



Tribal Council Meeting Minutes
Squaxin Island Tribe
Mar 23, 2023
Council Chambers

Attendance

Present:

Kris Peters, Jaimie Cruz, Pat Braese, Marvin Campbell (remote), Andy Whitener, David Whitener, Jr., Nathan Schreiner, Ray Peters, Melissa Puhn

Absent:

Members: Vince Henry, Sr., Erika Thale

Kris Peters called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and offered the opening prayer.

1. Approval of Agenda

Approval of the March 23, 2023 Council Agenda

Motion:

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

February 23, 2023 Minutes

Motion:

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Travel Reports & Plans

April 13: Candidate Forum #2, Community Kitchen, 5pm

April 24-25: NAFOA, WA DC. Marvin

May 6: Annual General Body Meeting, LCCR

May 7-11: ATNI Mid Year Convention, Coeur d'Alene ID

May 11: Elders Host Luncheon, LCCR

June 10: World Ocean Day, Heritage Park, 11-3pm

June 26-29: Tribal Self Gov Conference, Tulsa OK. Marvin, Ray.

October 1-3: NAFOA, Phoenix, AZ

Kris shared that he has been asked by the Elders to to emcee their Host Luncheon.

June 8: Sqwi Gwi in the ballfield. 5pm

4. Council Discussion

Kris provided an update from the Canoe Journey planning meeting on the 15th, and the next planning meeting will be the 29th. They will be meeting every two weeks. They plan to solidify a route in the coming weeks and will keep communicating the plan to the community. There was good attendance at the meeting and the topic that keeps coming up is mental health; one of the best ways to deal with mental health is to be involved in culture. The group is really trying to get everyone remotely interested, to participate in some capacity. The landing will be at Alki Beach, July 30th. Jaimie shared that she met with the Turning Point Domestic Violence Shelter, in Shelton and she applied to be on their board. They meet twice/month and she really enjoyed meeting with them. They are a great organization and shared that they are still learning the tribal ICW protocols and looking forward to working with the tribe by having Jaimie on the board. They have 40 beds and serve Mason and surrounding counties for women DV.

Ray mentioned that he will be attending NAFOA and ATNI. He added that Olympia City is holding a workshop May 10-11 at the MLRC. Council is welcome to meet with them.

5. Operations Director Update (Presenters: Erika Thale)

Operational Report

Erika shared that Parks and TLC will be coming in next Council meeting to update on their summer activities. The annual Easter egg event will be on April 1, at 10am. They are planning for basketball and have been trying to recruit a coach with no success. Have reached out to a variety of dads in the community who are coming together to come up with a plan. They hope to get the kids to the next tournament at Skokomish. Looking at some day camps for basketball, soccer and baseball.

The Shellfish Settlement Distributions were sent out last week. Heard a lot of positive feedback.

Tiny home workgroup is meeting to review the plans for future use of the tiny homes with feedback from the community. Looking at the feasibility of the spaces.

Countdown for the pool reopening. Elders Bake sale will be at KTP on April 7th.

Jaimie asked about the sports camps and what neighboring counties are doing as well. Its a great opportunity for us to not have to start from the ground up and perhaps work with outside organizations.

Vince asked about sports equipment. Erika said they are looking at funding sources for equipment. Andy asked about a basketball tournament at the event center. Erika said they are planning something during Christmas break.

Jaimie asked about an update from Public Safety, since there has been a lot of talk in the community of community safety. She asked about a gentle reminder to the community of being aware and watch for kids, don't drink and drive, etc. Kris suggested Barry and some of his staff come chat with Council at an upcoming work session.

Ray brought up as the tidelands grow, it might be a worthwhile work session topic to have all security and law enforcement get together and discuss. Kris asked Erika to coordinate that discussion.

6. Natural Resources (Presenters: Erik Sparkman, Julie Owens)

Geoduck Regulations

Erik Sparkman and Julie Owens presented the 2023 Geoduck Regulations. This year, they took last years regs and changed the dates and changed the drug testing from NR to BHR, which made more sense. On previous regs, a diver could phase out and re-enter; a diver can no longer take advantage of phasing out again or medical waivers. The loophole that was created initially, has been closed. There are currently 52 divers and 14 phase outs. At the last page of the allocation is blank, but that will be filled out once they do the last survey next week to figure out the biomass. Erik went over the tracks that will be open and updated on the statuses. They are still working with Puyallup to work together for the best management of the common area to ensure the biomass lasts as long as possible. Henderson Inlet track will be open. Waiting to see what Puyallup would like to do in the common area.

Davey asked what the Puyallup process is, and if it would help involving Council, reach out. This has not been vetted through the committee yet, but their first meeting is on Monday. This is the new NR Committee, and Erik will share and discuss the reg with them with no intention of changing anything this year. Next year, if the committee would like to discuss and make changes, they will have the year to make the plans. Unsure of new divers this year. There is one diver who re-entered after phasing out. All of this information was sent out to the boat owners. Any major changes will go the committee.

Motion:

Approving the 2023-24 geoduck regulations with the allocation page to be filled out after the biomass survey.

Motion carried five (5) in favor and zero (0) against.

7. Tribal Liaison Update (Presenters: Ray Peters)

Columbia Bank

Kevin Meabon and Tyler Hannon of Columbia Bank were both present remotely to briefly discuss the current banking climate. Kevin explained the difference of what's going on currently with banks now versus the 2008 crash. He shared the recent issues are due to banks having a lumpy and unbalanced deposit. He shared most of Columbia's accounts are not risky and have a good diversification. One of the other things they look at is the profit versus diversification based on location.

Tyler went over the accounts and evaluations on behalf of the tribe. The combined accounts with the tribe and the quarterly statements are sent to Henry on a regular basis. All funds are fully protected. The bank is getting a new protection product which will provide FDIC insurance to up to \$150M for larger businesses. Tyler and Henry stay in good communication and they are always available for questions and discussion. Henry joined and thanked Kevin and Tyler for the update and communication.

Ray shared that the Fee to Trust applications are moving forward. He received notification that the BIA has notified Thurston County and Tumwater regarding the Littlerock Road project. They are starting phase 1 and will have a contractor on property to work on that piece. He will be working with the contractor to get them to the Edwards property too, starting Monday. Got notification from Kilmer's Offices that they have selected the pedestrian safety plan to be funded. This was in cooperation with WSDOT and has been in the works for some time. This project has been selected for funding but still have a few steps to go. There are two round about that will be constructed on the on/off ramps, including sidewalks, cross walks and cross walk lights. Ray has worked with Tracy to get the application submitted. That is a different project than the commercial round about at Salish Cliffs Drive that will help control traffic on 108. Will do a presentation to get Council caught up at a later date.

Planning did receive a grant for a car charging station. Ray has been trying to get the Port of Olympia to publicly acknowledge the Deschutes Estuary; although they signed off the preferred option. Working on funding for the first state of planning. Working on funding to clean the east bay area and dredging. Olympia has been supportive but have not publicly come out about the support.

Ray added that the House Budget will come out next week; the senate budget came out with funding for remediation but nothing for the estuary. The house budget will have money for the estuary and have spoken with senators. Ray gave an overview of senate support.

8. Legal Update (Presenters: Nathan Schreiner)

8.1. Wild Fish Conservancy ESA

David Babcock was present to provide an update on a lawsuit regarding Wild Fish Conservancy. Update only, no action at this time.

8.2. LCCR Contract for Class II machines

Nate presented the Little Creek Lease Agreements with AGS and VGT, which include a limited waiver of sovereign immunity. Ramon briefed these agreements in detail at the last work session.

Motion:

Approving Resolutions 23-12 (AGT Agreement) and 23-13 (VGT Agreement).

Motion carried unanimously.

8.3. City of Tumwater MOU

Nate presented the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Tumwater. This MOU relates to current trust property in Tumwater and will create a mutual recommendation and a periodic payment of \$2500 which is consistent with other MOUs. This will help enforcement for off reservation properties, and similar to other agreements in place. Ray gave a brief history. Nate shared that they would like to do a public signing. (The signing was later scheduled for the afternoon of April 27)

Motion:

Approving the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Tumwater.

Motion carried unanimously.

8.4. Geoduck Revenue Resolution

This was previously discussed.

Motion:

Approving Resolution #23-08, Geoduck Revenue Allocation.

Motion carried unanimously.

Marvin provided a background to the geoduck funds. Last year, Council became aware of geoduck revenue that IEI had in an account that previous leadership

told them to hold in a bank. This Council recently directed Marvin to work with Nate, Ray and IEI on how to deal with these revenues. Once all the numbers were looked at, it came to around \$4M. The Council then made the recommendation to use \$500k for shellfish enhancement; 50% of that for individual distribution and 50% to be used for major projects to the tribe. The decision has been made to distribute 50% of the \$3.5M to tribal members and 50% will be set aside for a wellness center. July 1 will be a distribution and again in December of this year. This is a resolution for a decision today, but there is a team on the budget ordinance that will address this by code. Kris reiterated that when the geoduck business was started years ago, there was no solid plan on what to do with the funds. Any time there is revenue, it needs to be invested to keep the enhancement moving and the intent also was to give back to the community.

9. Planning, Community Development (Presenters: Elizabeth Egan)
- OVW (Office on Violence Against Women) for Family Services
 - OVC (Office on Victims of Crime) for Family Services
 - SPIPA resolution for Emergency Food program (voucher program)

Elizabeth presented three resolutions: The Office on Violence against Women is a three year project with Family Services and will continue a program that has been in place for 10 years.

Motion:

Approving the OVW Grant by Resolution #23-09

Motion carried unanimously.

Office on Victims of Crime grant is also a continuation, unsure of the amount yet but estimation \$300-400k. This will be at Family Services and will help bridge Family Services with BHR with a great service.

Motion:

Approving the OVC Grant by Resolution # 23-10.

Motion carried unanimously.

The last grant resolution Elizabeth presented was with SPIPA for the next biennium with the state Emergency food voucher program with SPIPA.

Motion:

Approving the SPIPA Food Voucher Grant by Resolution # 23-11.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Tribal Gaming Update

Chad Ziegler TGA Update

Chad Ziegler introduced himself as this is his first time in front of Council as a director. He has been with the Casino since 1999, transferred to surveillance in 2001 and the last 5.5 years he served as deputy director to TGA, and now he is TGA Director. He is proud and happy to work for Squaxin.

Gaming update: sports wagering and online. TGA Directors met recently regarding sports wagering website that has been doing business in WA called ProSwap. This is illegal, and sports wagering in Washington can only be done by tribes. The states proposal is to write a cease and desist letter to the company and have all tribal gaming directors to sign the letter. The letter has been reviewed by Legal and TGA Commission, and its his intention to sign. A few more companies have popped up doing the same thing, so more letters will be sent. Kris asked when the AG's office gets involved. Nate explained the strategies involved. Kris agrees with the letter.

Next update on a regulation change, the commission approved new regulations regarding age limits on gaming Class 3 licenses. Previously an applicant had to be 21 in order to obtain their Class 3, this change lowers the age to 18. Hoping this will help operations with staffing levels which has been an issue lately. Other tribes have done this with no issues.

New piece of tech they have been using is facial recognition with surveillance. Its been working better than anticipated and they get alerted immediately when people arrive on property that cannot be there. They also have the ability to track specific individuals immediately.

Jaimie brought up the General Body Meeting coming up and wanted to make sure any barred members from the Casino can attend the meeting. Chad said that its pretty much a policy on TGA that barred tribal members are allowed to attend tribal meetings at the event center, as long as they stay off the gaming floor.

11. Little Creek Casino Update (Presenters: Ramon Nunez)

Ramon Nunez was present to share his report.

Projects: shared an image of what Starlight Lounge looks inside the construction wall. The Administration Building Geotechnical report was received. Report does not include a recommendation on what additional support structure is needed. Reaching out to civil engineer on how to proceed. The Hotel Tower 2 Renovation Contract with Swinerton Builders is signed. Working on procurement of case work and furniture and fixtures. Agilisys went live with Golf last week. Master Planning preliminary meeting with Cunningham/Full Circle this afternoon to discuss the process moving forward. Exterior LED Wall Contract approved and signed. Salish Cliffs Drive Sign is going for an RFP for this sign. Golf Course Bridge abutment construction company has mobilized and is starting the project. Bridge is constructed and awaiting installation. Golf Course Bunkers contract is signed. Planning how to minimize guest experience while project proceeds has started.

Marketing: April Major Promotions include Tax Relief Spin & Win, Slot Tournament and the Mrs. Fields Bakeware Collection. New Mobile App still in progress. Event Calendar includes April 8th: WFC 152 MMA; May 13th: Hairball-80's Tribute; June 9th & 10th: Thunder From Down Under; July 15th: Car Show; July 29th: Dwight Yoakam (tentative); August 12th: Genuwine & Tone Loc (tentative) and September 23rd: Foreigner (tentative).

Human Resources: Started producing a monthly employee employee newsletter to discuss what is happening on the property and short articles on emotional intelligence and engagement.

Council thanked Ramon for his work.

There being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned.

12. Exec Session

Exclusion Petition