

**SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBAL COUNCIL  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
January 14, 2021**

**Attendance:**

<b>Tribal Council</b>	<b>Kristopher Peters</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
	<b>Charlene Krise</b>	<b>Vice Chair</b>
	<b>Vicki Kruger</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
	<b>Jeremie Walls</b>	<b>Secretary</b>
	<b>Andy Whitener</b>	<b>1st Council Member</b>
	<b>David Whitener, Jr.</b>	<b>2nd Council Member</b>
	<b>Vince Henry, Sr.</b>	<b>3rd Council Member</b>
<b>Tribal Administrator</b>	<b>Marvin Campbell</b>	
<b>Operations Director</b>	<b>Erika Thale</b>	
<b>Tribal Liaison</b>	<b>Ray Peters</b>	
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	<b>Melissa Puhn</b>	

Kris called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Marvin offered the opening prayer.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Kris shared that he would like to add a few words on the Inslee Inauguration that occurred the day before. Vicki would like to discuss the banking update and an investment report, in executive session at the end of the day. Jeremie moved to approve the January 14th Agenda. Vince seconded the motion. The motion carried six (6) in favor and zero (0) against.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vicki moved to approve the December 10, 2020 Council Minutes and the January 5, 2021 phone poll. Vince seconded the motion. The motion carried six (6) in favor and zero (0) against.

**TRAVEL REPORTS AND PLANS**

January 21:	Council Work Session, 9am, Virtual
January 21:	Council Meeting with IEI Board, 1pm, Virtual
January 25-28:	ATNI Winter Convention, Virtual. Jeremie and Ray
February 21-25:	NCAI Winter Session, Virtual

Charlene shared that with the current climate, would like to see conflict resolution training for tribal members, staff and community. She would like to see everyone equipped with the ability to deal with the adversities out there right now.

Kris shared that yesterday at Governor Inslees Inauguration, Kris was able to say a few words on behalf of Squaxin. Council was invited and brought some beautiful tribal artwork to loan on display at the capitol building the next four years. This shows the relationship between Squaxin and the State and recognizing the traditional Squaxin land. Kris stated his appreciation that Governor Inslee actually thanked the Tribe for allowing them to be on Squaxin land. Kris commended the tribal artists and the amazing art that will be on display. Governor Inslee asked if those artists could come to the capitol rotunda and talk about their work.

Vicki brought up General Welfare. Kris stated that Nate will report on that later.

## **COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

**IEI Board Update:** Kris announced the new IEI Board: Marvin Campbell, Michael Peters, Whitney Jones, Aleta Poste, Diane Deyette, Julie Owens and Tim Sheldon. Andy Whitener will serve as the Council Rep.

**Constitution Committee Update:** Council announced the newly appointed Committee: Russell Harper Josh Whitener Jayde Smith Tammy Ford Rhonda Foster Ron Whitener Vicki Kruger Steven Dorland Redwolf Krise Whitney Jones Will Penn Rickie Ramage. Marvin will do what is necessary to get this committee working and moving forward.

**TERO Committee Update:** Marvin shared they had their first meeting last Friday discussing the ground rules and policy that was passed. They went over the bylaws and discussed what was approved and what the end goal is. The committee will meet again this Friday to have a more formalized discussion and appoint positions. The group is excited and share a good mix of experiences.

Jeremie would like to add a TERO link to the tribes website to include employment opportunities for jobs and contracts. He suggested emulating what Nisqually offers on their web page. Marvin will look at that and bring it up to the Committee at their next meeting.

Council briefly discussed the importance of having all families represented on committees; but also looking at each person as an individual and what they have to offer, regardless of their last name. Having diverse committee members is important. However, Council

shared the importance of allowing each committee and commission to do their job, without Council influence.

**Winter General Body Meeting discussion:** Kris shared how pleased he was with how the Virtual Meeting went. There was a lot of good conversation. Kris wants to work with staff to tackle each question that was asked and make sure that everything gets answered back to the community. He plans to break the questions down into categories. He and Marvin talked about a virtual platform for getting information out and providing a place for members to submit questions and comments. He and Kris could then filter the questions to send to staff for a response. This would show accountability of the government to the community.

Jeremie agreed and felt that the meeting went really well and he heard positive feedback from those who participated. He is looking forward to future meetings. Vince and Vicki both agreed and also heard a lot of positive feedback. Charlene felt it was amazing and the input from the community was so good. She did hear concerns from tribal members stating they were unable to log on to the meeting. She told them that there might have been an overload of the system, and any technical issues were not intentional. Kris added that the meeting was advertised on the Daily Scoop, Facebook and Tribal website. He has been talking with DIS about other mediums for sharing information with the community.

Andy asked about how the Council sees future meetings? Kris said that he likes the in-person stuff, but if a business meeting is a business meeting, he shared that he likes the web platform. A lot more was able to be shared without people getting interrupted. Then reserve in-person events for fun and getting together without discussing business.

Vicki added that she liked how this medium allowed for tribal members living out of state to attend the meeting. She would like to see this option continue, regardless of what the future holds.

Kris will set up a meeting to break down the assignments and duties from the winter meeting, and will report back.

**Banking Report:** Vicki shared that SPIPA has been looking into native owned banks. She is not sure if SPIPA has the capacity to start a bank with the five consortium tribes, but she wondered if this is something that Squaxin could pursue. Ray shared information regarding what it would take and different models for setting up a bank as well as the differences between a credit union and a bank.

Kris asked if Council would like to have Ray and Legal meet with Whitney Joes, to continue researching and looking into this option. Council agreed and Ray will attend the meetings as his schedule permits.

Vicki added that there is a SPIPA Board meeting tomorrow if anyone wants to join. She also said that the PNW has been identified as a growing community and a need for a Native American Bank.

Vicki emailed Council the current investment report. She reported in the last year and her concern of the economy, but the numbers she sees in the tribal investments impressed her with the gains. Ray shared that the tribal investments are up. Vicki added that she really hopes the next Council Treasurer has a financial and investment background. She appreciates the opportunity she has had to learn.

Andy added that there are a lot of checks and balances within the tribal finances, and there never has been an issue. Vicki would like to discuss the Salal account and would like to have that process changed, since she is the only signer on that account. Kris assured her that is being remedied.

Marvin added that before the Finance Department creates a check from the Salal account, it takes the approval of four Council members before a check is even created for Vicki to sign.

## **TRIBAL ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**

**SPIPA Resolution:** Elizabeth Egan presented **Resolution #21-02** which is authorizing a five year SPIPA Grant. This grant would be complimentary funding and a good boost for the workforce program. The program includes adults displaced from work and funding for client support services. Vicki asked if clients are restricted to tribal members only.

Elizabeth said that yes, if funded it will be rolled into the 477 plan and will have some limitations since it is through the Department of Education. There are no match requirements. The money would go to SPIPA and the tribe would work with them for the funding. Vicki moved to approve the grant resolution. Vince seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Committee & Commission reporting schedule:** Erika shared that a draft schedule was created for committees and commissions to report annually to Council. Kris asked about scheduling some committees to report reporting a couple of times each year, such as the Housing Commission, Budget Commission and Emergency Management.

Jeremie stated that he would like to take on the responsibility of overseeing committees and commissions and has started the process of working with Melissa to assist with that. Council is okay with him doing that.

Charlene would like to offer training to the committees and allow them to make their own decisions and not micromanage them.

**Water update:** Marvin sent an email to council regarding the Taylor Water update that included different options for the next steps in the project. Erika went over the options that were presented and emailed to Council, she asked that they read through the two options. The recommendation is Option 1 which involves taking the route down Simmons Road, connecting at KTP Express. The cost for option 1 is higher, but has less variables and is a quicker option. This option will cost more initially, but in the long run it will serve the tribe better. Council was supportive of option 1. Kris will defer to the experts on this process and go with what is the best option for the tribe and to keep it moving forward. Option 1 is approved.

**General Welfare update:** Nate gave an update on a potential General Welfare Program. He shared the program that Nisqually has in place and how it works for them. He spoke with the founder and owner of this program and shared different options which he was impressed with. He wanted to know if the expense was worth it to the tribe. He could ask this person to give a presentation to Council at a later date.

Jeremie wants to present this idea to the membership and see what the interest is. Nate added that this particular program allows you to opt in or opt out. David suggested a pre-survey process to see the sense of interest with tribal members.

Andy added that it's really up to what tribal members want to do. If it's something that is of interest to a lot of tribal members, then it's worth it. But there has to be enough to justify a program.

Kris asked if Council could get a one or two page flier describing the program, to share with the community, as well as an estimated cost. Nate stated that the initial year will have startup costs, but each year after that will be less. The start up costs run in the \$30k range. The annual cost could be absorbed by participants if there are enough people signed up.

## **TRIBAL LIAISON UPDATE**

Ray shared that the legislative session started yesterday. As reported previously it will be virtual. With this, there are efficiencies with the session being virtual. This also allows

Council the opportunity to participate in some of the hearings. Ray reported that the decrease in state revenue is real; it is manageable but a significant challenge. It might be managed by tax increases, cuts in services, or tapping into the "rainy day fund." Governor Inslee has published the draft budget with requests for an increase. He will propose taxes on new capital gains which will be for a single person over \$25k. Washington State is behind the national norm in regards to taxes and trails the national averages. The governor is trying to move to a more progressive tax so it is more equal among the citizens.

Ray spoke about police reform and how that will affect Squaxin and what Council would like to see in those reform bills that will be proposed.

Charlene asked Ray about the education bill regarding teaching tribal curriculum in the schools. Ray stated that the tribe wants to support the bill that requires administrators and teachers to have training in their certifications. They need to know the law in offering that curriculum to schools. Childcare and education inequality will also be a large part of this legislative session.

Vicki added that she knows a lot of high school aged students who want Lushootseed offered as a foreign language class.

Ray will work with tribal directors on tracking specific legislative bills.

Ray shared that if Council has any questions or bills they want him to track, just let him know.

He briefed on bills that will be coming regarding firearms, pandemic, racial injustice, police training, etc.

Kris went back to Vicki's question regarding the Lushootseed language. He shared that it is an accredited language and will be accepted by colleges soon. However, there is a standard to make sure it's accepted. He would like to have OSPI meet with Council to share what it will take to take to get this accredited. He would like to bring that program on to the reservation so all have access.

Ray added that WSDOT Liaison has shared that they will be doing repairs on HWY 108 and will have lane restrictions. He will work with Dave Johns and will make sure there is open communication.

Ray continued to look at some property of interest, as directed previously. There will be some cleanup. Kris asked what the plans are; he would like to see its potentials and plans before the tribe purchases it. Ray added that it is in the Kamilche Corridor. Charlene

inquired about another parcel within the corridor, Ray reported that the asking price at the time was too high.

Vicki reiterated that she does not want to lose track of parcels the tribe already owns; such as the Rock Church. Council discussed properties briefly.

Ray shared that a decision regarding this particular parcel is needed by the 20th. Charlene recused herself from voting, but Kris, Vince and Andy were supportive of buying it. Kris would like Ray to reach back out to the landowner and get some final numbers and proposals. Ray will work with Nate on the purchase sale agreement and present back to Council at their next meeting.

Ray shared that the investment committee met and would like to get Monte Davis on the agenda to give an investment report on a regular basis. He added that if Council ever wants to sit in on their quarterly reviews, they are welcome. It might be insightful for Council and easily accomplished.

Ray shared that the Port of Olympia is going through an assessment and gathering input on development and projects. They have decided to build a marine office. They are asking for a letter of support, which Ray will be drafting. He will share the letter soon, and ask for consideration at the next Council meeting. He feels it would be a nice gesture since the building will include public space.

Jeremie asked about the public comments regarding the Shelton School District and the new Superintendent. Ray said that Sally Brownfield is on the School Board and creates a good relationship between them and the Tribe.

Erika offered to share the link for tonight's meeting between the Tribe's and the School Board.

## **LITTLE CREEK CASINO**

Ramon Nunez introduced the Casinos new CFO, Marvin Smith and the new Marketing Director, Tam Ho. Council thanked and welcomed both of them to Squaxin.

Ramon shared his report and noted that there is nothing in his mind that moving forward with the minimum wage increase, takes convincing. Council is supportive of moving forward with the increase.

The mission of LCCR is being reminded and staged to remind everyone who we are. The mission states that Little Creek Casino Resort is recognized by employees as the areas best place to work with quality jobs; by guests as the friendliest casino entertainment facility in the marketplace; by the stakeholders for excellent operating results and strong financial performance; and by the community as a concerned and effective corporate citizen.

Part of that mission is asking the question what a living wage is. Ramon is in the process of getting a compensation study for their employees and wages. Ramon shared a presentation that discussed the changes LCCR made to employee wages in 2020 and how they plan to address the minimum wage increase for 2021.

Ramon also shared that he is in the process of working with a consultant on setting up a strategic plan for the Casino. Having a strategic plan allows Council, directors and staff to have an idea of what the strategy and where everyone fits into the plan and how that supports the overall mission of LCCR. This discussion will continue at the upcoming work session.

#### **GUEST: WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

Director Lisa Brown and Tribal Liaison Ernest Rasmussen introduced themselves. Lisa shared a PowerPoint Presentation showing what they do for the State.

Their mission is to strengthen communities through housing, infrastructure/broadband, clean energy, planning, community facilities and community services. They have been engaged with the State on helping administer the CARES Funding through the COVID Response. They have been able to assemble and assist with other agencies in economic recovery for small businesses and nonprofits. Their focus right now is broadband set up and have been able to help with WiFi setups for local communities and have been working with SpaceX for offering rural services. Broadband access for all is especially important right now. They have been mapping broadband access across the state.

Lisa briefly went over the other areas they have partnered with local agencies to benefit the community. Council was interested in the broadband piece, especially SpaceX. Lisa shared that they facilitated the introduction to that program and can provide the contact. Lisa explained the grants available for broadband.

Vicki asked Lisa about job training and clean energy. Vicki shared how Squaxin is always looking at economic ventures for tribal members. She asked to please keep Squaxin in mind if there are any clean energy related ventures coming out.

Jeremie shared his interest with their clean energy actions and if they have any funding for solar, to keep Squaxin in mind. Lisa said that they do and should be able to have a follow up conversation about this.

Charlene brought up Tourism and the Pacific Coast Scenic Byway Plan and asked how Commerce can help the Tribes with Tourism and travel activities.

### **ISLAND ENTERPRISES UPDATE**

Kristen Davis provided a quick update. KTP has changed their operating hours to one hour earlier, Mon-Sat. The deli will be open on Saturdays and will continue testing to find out what the needs are.

Salish Seafood lost power yesterday all day, but there were no lasting impacts on operations.

Jeremie asked if Salish should have backup power. He feels they should have a stand alone system because of their cold storage. Andy suggested GSA purchasing.

Kris asked that Kristen, Rod and Dave discuss the need for a generator.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Action Item:** NCAI Amicus vote. Council approved joining the NCAI amicus brief in U.S. v. Cooley, a case going to the Supreme Court which considers the ability of Tribal officers to search non-Indians.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.