. His family was split up when he was a child and he did not return here until 1978 when he learned about his family. Gene worked in the Salish Kootenai College Library for 20 years and he learned the history of the Tribes. He indexed the 1885 Census and 1940 Census.

**MOTION** by Len TwoTeeth to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jim Malatare. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

Council **adjourned** at 2:16 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

**CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES**

/sgnd/

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Martin A. Charlo  
Tribal Council Secretary