

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

Volume 23 Number 36  
Council Chambers, Pablo, MT

Held: March 21, 2023  
Approved: March 23, 2023

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom McDonald, Chairman; Len TwoTeeth, Vice-Chairman; Martin Charlo, Secretary; Ellie Bundy, Treasurer; Mike Dolson; Jennifer Finley; Carole Lankford; Jim Malatare; James “Bing” Matt; and Terry Pitts.

**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 9:00 a.m. Quorum established.

The meeting was opened with a **prayer** by Jennifer Finley.

The **Tribal Council Meeting Minutes** for March 16, 2023 were presented for approval.

**MOTION** by Martin Charlo to approve the Tribal Council Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2023, with corrections. Seconded by Len TwoTeeth. Carried, 8 for; 1 abstention (Jennifer Finley).

The **agenda** was presented for approval. **Council** scheduled a pow wow meeting for next Monday at 1:00 p.m.

**MOTION** by Len TwoTeeth to approve the agenda, with changes. Seconded by Bing Matt. Carried, unanimous (9 present).

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

**Ellie Bundy** joined the meeting.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

**Mark Couture** and **Zanen Pitts**, Tribal Lands Department, presented a request for a free-use revocable permit for the Babe Ruth/Mission Mountain Cal Ripken Baseball League to use the baseball fields on tribal lands in Arlee, Charlo, Ronan, and St. Ignatius Elders Park from April 2023 through September 30, 2023.

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Lands staff recommended approving the permit so long as all permitting requirements are met, including a waiver of the bond requirement and proof of required insurance coverage.

**MOTION** by Martin Charlo to grant a free-use revocable permit for the Babe Ruth/Mission Mountain Cal Ripken Baseball League to use the baseball fields on tribal lands in Arlee, Charlo, Ronan, and St. Ignatius Elders Park from April 2023 through September 30, 2023, a waiver of the bond requirement, and proof of required insurance coverage. Seconded by Bing Matt. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

**Mark Couture** and **Zanen Pitts**, Tribal Lands Department, discussed the 33 ton of hay that was advertised at the Bison Spring Ranch and asked a council representative to pull the number out of the envelope. Len TwoTeeth drew number 3. The Lands staff will notify that individual. The Tribes are 50% owner in a 60-acre tract next to the Bison Spring Ranch. The discussion continued in **executive session**.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

**Jody Perez**, Salish Kootenai Housing Authority, gave an update on the Flathead Indian Reservation Housing Needs Assessment that was conducted. There was a 63% response rate. A detailed report was provided. Montana Healthcare Foundation and HUD paid for the surveys. **David Dixon**, Big Water Consulting, gave a presentation on the assessment that was done. The project was launched by SKHA to understand and quantify the housing crisis, including overcrowding, homelessness, and the need for supportive housing. The household component of the needs assessment engaged a statistically representative sample of 411 households, including 786 adults and 261 children, achieving an overall response rate of 63.8%. data collection began in March. Part of the process included holding focus groups and community meetings. A doubled-up/hopelessness survey was conducted. The Homelessness Task Force led the creation and administration of a survey for anyone currently doubled up or experiencing homelessness, both on and off the reservation. The results of the household survey found that a high proportion of children aged 0-19 and elders aged 65+ is present on the reservation. These factors have important implications for elder and child care, healthcare, economic development, and housing needs. About 10% of all households experience overcrowding at a rate that was five times of what was reported for the state of Montana. 23.4% households are doubled up living with more than one family in the same household. 26.9% of all households are 42.7% of American Indian/Alaska Native households reported at least one housing condition that may be impacting health. Many households may be eligible for state assistance through LIHEAP or WAP to improve or maintain healthy housing conditions, but the survey responses indicated they may not be using these programs. Most people

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preferred housing types include affordable homeownership units and low-rent housing units. Elder housing, student housing and sober living facilities are needed in lower amounts, meaning there may be need for only a few locations/facilities. Further outreach should be conducted to determine the optimal location and need for wraparound services. 62.1% of households indicated a need for affordable homeownership, but only 26.8% expressed an interest in becoming homeowners. Barriers to homeownership included saving for a down payment, lack of available housing, and having enough income to afford monthly loan payments. If homeownership opportunities are made available for approximately 200K, nearly half of interested residents would likely be able to afford a new home. Education and job training interest results indicated many households had an interest in continuing technical and practical education. The top interest area align with many of the programs offered by SKC. Many of the skills in computer software, finance, and building trades can support existing tribal programs as well as contribute to the development of new housing on the reservation. The doubled-up/homelessness survey results showed 702 individuals across 273 households are in need of permanent housing; 15.89% are children under 18. Most are staying with friends and family but 21.7% have a less stable housing situation. Most prefer rental or homeownership unit but 39.4% express interest in permanent supportive housing. Actions to consider were to continue to use the information gathered to assist SKHA, CSKT and the Flathead Housing Coalition in developing a coordinated plan for housing development throughout the reservation; pursue new partnership and opportunities to increase housing supply on the reservation, including affordable homeownership and low-rent housing units; and conduct additional outreach and data collection for student housing, elder housing (including assisted/independent living and skilled nursing facilities) and sober living to investigate the demand for these housing types; identify new or expanded opportunities to provide down payment assistance and credit builder/rebuilder programs, as well as financial literacy and home maintenance 101 programs for potential homeowners to lower barriers, develop workable household budgets, and boost confidence in affordability; and increase awareness and use of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP and Weatherization Assistance (WAP) programs to address a range of housing conditions affecting household expense and health. **Jody Perez** requested approval to post the Housing Needs Assessment Report online. **Council** had no objection.

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

**Shannon Clairmont**, Natural Resources Department, presented a request from Salish Kootenai College for a data collection permit for an elk study at the Bison Range for student research activities to fulfill college requirements.

**MOTION** by Martin Charlo to grant the Salish Kootenai College a data collection permit for an elk study at the Bison Range for student research activities to fulfill college requirements. Seconded by Ellie Bundy. Carried, unanimous (10 present).

**Whisper Camel-Means**, Natural Resources Department, gave an overview of infrastructure needs at the Bison Range and requested approval of the projects. The department will work with the Facilities Maintenance Department. Quotes were obtained and most of the projects will be funded with Deferred Maintenance funds. The list included an ADA compliant front door and repair the back door of the Visitor Center at an estimated cost of \$15,000; retaining wall replacement at an estimated cost of \$13,000; trail system at an estimated cost of \$9,000; Visitor Center front desk remodel for an estimated cost of \$25,000; and the main paved road from the entrance to the Visitor Center parking lot for an unknown cost; a bid will need to be received. The Roads Program has some grant funding that will pay for a road safety audit and road maintenance plan, but the program does not have funding to maintain the road. **Chairman McDonald** suggested getting the needed roadwork done and he suggested getting rid of the retaining walls as much as possible. **Terry Pitts** asked if there was plan for any snake bites. The department does not have an emergency response plan that includes snake bites, and Whisper will follow up on that issue. There are warning signs posted throughout the Bison Range. **Martin Charlo** suggested the staff work through Contracts & Grants for the contracts needed for the projects. **Council** agreed to move forward with the needed improvements at the Bison Range.

**Jordan Thompson** and **Dana Hewankorn**, Food Sovereignty Program, gave an update. Dana reviewed the organizational chart. A Local Food Specialist will be hired. The program will be getting a bus to transport food. Jordan requested approval of a sole source contract with Qene's Catering.

**MOTION** by Martin Charlo to approve the sole source contract with Qene's for a term through December 2023. Seconded by Len TwoTeeth. Carried, 9 for; 1 opposed (Mike Dolson).

***Mike Dolson**, for the record, "I very much support Qene's Catering, did not see any reason for having a sole source contract for that position."*

**Jordan Thompson** and **Dana Hewankorn**, Food Sovereignty Program; and **Mark Couture**, Tribal Lands Department; gave an updated on the gardening network. Last year there were gardens in Elmo, SKC, Tribal Forestry airport, and in Ronan, and those gardens grew 32,000 pounds of food. This year there will be gardens at the Food Sovereignty Center, Arlee, St. Ignatius, and Hot Springs. **Mark Couture** discussed the Liberty Garden in Arlee. Shelly wanted to have the garden located between the firehall and the Community Center, but that site was set up for commercial and residential living and Salish Kootenai Housing

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Authority will be building housing units there. There is a parcel of property available at the main entrance of the Arlee Pow Wow grounds. The next sites that were looked at was in Dixon and the Dixon Agency. There is a site at the old Forestry building in Hot Springs that could be used for a community garden. There is a potential site in Polson that is located next to the MSU Extension Office. The other site that was considered was at the Commodity Center in St. Ignatius. There would be a memorandum of understanding instead of a lease. Grant funding will pay for three food distributions and the first distribution is scheduled for June. The program prepared meals for the Warming Center. The building will be updated.

**Jordan Thompson**, Tribal Executive Office, requested to meet with council in **executive session** to provide a legislative update. **Lynsey Gaudio** and **Melissa Schlichting**, Legal Department, were present for discussion.

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

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

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

**Dan Decker, Lana Page, Brian Upton, Katie Jones, John Harrison, Lynsey Gaudio, Chelsea Colwyn, Melissa Schlichting, Zack Zipfel, and Grace Judge**, Legal Department, requested to meet with council in **executive session** to discuss legal issues.

Council reconvened into **regular session**.

Council **adjourned** at 2:22 p.m., and is scheduled to meet again on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

**CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES**

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Martin A. Charlo  
Tribal Council Secretary