

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

Volume 18 Number 23
Council Chambers, Pablo, MT

Held: January 5, 2018
Approved: January 11, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ronald Trahan, Chairman; Leonard Gray, Vice-Chairman; Troy Felsman, Secretary; Anita Matt, Treasurer; Shelly Fyant; Leonard TwoTeeth; Dennis Clairmont; Carole Lankford; James Steele, Jr.; and Charmel Gillin.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jennifer Trahan, Council Office Manager; Bill Kehoe, Sergeant at Arms; and Abby Dupuis, Recording Secretary.

The meeting **began** at 9:13 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was opened with a **prayer** by Francis Vanderburg.

Brad Pluff, Acting Chief Judge, conducted the swearing-in of the newly elected tribal council members: Len TwoTeeth, Carole Lankford, Shelly Fyant, James Steele, Jr., and Charmel Gillin.

The meeting was called to **order** at 9:18 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was turned over to Troy Felsman for the nomination process.

The floor was opened for nominations for the Chairman position.

James Steele, Jr. nominated Len TwoTeeth as chairman. Len accepted the nomination.

Leonard Gray nominated Ron Trahan as chairman. Ron accepted the nomination.

Council voted by ballot and Ron Trahan was voted in as chairman.

MOTION by Len TwoTeeth to ratify the vote and appoint Ron Trahan as the Chairman of the tribal council. Seconded by Troy Felsman. Carried, 9 for; 1 abstention (Ron Trahan).

Ron Trahan thanked his colleagues and the membership for their support.

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The tribal council will work together and get things accomplished this year; the council has a lot of work to do to help the people and the tribal government.

The floor was opened for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.

Len TwoTeeth nominated James Steele, Jr. for the position of Vice-Chairman. James accepted the nomination.

Charmel Gillin nominated Leonard Gray for the position of Vice-Chairman. Leonard accepted the nomination.

Council voted by ballot for the Vice-Chairman position.

MOTION by James Steele, Jr. to ratify the vote and appoint Leonard Gray as Vice-Chairman of the tribal council. Seconded by Troy Felsman. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

The floor was opened for nominations for the Secretary position.

James Steele, Jr. nominated Charmel Gillin for the position of Secretary. Charmel accepted the nomination.

Dennis Clairmont nominated Troy Felsman for the position of Secretary. Troy accepted the nomination.

Council voted by ballot for the Secretary position. The vote resulted in a tie. **Council** voted a second time for the Secretary position. The vote resulted in another tie. **Council** voted a third time.

MOTION by Dennis Clairmont to ratify the vote and appoint Troy Felsman as Secretary of the tribal council. Seconded by Len TwoTeeth. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

Charmel Gillin nominated Anita Matt for the Treasurer position. Anita accepted the nomination.

MOTION by Carole Lankford to close nominations for the Treasurer position. Seconded by James Steele, Jr.

By acclamation Anita Matt was appointed as Treasurer of the tribal council.

The newly appointed council signed the oath of office.

The **Buck Shot Singers** sang a flag song and an honor song.

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Vernon Finley thanked the membership for the honor they gave him for the past four years and he congratulated the newly elected council members.

The **Buck Shot Singers** sang a song.

Chairman Trahan opened the floor for comments from the elders.

Stephen Smallsalmon was happy to see everyone here today. Last year was a tough year. Things have changed over the years. There aren't very many people left who can speak the language. Nkwusm works hard. He hopes council works for the elders and the youth. Stephen wanted to know what council was going to do with the Mission Mart building. **Troy Felsman** commented that there are several options. It could be converted into a fitness center and meeting rooms. Ronan is the largest district by population on the reservation. **Carole Lankford** reported that Jason Adams was asked to head up the community center and has a meeting set for January 10th, at 3:00 p.m. She received an estimate of costs for a temporary fitness center at the old site. No decision has been made yet. Another option is to sell the building.

Francine Antoine congratulated everyone who won the election. She feels good about 2018. She has been concerned about Ronan and she believes good things will happen in the Ronan district this year. There needs to be a place for the youth to do activities. Francine went to a Head Start workshop yesterday and there is a Salish school in the town of Spokane.

Francis Stanger commented that everyone needs to pray for the people, new council members, alcoholism, drugs, guns, hospitals, homes, armed forces, and to give thanks. We need to honor our American flag. Francis said a prayer.

Helen Camel commented that she is the last generation to hear the language spoken in the community. She is thankful for the elders check; it was the first good thing she has ever received from the Tribes. Helen has worked on the Adult Protective Code for the past 22 years; it is an issue that needs to be looked at. There is no rest home that will take elders with Alzheimer's unless they are eligible for Medicare. Alzheimer's is a terminal illness. She has concerns about what happens to the elderly. Medicare will only provide coverage for up to 20 days of hospitalization. Sometimes those elders need to be housed somewhere.

Patricia Kelly congratulated the new council members. Her family lost three family members last year. She feels 2018 will be a good year. Patricia works for Salish Kootenai College. Classes begin again on Monday. There are a lot of bright stars from this reservation. There are students who want to become nurses so they can take care of their family members.

Tom Camel was thinking about where he is going to live; he does not feel safe where he currently lives due to drugs. He is almost 70 years old and needs to live in a place where he feels safe. Tom hopes the Tribes do something for treatment and help people who have problems.

Chuck Tellier discussed a trend that needs to be addressed. There are people that whatever problem they have they think all they have to do is walk into council and the tribal council has the answer. That is a great amount of responsibility for the council to have. Chuck challenged council to do a canvass of their district and make an assessment of who the active people are in the district and start to create committees. There are talented people on the reservation that are not being fully utilized.

James Steele, Sr. commented on the history of the tribal council. This generation of council representatives all had family members who served on the tribal council in the past. The unity of the tribal government body maintains the stability of the Tribe.

Randy Michel discussed the drug problems on the reservation. Addicts are good at manipulation. There are drug users that have children and are homeless. He suggested using the Mission Mart building for a wellness center. There are people attending Salish Kootenai College to become counselors and there needs to be a place for them to do their internships. People need to be held accountable. Everyone needs to work together. We should not be a society that believes a pill for every ill is the answer. Randy told stories of how drug abuse has affected his family life.

Agnes GunHammer started a group at the Corner Faith Church in St. Ignatius called The Sober Project, which is similar to the AA program. It is a biblical program. The group meets each Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.

Amelia Stanger announced that there will be a birthday party for her father on Saturday at noon at the Polson Senior Center. Her father turned 90 on December 19. Everyone was invited to the party.

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

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

Carole Lankford thanked everyone for being here today. She participated in the jump dances. Carole put her name in for chairman. She congratulated the officers. Carole looks forward to having a positive year and putting things in place, such as community committees. The Tribes are looking at a facility that became available for the elders. She is in favor of having a community center

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and fitness center in Ronan. Carole continues to serve on the Drug Court. People getting out of incarceration have had difficulty in accessing Tribal Health services. She will continue working on that to make services available to the membership. Carole is humbled to serve on the tribal council for the past 24 years.

Francis Stanger was traveling from Arlee and he picked up a hitchhiker that was going to an AA meeting in St. Ignatius, so Francis talked to him about alcohol and what he had went through. We need a place for alcohol and drug meetings.

Shelly Fyant thanked the membership for being here today. With all this talk of substance and drug abuse, her son Thomas made a decision last year to not drink and he had a successful year. She is proud of him for making that decision. Shelly thanked the drum. Shelly is encouraged by the young people that sit in on the drum and the way they help out in the community. She is grateful the adults teach and mentor the youth. She is excited about this year. Council met yesterday and had a frank discussion about the past and what they have ahead of them in the next four years. Council made a commitment to work together and respect one another's opinions in moving forward. Council has a lot of unfinished business and the council is looking forward to a new beginning and will support and encourage each other. She appreciated Chuck's challenge to reach out to our communities. Shelly thanked her family. She has four healthy sons and she feels protected when her boys stand behind her. Shelly is blessed to still have her mother and extended family members.

Charmel Gillin wished everyone a happy new year. It is an honor for her to serve on tribal council. Charmel will do her best. She agrees that the council has gotten off to a good and appropriate start. Council is a reflection of who the membership is, so we are interlocked. This last year was a challenging year for many people. She learned that we can help one another to encourage one another to get through some of the most difficult things we face. Charmel faced some personal challenges in 2017. The strength of family is powerful. She thanked the membership for the honor of serving them.

James Steele, Jr. appreciates the support of the membership returning him to the tribal council. He is happy to be elected to serve from the same district as his maternal grandparents. He is one of few council members that were elected to serve in one district and then move to a different district and get elected from that district. He thanked Patricia Kelly for her service in the armed forces. James served as the Director of Student Success at Salish Kootenai College. We are a blessed reservation. Students travel here from other reservations to attend college because they feel it is safer here and there is opportunity here. James appreciates everyone's prayers and support.

Len TwoTeeth feels blessed today and he thanked the people for entrusting him to work for them for the next four years. It has been a learning experience. Len acknowledged the leadership of Vernon Finley; he helped Len deal with some of the tough issues. Len recently lost his mother; she was his biggest supporter. Len felt fortunate to be in a position to help the membership when he was the vice-chairman. He will continue to work for the membership. He is a team player and supports the new council officers. Len never forgets who he works for and will continue to help the membership.

Anita Matt got the well completed in Dixon. She has been busy with the Farm Bill. Anita requested input from the public and the departments on the 12 titles of the Farm Bill. The titles of the Farm Bill are: Commodities, Conservation, Trade, Nutrition, Credit, Rural Development, Research, Forestry, Energy, Horticulture, Crop Insurance, and Miscellaneous. There is talk about cutting \$10 million in the nutrition programs and Anita attended the Inter-Tribal Ag Meeting in December and will serve on the Farm Bill Coalition. Anita serves as president of the IAC Rocky Mountain Region and attended the Inter-Tribal Ag meeting. Anita is humbled to serve the membership. She appreciated the prayer and drums and is happy to have the membership here.

Dennis Clairmont thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and the good words that have been said. He looks forward to working for the membership. Dennis accompanied Rich Janssen, the Natural Resources Department Head; and Stu Levit, Legal, to meet the new representatives of the State Department that will be negotiating the upcoming treaty. There are 15 tribes represented and their purpose is to get a seat at the table at these negotiations. Dennis also accompanied our Legal Department, which is Rhonda Swaney and Ryan Rusche, to meet with the congressional delegation concerning moving the water compact forward and the Bison Range. We are nearing reintroduction of the water compact to the legislature.

Troy Felsman welcomed the newly elected council members. He is grateful to serve, but it has been challenging. There are several business directions the Tribes can go in and needs to increase revenue streams and diversify their financial portfolio. Fracking has been an issue for the Tribes. We were the first tribe to ratify the constitution. Troy would like to address redistricting. He wants to obtain feedback from each district. Health care continues to be an issue. The opioid distribution needs to be controlled. Council wants to have a community and fitness center in Ronan. Troy receives calls from an elder about the importance of the language. He thanked his wife for supporting him. Troy looks forward to having a great 2018.

Leonard Gray is humbled to be in this position. He did not plan on being vice-chairman but will do what is asked of him. There are intelligent and

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hardworking members on the council that will work for the membership. It was good to see so many elders speak today.

Ron Trahan commented that the council works for the membership. There are a lot of issues facing the tribal government. Ron looks forward to the council helping each other. He invited the membership to attend council meetings.

Helen Camel asked about fracking and wanted some examples of how it affects the Tribes. **Troy Felsman** explained that most of the power grid of the United States is supplied by coal, natural gas, hydropower, nuclear, solar and wind, etc. When fracking took off primarily in North Dakota, W. Pennsylvania and Texas it allowed petroleum companies to bring a large supply of new natural gas sources into the market. This caused the price for energy to lower across the board, including hydropower. When we were in negotiations to acquire the dam several years ago, energy prices were considerably higher than today, primarily due to this new influx of natural gas. This presents a challenge for EKI. Troy doesn't see the energy market changing any time soon since the Trump Administration is fracking friendly despite potential serious concerns for harm to the environment.

Helen Camel asked about bison and if it is going to be available to tribal members. **Leonard Gray** commented that we anticipate another ship to processing this year, but it depends on the buffalo. There is a good chance of that though.

James Stele, Jr. commented on natural gas. The electric price has been driven down because of the price of natural gas.

***** **Lunch** *****

The floor was opened for comments from the membership.

Patrick Yawakie is a junior at Salish Kootenai College in the tribal governance and administration program. He commented on the Agriculture Resource Management Plan. Patrick co-wrote a plan that produces organic foods and restore traditional knowledge for K-12 curriculum and is focused on tribal and food sovereignty. He wants to make his presentation to the tribal council. Patrick's parents own a company called Turtle Island Communications. That company provides fiber optic systems. Having up-to-date telecommunications is important for students and the tribal government and having a tribally-owned telecommunications company would be valuable. He would like the Tribes to meet with parents about this company. **Chairman Trahan** requested that Patrick provide his contact information to Jennifer so council can contact him.

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Pat Matt congratulated the newly elected tribal council members. He has had struggles in the past. In 2007 a friend's daughter was raped and murdered. After that wake he drank through the night and into the next day, and that behavior turned into a pattern. Pat discussed tribal sovereignty. Charmel's comments this morning about encouragement were profound. When the issue came up about whether we should build Gray Wolf Casino or a treatment center, that became a hot topic. The Tribes should do something good with that building to benefit the membership.

Renee Camel informed council that her brother was snowed in. Tom Camel is a 70-year-old disabled veteran. The Tribal programs would not assist him since the age requirement is 75 and is income-based. The family had to shovel him out. **Troy Felsman** commented that council took action to provide assistance to elders regardless of income. **Council** is trying to be fiscally responsible, but is willing to review the guidelines again.

Sandra Boham, Salish Kootenai College, thanked council and appreciates their efforts to serve the membership over the next few years. She thinks it will be an exciting time for our Tribe. Sandra is grateful to work at Salish Kootenai College. Students are exceptional individuals, despite their struggles. SKC is close to publishing a book and are discussing publishing option with a publisher. Council will be provided a copy of the book after it is finished. SKC turned 40 years old this year. Sandra thanked council for supporting the college. **Chairman Trahan** would like to have more trades available for students. **James Steele, Jr.** appreciated working at Salish Kootenai College. James wants the council to improve the process for selecting board members instead of just requiring a letter of interest. It is important to know what the entities needs are for board members. Applicants should be required to have the appropriate knowledge and background.

Cathy Felsman congratulated the newly elected council members. She reminded the tribal council that they work for the membership and they must not forget where they come from. The council must lead by example. The membership wants the council to put their differences aside and work together. If the tribal council works together, then the tribal employees will follow their example. The council needs to listen to the membership. The membership needs to be allowed to voice their opinions. The people used to be allowed to talk at quarterly meetings; she attended a meeting and council did all the talking and then adjourned the meeting without allowing the membership to talk. Cathy attended a meeting in Dixon and the Hot Springs Bath House was discussed. She hopes it moves along because it could be a money maker. Good leadership needs to be put in there that has a long-term vision. It needs to be for the good of the people; not just themselves. Cathy reads the minutes and there are a lot of nontribal members being hired because of no qualified tribal members. She wants to know why tribal members do not want to work

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here. Cathy does not want council to put people in jail or build a jail; a treatment facility is needed because putting people in jail does not help anyone. Culture needs to be a part of it. The council members need to remember that when they travel there are a lot of eyes on them and the membership hears about what they do while on travel.

The floor was opened for closing comments from the council.

Carole Lankford requested that the tribal council to meet in the back room this afternoon to appoint the boards and committees and discuss the snowplowing policy. **Ron Trahan** wants the organization to be beneficial to the Tribes if the Tribes become board/committee members of any organization. **James Steele, Jr.** commented on the complaints received from the membership about council meetings being cancelled; that will be addressed. **Carole Lankford** informed the membership that the chairman position receives leave each pay period. At the end of their council term they get a payout if they do not use all of their leave, which amounts to a sizeable payout. Carole wants to put an end to that benefit. The rest of the council does not receive leave benefits.

MOTION by Carole to discontinue the annual leave for the chairman position. Seconded by Troy Felsman. Carried, 9 for; 1 abstention (Ron Trahan).

MOTION by Len TwoTeeth to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Troy Felsman. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

Council **adjourned** at 2:08 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, at 9:00 a.m.

CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES

/sgnd/

Troy Felsman
Tribal Secretary