

NOTICES

Proposed Tribal Council Salary

by Jessie Davis, Vice Chairman

An ad-hoc committee composed of Administrative Officer Sharon Edenfield, Human Resources Manager Michele Rowan, and Tribal Council members Lillie Butler and myself was assigned the responsibility of conducting a study on and recommending to Tribal Council a fair and equitable salary for the Tribal Council. Our recommendation was approved by Tribal Council and is now subject to General Council approval.

It's been 13 years since a ballot measure on Tribal Council compensation has been taken to the general membership. On Oct. 21, 1989, Resolution No. 90-06 was referred to ballot. This increased the salary from \$5 an hour to \$7.31 per hour with cost of living allowances (COLA) increases. Over the 13 years with COLA, our present salary increased to \$9.83.

What's the proposed salary for Tribal Council members? Based on our study, the ad-hoc committee recommended a proposed annual salary of \$45,000. This is comparable to Tribal Level 11, step 6, which would include cost of living increases and certain fringe benefits: 1) medical and dental insurance, 2) life insurance, and 3) eligibility to participate in the tribe's 401K plan. Unlike tribal employees, however, council members won't be eligible for annual or sick leave, paid holidays, or overtime.

How much are Siletz council members currently paid? Siletz council members are paid \$9.83 per hour, about \$3 more than the minimum wage. The \$9.83 equals about \$20,000 annually.

How does the council salary compare with the salaries paid to Siletz Tribal staff? The present council salary of \$9.83 is comparable to the tribe's beginning Level 4, which is less than the first step of a Level 5, which includes such positions as maintenance workers, clerks, and receptionists.

How does the salary paid to the Siletz Tribal Council compare with other Oregon tribes? Our survey revealed that council members of other Oregon tribes are paid between \$18 and \$50 per hour, which equals annual salaries of \$37,440 to \$104,000.

From what source will the increased council salary be paid? Twenty-five percent will come from timber revenue, 25 percent from indirect costs (tribal administrative costs), and 50 percent from gaming revenue, specifically from the Tribal Government Operations category. This will not affect the General Welfare category or per capita payments.

What are the responsibilities of council members that warrant an increase in pay? The Tribal Council position description is not new. We've been performing these duties for the past 10 years. Specific functions, however, are described below.

1. To carry out the governmental functions of a sovereign Indian Tribe in the tribe's relationships with the U.S. government, the state of Oregon, and other Indian tribes; to negotiate inter-governmental agreements, i.e. Lincoln City and municipal services for Chinook Winds
2. To hire, suspend, promote, fire, and provide general supervision over the general manager and certain other supervised staff
3. To analyze and take action on the tribe's budget of more than \$24 million annually; to take action on budget recommendations of the general manager and department heads. Council members must be knowledgeable about and act on individual program and budget needs.
4. To be involved in local, state, and national Indian issues that impact or have the potential to impact the Siletz Tribe, including such issues as trust and taxation, threats to tribal sovereignty, etc.
5. To be knowledgeable of special BIA and IHS regulations, such as the Resource Allocation Plan (RAP), and to ensure that the tribe complies with such regulations

6. To be knowledgeable of and actively involved in negotiating gaming compacts with the state within the requirements of IGRA
7. To effectively deal with the National Indian Gaming Commission on controversial gaming issues
8. To oversee the Gaming Board, which in turn ensures that Chinooks Winds complies with the tribal/state compact, policies and minimum internal controls of NIGC, and the gaming ordinance
9. To serve as the Board of Directors of the housing program
10. To serve as the Board of Directors of the tribal health program
11. To participate in the legislatively established Oregon Commission on Indian Services; to work with state agencies on a government-to-government basis, making certain Gov. John Kitzhaber's executive order (960-30_ and codified in SB 771) is ongoing
12. To identify the need for, discuss, and adopt tribal policies, ordinances, and codes relative to environment, housing, education, economic development, and other issues
13. To oversee the Siletz Tribal Gaming Regulatory Agency (STGRA) and the Gaming Commission to ensure these entities carry out the responsibilities with maximum autonomy and flexibility. Review, revise, and adopt STGRA standards, policies, ordinances, and procedures
14. To participate in the BIA and IHS budget process and self-governance contract negotiations (through the council's efforts, the Siletz Tribe was among the first 20 in the nation to be designated as a SG tribe)

15. To respond to the needs of members who live outside the 11-county service area; to adopt policies, programs, and funding to address their needs, taking into consideration tribal program and funding constraints

16. To serve (individual council members) as liaison to tribal committees, i.e. health, education, culture, social services, natural resources, etc.

17. In addition to regular duties, to be actively represented in regional and national Indian organizations, such as the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, NIGA, and NCAI. When attending NCAI meetings, to be involved in subcommittees – finance, banking and taxation; housing; business and employment; transportation and infrastructure; energy and mineral policy; environmental and land use; agriculture and water rights; telecommunications; tribal gaming; jurisdiction and tribal government; human, religious and cultural concerns; health; education; Indian child and family welfare; disabilities; and elders.

Conclusion: Based on the ad-hoc committee's study, it was determined that the council salary should be at least comparable to the tribe's Level 11, step 6, at \$45,000, with certain benefits specified above, except that council members will not be eligible for sick or annual leave, paid holidays, or overtime.

This recommendation is based on a study of the salaries paid to tribal staff and Tribal Councils of other tribes, including Oregon tribes. Unlike tribal employees who are responsible for their individual program duties, the Tribal Council's responsibility is all-encompassing – for integrating all programs under one tribal umbrella.

The proposed salary is reasonable, equitable, and we believe worthy of tribal support. The adoption of this proposed salary may have the added benefit of attracting candidates for Tribal Council who are willing and able to serve who otherwise could not afford to serve.

We welcome any comments and suggestions you may have regarding this proposal.

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