

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

Volume 21 Number 46  
Zoom Meeting

Held: March 18, 2021  
Approved: March 23, 2021

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Shelly Fyant, Chairwoman; Anita Matt, Vice-Chairwoman; Ellie Bundy McLeod, Secretary; Martin Charlo, Treasurer; Carole Lankford; James “Bing” Matt; Fred Matt; Charmel Gillin; Mike Dolson; and Len TwoTeeth.

**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 9:02 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was opened with a **prayer** by Carole Lankford.

The **Tribal Council Meeting Minutes** for March 16, 2021 were presented for approval.

**MOTION** by Len TwoTeeth to approve the Tribal Council Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2021, with corrections. Seconded by Fred Matt. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

The **agenda** was presented for approval.

**MOTION** by Anita Matt to approve the agenda, with additions. Seconded by Len TwoTeeth. Carried, 9 for; 1 opposed (Carole Lankford).

**Council** met in **executive session**.

**Brian Lipscomb**, Energy Keepers, Inc.; **Rhonda Swaney**, **Stu Levit**, **Chelsea Colwyn**, and **John Harrison**, Legal Department; **Rich Janssen**, Natural Resources Department; and **Tom Johnson**, Tribal Services; requested to meet with council in **executive session**.

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

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**John Harrison**, Legal Department; **Melody McCoy** and **Samantha Kelty**, Native American Rights Fund; and **Alex Rate**, American Civil Liberties Union; requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss legal matters.

**Jami Pluff**, Policy Analyst; **Patricia Courchane**, Department of Human Resources Development; **Annette Brown** and **Hank Conko-Camel**, Child Support Enforcement Program; requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss a departmental matter. **Tom Johnson**, Tribal Services, was present for discussion.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

**MOTION** by Carole Lankford to amend the council action from Thursday to delay the implementation of the TSCEP policy until the next per capita in order to further review the changes and provide notice of the changes to the membership. Seconded by Mike Dolson. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

**Patricia Courchane**, Department of Human Resources Development; **Eddie Screechowl**, Casey Family Program; **Theresa Grant** and **Mike Watson**, KAT Communications; presented information and provided a demonstration of the Native Reach Project. Native Reach is a communications support service and customized mobile app for partner tribes. They are providing the opportunity to tribes that want to be involved. It is a tool for tribes to get information on programs and tribal activities. There is no cost to participate in the project and the Tribes control the content. It is a service of KAT Marketing and they have been doing this in Indian country for the past 30 years. It's called Health TV and was installed in the Tribal Health facilities. They provide service for 12 months so that tribes do not need to do it on their own. Continued support will be provided by the Case Family Foundation. It was the **consensus** of council to move forward and have Communications and Information Technologies meet with this group.

**Carole Lankford** discussed the parade in Ronan yesterday. She expressed her concerns to an individual regarding a float in the parade but was told it was a freedom of speech issue. There are people on Facebook commenting on it and going against that company. Mr. Emporium Cabinets had signage on his truck.

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

**D'Shane Barnett**, **Marilynn Zimmerman**, **Casey Dunning**, **Lisa Davey**, **Rai Combs**, **Laura Folkwein**, **John Lund**, **Suzanne Dzus**, **Kaylie Ines**, and **Joe Chrastil**, All Nation's Health Center and Common Good Montana, discussed the "Wrestling with the truth" initiative and steps toward learning the story of the colonization of the Missoula valley the way indigenous people have and continue

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to experience it with the hope of learning the best way to teach it to others in the Common Good organization. **Jody Perez**, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority; **Vernon Finley**, Kootenai Culture Committee; **Desiree Fox**, Tribal Health Department; **Ann Miller**, Tribal Defenders Office; **Michelle Mitchell**, Tribal Education Department; **Michael Munson**, Salish Kootenai College; **Tom Johnson**, Tribal Services; **Velda Shelby**, Economic Development Office; **Tony Incashola, Sr.** and **Chaney Bell**, Salish Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee; were present for discussion. The initiative is a training that they ask people to participate in which provides an overview of colonization and historical trauma; challenges white settlers' belief system, paradigms, and ways of being in the world contrary to what the history speaks about; and the racial and social inequities. **Chairwoman Fyant** talked about the institutional racism and historical traumas that they have experienced. There was a derogatory float in yesterday's parade, and the response to the concerns was that it was free speech. The Missoulian wanted Shelly to comment on the appointment of the first Native American woman appointed to a cabinet post, and she was disappointed that the article did not include her comments relative to the indigenous way of thinking. **Michelle Mitchell** stated she looked forward to helping. **Vernon Finley** mentioned the movement that is happening for standing up for racial justice. Vernon is grateful to see these things happening. When we complain about the injustices, it is easily shoved aside or dubbed as complaining. **Tony Incashola, Sr.** has seen other groups similar to this beginning to form. It is crucial as we look around this country we live in and all the hatred, prejudice and racism that is happening. Years ago, there were no jails, because there was no need for it; there were no laws, because they were not needed, and people took care of each other. Laws are created on mistrust. If we don't get a handle on it, things like what happened at the capitol building will continue to happen. It is a good indication of what's to come if we don't start within our own homes and cities to stop this. **Jody Perez** was humbled to be in the room with these leaders, and she applauds the efforts to share our stories in a good way. She thinks that the more we can educate people the happier we will be as a whole. Her own children are not taught their history or language in our schools on our reservation. This is going in the right direction. She was willing to contribute to this effort. **Michael Munson** informed them that President Boham looks forward to viewing today's presentation and figure out the best way to move forward. **Desiree Fox** appreciates the work and the intent. She will continue to go to the meetings. **Charmel Gillin** was excited they engaged us in this project. We have a lot of good stories to tell from our perspective. It is important for us as tribal people to remember those stories from our own people. We are no longer victims; we are the victors, and we need to emphasize that. She looks forward to the restrengthening of our Tribes. We face a lot of adversity daily and as an elected official it is much more in her face as far as her responsibility. She witnessed a hearing at the state legislature on a draft bill that threatened our treaty hunting rights. She realized as she was listening to the testimony that proponents said they were fifth generation homesteaders. She was offended by that. We received

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a copy of the petition and was disappointed to look at those signatures from our reservation. She recognized many names and many of them were minors still in high school. One of them was a member of her family, so she had a conversation with him. There is a lack of education on the indigenous rights by sovereigns. We need to reframe our story. We are still here, and this is our land. **Chaney Bell** appreciates this conversation. While growing up, Chaney was a product of assimilation and colonization; he didn't know his language and what it meant to be Indian. The prayer of his ancestors guided him, and he took a step in another direction that led him to where he is today. Chaney discussed the importance of the language. He talks about reversing colonization every day. **Mike Dolson** taught Native American Studies at Salish Kootenai College for 17 years. When the idea of sovereignty comes up, most people understand sovereignty from a state perspective. It is hard for folks to see sovereignty in any other light. The language shows the individual sovereignty. **Anita Matt** hopes we can work together. She never learned anything about the treaty, the Tribe, or the language when she attended school. It was not until the Culture Committees initiative in the 1970s took off that it came about. The way people on our own reservation feel is sad. **Ellie Bundy McLeod** found today's conversation thought provoking and she appreciated the discussion. **Bing Matt** commented that Tony and Chaney are very knowledgeable, and he learns a lot from them. He thinks this is a good thing they are doing, and he hopes it gets off the ground. **Martin Charlo** commented this is a great undertaking that they started. It will be a few generations before we get there. He is torn on things like this. His family has a history that ties back to time immemorial. It is not easy to see changes in the Bitterroot valley and Missoula. A lot of people are ignorant. We are in a position where we can teach people now. There is a lack of native education in our schools. We have some of the best lawyers in the country and people that work for us. People do not understand the historical trauma that our people have faced. He will continue to support and encourage them for what they are doing. **Len TwoTeeth** appreciated the dialogue today. Racism was a big issue in his life while growing up, especially living off the reservation while he went to school. He was fortunate to learn from that, though. Those people did not know they were ignorant because they were not raised right. He learned they were seeking attention when they were being racist. He learned from the experiences he went through. You just have to pray for those people that don't know any better. **Michelle Mitchell** was interested in the piece they talked about to build a foundation that both parties have to agree to that path we are trying to restore. She wants to hear more about that and how we get there. Our school boards are primarily non-Native. Those are the governing boards for the reservation schools. Not having a voice at those tables is going to be a difficult obstacle to overcome to see the changes we are hoping to see. **Suzanne Dzus** explained that part of it was for both parties to sit together. The nations would have a truce when they went to war. They would come together and the truth would be spoken. They need to agree there is racial bias and come together to resolve it. It would be good for the CSKT to voice their concerns about wanting natives on

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their school boards. The Tribes just need to let the organization know what they want help with. **Joe Chrastil** stated that the wrestling with the truth training will set the groundwork to develop a trusting relationship. **Michelle Mitchell** will serve as the CSKT point of contact on this.

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

**Anita Matt** left the meeting for the remainder of the day.

**Helen Russette, Niki Graham, and Ashley Glass**, University of Montana, requested approval of a revised paper on relationship-building to develop an indigenous community-based epidemiological study investigating developmental resilience factors among children with prenatal substance exposure and study updates specific to recruitment and study tools. The University entered into a memorandum of understanding with Early Childhood Services. The development grant was renewed for another year. **Council** had no objection to Helen continuing to highlight the CSKT in her papers.

**MOTION** by Ellie Bundy McLeod to approve the revised paper on relationship-building to develop an indigenous community-based epidemiological study investigating developmental resilience factors among children with prenatal substance exposure and study updates specific to recruitment and study tools. Seconded by Fred Matt. Carried, unanimous (8 present – Len TwoTeeth out of the room).

**Brian Upton**, Legal Department; **Amy Coffman**, Bison Range; **Tom McDonald, Steph Gillin**, and **Amanda Bourdon**, Natural Resources Department; followed up on immediate work needed at the Bison Range, such as maintenance work, signage, messaging, and a uniform logo. It was the **consensus** of council to authorize the staff to move forward with the plans. The interim name will be Bison Range until a final name is decided upon. Tom informed council that the department would like to have their own sign shop. That would reduce the cost of changing signs in the future. The staff had discussed the COVID-19 mandate and suggested if it remains in place, then they would provide temperature checks, masks, post social distancing signs, hand-free sanitizer stations, plexi glass installation, employee health agreement, cleaning, temporary closure protocol, purchasing foggers, hand-free units for paper towels, and hands-free water station. The annual AIS mussel walk and the river honoring are coming up in the next couple of months and the lake honoring is in the fall. Steph wanted to know if they could resume their annual events. **Chairwoman Fyant** advised that the Tribal Health Department identified May 1 as the date they would revisit what is in place. It could be approved barring any upswings or variants and how the vaccination percentages are by then. **Amanda Bourdon** reported that they are working on the PDs for the positions and are scheduled to meet with Annie to train the staff on April 26 on the Visitor Center. They would

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like to have uniforms for the employees. **Council** had no objection to the logo/shirt Amanda suggested using. **Len TwoTeeth** wanted Pend d'Oreille added to the logo on the shirts. **Chairwoman Fyant** thought that could be added in the signage, but we have not officially changed our name. Pend d'Oreille will be added to the logo on the shirts.

**Chairwoman Fyant** left the meeting for the remainder of the day to participate in the NCAI Rocky Mountain meeting.

**Tom McDonald** advised that David Rockwell will assist with the brochures and help train the technology position.

**Rich Janssen**, Natural Resources Department; and **Tom Bansak**, Flathead Lake Biological Station; requested authorization to continue Columbian ground squirrel reintroduction and field studies in animal behavior at the Flathead Lake Biological Station. The project would continue to allow student researchers the opportunity to learn techniques for live-trapping, minimally invasive handling, and reintroducing this species to habitats where they have suffered local extinction.

**MOTION** by Len TwoTeeth to approve a collection permit to continue Columbian ground squirrel reintroduction and field studies in animal behavior at the Flathead Lake Biological Station. Seconded by Fed Matt. Carried, unanimous (8 present).

**Council** met in **executive session**. **Jami Pluff**, Policy Analyst, was present for discussion.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

**MOTION** by Len TwoTeeth to approve the DOI comments, with the recommended changes. Seconded by Carole Lankford. Carried, unanimous (8 present).

**Council** discussed a request for Chairwoman Fyant to travel to Helena on March 24 to provide testimony on SB 214, as recommended by Jordan Thompson. **Len TwoTeeth** brought up travel previously, and rather than lifting the travel ban they could be approved on a case-by-case basis during the legislative session.

**MOTION** by Charmel Gillin to approve the chairwoman's travel to Helena to provide testimony on Wednesday, March 24. Seconded by Martin Charlo. Carried, unanimous (8 present).

**Len TwoTeeth** left the meeting for the remainder of the day.

**Council** discussed the reappointment of Janna Blanter to the Energy Keepers, Inc. Board of Directors.

**MOTION** by Carole Lankford to reappoint Janna Blanter to the Energy Keepers, Inc. Board of Directors for a three-year term. Seconded by Fred Matt. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

***Martin Charlo***, for the record, *“I condemn the vulgarity for the parade in Ronan yesterday.”*

**MOTION** by Carole Lankford to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Martin Charlo. Carried, unanimous (7 present).

Council **adjourned** at 4:34 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

**CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES**

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Ellie Bundy McLeod  
Tribal Council Secretary