

**SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBAL COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2020**

Attendance(virtual):

Tribal Council	Arnold Cooper	Chairman
	Charlene Krise	Vice Chair
	Vicki Kruger	Treasurer
	Jeremie Walls	Secretary
	Bev Hawks	1st Council Member
	David Whitener, Jr.	2nd Council Member
	Vince Henry, Sr.	3rd Council Member
Tribal Administrator	Marvin Campbell	
Legal	Nate Schreiner	
Election Staff	Josh Whitener	
Recording Secretary	Melissa Puhn	

Josh Whitener shared with the Council that the Enrollment Committee met yesterday to discuss the options with this year's election process. The entire Committee agreed to prioritize the health and safety of the community and recommend cancelling the 2020 General Body Meeting. Their second recommendation is to proceed with the mail-in balloting process. The Committee feels that this is the best option available at this time.

Jeremie Walls shared that he has been reaching out to tribal members and the main question is if the Tribe will allow patrons into the Casino, then how can the Tribe not provide a safe environment for voting? The largest issue he has heard is the long timeframe the mail-in process will take.

Josh shared that if this process is started right away, the first election would be done July 25; followed by a run-off vote (if necessary) to be completed by August 22. By August 27 all three positions would be filled. If a vacancy is created, the process will start over at that point.

Jeremie understands the safety issue, but cannot justify the change if the Casino remains open.

Marvin Campbell added that the Casino is different: staff can enforce social distancing, where it would be extremely difficult to enforce in a General Body Meeting setting.

Each election would take 28 days: 7 days to print and distribute ballots, and 21 days to receive, vote and return the ballot.

Nate Schreiner added that the Constitution states that elections will happen in the spring of each year. What it does not state, is how to proceed if that is not possible. If that situation occurs, the tribe does the next best thing, which is what the Committee is proposing. He

added that the run-off vote is important to give tribal members a chance to vote for the two candidates. He feels the Election Committee has done a good job in coming up with the next best option.

Bev Hawks shared that Council will not make everyone happy with whatever decision is made. She does not believe mail-in balloting will drag the elections out; she believes that this is a good solution to ensure everyone's safety. She added that sometimes as leaders, they need to be prepared to take the brunt of what is best for the community.

Arnold stated that he is not willing to take a chance and jeopardize tribal members; he stated that he does not care if people throw him under the bus. As Chairman, he is not willing to take that chance to jeopardize the tribe. The tribal members who may complain about this change, are not elected to take care of the tribe; Council is.

Jeremie asked about the tribal businesses that remain open and are safe. Josh added that nobody knows how long elections will take, and the risk increases as time spent around each other increases. Josh emphasized the importance of education to the community on why this decision is made.

Marvin added that he reached out to Mason County Health Officers and they currently are not recommending groups larger than 50 people.

Vicki shared that she would like to stick as closely to the Constitution as possible. She too, reached out to tribal members to get their views on this. The people she spoke with shared that if a meeting was to be held, they did not feel safe attending. Vicki said that she sees both sides: she knows mail-in ballots is the safest option, yet does not want to drag the process on longer.

Davey added that there is no right answer.

Charlene added that she understands the political piece, but when it comes down to ethics, health and welfare tribal members, she would protect them. She knows there are people who want the meeting now. However, the Tribe is up against an enemy and she will do the best she can to protect tribal members from that enemy. Whether the decision is right or wrong, she agrees with the Election Committee on their recommendation. Charlene supports the committee based on the oath Council took, to protect the health and welfare of tribal members.

Davey said that he is voting no. None of this is an easy decision, but seeing how Mason County has a minimal amount of risk. He would like to have the election on the 27th.

Vince shared that safety and health of tribal members is his number one concern, but does not want to see this process go on for so long. It is one of the toughest decisions he's had to make. He wants to have the election just to get it done, but also knows the thread of the pandemic is still here.

Jeremie feels that structure and laws are important to him. He would like to have the meeting since he believes the tribe can provide a safe place for people and still supports the meeting and the constitution.

Bev said that she supports mail-in ballots and with Nate's guidance, she feels that this is the best option.

Vince says that he knows people will be upset; he wants to get this done so he votes the 27th.

Vicki supports mail-in.

Due to a tie vote: three (3) for holding the meeting on June 27th as planned and three (3) for canceling the meeting and moving forward with mail on ballots; the Chairman broke the tie with a vote in support of mail in ballots.

Arnold stated that as the Chairman, he is looking out for the best interest of the Tribe. He would not have a clear conscience if the tribe proceeded with a full meeting, and one person got sick due to it.

Council shared their appreciation and leadership shown by Arnold. They all agreed to move forward and supported the final decision together. Council knew this was a tough decision, and those who voted against mail-in voting, support the outcome.

Communication will be imperative. Josh will start getting the information shared and are looking at next Tuesday as the nomination deadline.

Council thanked Josh, Nate and the rest of the Committee for the extraordinary amount of work that has gone into this.

Meeting adjourned.