

Tribal Council: resolutions address concerns in survey

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Resolution on Economic Strategy

Council got quickly to work on some of the changes by passing a resolution on economic strategy that contains six directives with deadlines on most of them. Council first of all reaffirmed commitment to the Bridge of the Gods casino. In a second directive, it charged the Uniform Commercial Code Committee to complete its work and submit the proposed code by December of this year.

The next three directives went to different teams of tribal and outside personnel, with each team chosen according to relevant areas of expertise, to evaluate an array of economic projects and report back to Council by February 15, 2007.

One group will identify and evaluate four areas of the reservation for use and occupancy projects; a second will evaluate and recommend four projects with near-term benefits; and a third will investigate the value of consolidating all enterprise boards into a single board led by one executive director.

Land development

The sixth directive charges the Secretary-Treasurer to secure funding from two existing sources, to be earmarked exclusively for Council-approved economic projects through the year 2010.

As an example of the kind of use and occupancy proposal Council will look at in more detail when it receives reports next February, representatives of Warm Springs Ventures presented a drawing of exploratory work done on the possible development of land in the southwest corner of the reservation near the Metolius River.

In addition to creating income for the Tribe, such a development could improve travel and access management along the reservation's southern border. Council showed great interest in the project and also re-

quested that the Bear Springs area be looked into. Ideas for redefining Kah-Nee-Ta once the new casino is running will also be part of the use and occupancy report.

Use and occupancy projects tend to be sensitive, complex and long term in nature, and for this reason Council also instructed a group to focus on near-term projects. Warm Springs Ventures, Forest Products, Power Enterprises, and Composite Products will work together in coming up with this report, while Ventures, Kah-Nee-Ta, and Natural Resources will work on use and occupancy. The Secretary-Treasurer, Chief Operating Officer, and various people from Oregon State will also participate on both teams.

Council's directives make a point of requiring tribal enterprises and branches of tribal government to work together. The need for better communication, coordination, and cooperation throughout all parts of the Tribe and tribal organization was a persistent theme during the workshop. For example, when discussing the survey finding that members believe conflicts often bring everything on the reservation to a halt, one Council member said, "We don't get along worth a darn. We were three tribes before, too, but we worked out our problems. Today we don't. Why? What will it take to change that?"

Communication was seen as the key. Many Council members spoke to the fact that the Tribe has a wealth of resources, both natural and human, but needs to do a better job of working together to put those resources to use. Council also acknowledged the need to hire well-qualified people for important positions within the Tribe.

Administrative reform

After passing the economic resolution, Council turned to the topic of administrative reform. Working from the membership survey's troubling report on the

government organization, along with their own feelings of frustration in trying to get things done, Council reviewed tribal administration's shortcomings and ways in which it could improve performance.

Clyde Hamstreet, speaking in his role as a turnaround consultant with long experience in restoring business organizations, outlined the issues and challenges faced by the administration, along with a recommended strategy for improvement.

The liveliest topics of discussion centered on whether or not to return to a single administrative head and the need for more precise work plans, standards of performance, measurable results and accountability.

By and large, Council members recognized that having a single person both responsible and empowered to carry out administrative tasks was the best way to ensure accountability.

On the other hand, many members expressed concern that heading up the entire administration might be too big a job for one person.

The themes of accountability and performance came up repeatedly in Council's discussion, which took in a complex range of related issues. For example, Council members remarked on the low morale and other problems caused in the workplace when standards of performance are not applied equally to all employees. Some participants were concerned that there are too few incentives for good performance and customer service to the community, and inadequate consequences for poor work results.

Recognizing that these problems must be better understood before they can be fixed, and that the administration itself must offer its input, Council passed a resolution directing the Secretary-Treasurer to assemble a tribal governance team, including himself, the Chief Operating Officer, and four at-large tribal members, to prepare an

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assessment of the administration and recommend a comprehensive restructuring plan. The assessment and plan are due back to Council by February 15, 2007.

As part of its report, the governance team is instructed to review prior management plans and the reasons for the present administrative structure; to make a recommendation about going back to a single administrative head; to develop policies recommended in the presentation and discussion; and to improve the administration's responsiveness to the people and attention to performance and results.

Council governance practices

Discussion of administrative reform spilled over from Thurs-

day afternoon into much of the Friday morning session, leaving little time for Council to formally address its own governance practices. Nevertheless, in an informal manner, the governance topic had been present throughout the workshop. By the time it came up as an agenda item, Council members had already said they would like to do a better job of leading the people, and all had expressed willingness to work together towards that goal.

Hamstreet delivered a brief presentation on the governance issues that arose from the membership survey, focusing on two general areas: 1) how to win back the people's trust; and 2) how to do business more efficiently. Council's objective

should be to restore the membership's trust by improving Council's leadership, performance, stability, and integrity.

The presentation was well received and Council ended the workshop by agreeing to another one-and-a-half-day session in early November to focus on governance issues. "We need it," was the sentiment heard around the table—but also, "we want it."

Participants expressed both pleasure and hopefulness as the conference drew to a close. They seemed to feel that the workshop materials and process will make a good starting point for more active discussion with the Tribal membership. "The Council did good work today," said Secretary-Treasurer Jody Calica.

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