

Tribal Council remands disenrollment cases

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

After two days and more than 11 hours of testimony, Tribal Council voted 5-4 on Thursday, May 1, to remand 86 recommendations for disenrollment back to the Enrollment Committee so its members can consider new material presented by the 16 affected families.

The Enrollment Committee forwarded recommendations of disenrollment to Tribal Council on March 18 after holding approximately 80 hearings in December and January. The committee concurred with Enrollment staff recommendations for disenrollment on the basis that the Tribal members did not meet the constitutional lineal descent requirement at the time they were enrolled.

Those named in the disenrollment cases trace their lineage back to Chief Tumulth. The Cascades Indian chief signed the 1855 Willamette Valley Treaty, but was unjustly hung by Lt. Phil Sheridan before the Grand Ronde Reservation was established.

The Chief Tumulth descendants contended that a treaty should be considered a record of Grand Ronde members prepared by the Department of the Interior.

Many of Chief Tumulth's descendants also contended that they descend from Susan, one of Chief Tumulth's five wives. They maintain that Susan appears on an 1872 census roll of Grand Ronde Indians prepared by the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the name Susan Tumolcha, which they contend is a slightly different spelling of the last name Tumulth.

The Tribal Constitution before Sept. 14, 1999, required, among other things, that members be "descended from a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon" and provided that "descent ... shall include lineal descent from any person who was named on any roll or records of Grand Ronde members prepared by the Department of the Interior prior to the effective date of this Constitution."

Before the two-day meeting, Tribal Council scheduled eight days to review the enrollment files, listen to Enrollment Committee hearing recordings and read the information submitted to the Enrollment Committee.

Because of the gravity of the issue, Tribal Council waived the usual five-minute time limit on providing input at its business meetings.

Late on Thursday, May 1, Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno broke a 4-4 tie on the motion to remand the cases back to the Enrollment Committee, saying he believes committee members have a right to review the new material that was presented. He was joined by Tribal Council Vice Chair Jack Giffen Jr., Tribal Council Secretary Toby McClary and Tribal Council members Ed Pearsall and June Sherer in sending the cases back for review.

Tribal Council members Kathleen Tom, Denise Harvey, Jon A. George and Cheryle A. Kennedy said they voted against the motion

to remand because they were ready to vote on the disenrollment cases at that time.

The Tribal Council meeting is available for viewing on the Tribal website under the Video section.

The disenrollment cases are the result of an enrollment audit that started in early 2013. The audit fulfills one of the tasks assigned by the 2010 Strategic Plan, which directed the Tribe's Enrollment staff to audit enrollment files and applications, track reasons for denials and audit blood quantum records with the goal of strengthening the Tribal family tree.

In other action on April 30, Tribal Council approved the May 18 General Council agenda, which will feature a presentation on economic development and reports from the Veterans Special Event Board and Health Committee.

The General Council meeting was postponed from May 4 so that Tribal members could attend the memorial service for Tribal Elder Charles G. Haller. ■

Tribe hires Jamie Baxter in case of emergencies

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

When the Grand Ronde Tribe hired Jamie Baxter, 59, of West Salem as Emergency Preparedness coordinator early in March, it landed one of the nation's premier emergency professionals.

Baxter served at Ground Zero in the wake of the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. She also served in Haiti in 2010 on the heels of the Samoan tsunami deployment in 2009.

"Real world experience," Baxter says. "That's what I try to bring back here. I like to prepare people for anything that might put us at risk."

Baxter has been a registered nurse for 35 years, both in Silverton and Salem, always in the Emergency departments. She also continues to work with the federal Department of Health and Human Services as a disaster nurse and safety officer.

Baxter also is one of the few internationally certified emergency managers. "There are only a couple thousand in the world," she says.

Now Baxter brings that wealth of experience and training to Grand Ronde in an effort to keep Tribal people and employees safe in an emergency.

"The job is pretty broad in scope," she says of her new duties. She is responsible for preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. Basically, how to keep us safe in a disaster.

Baxter is and will continue to teach and train volunteers about being prepared. "The whole point of preparedness is not just surviving the event, but surviving it economically. So that's part of my job ... to help create resilience," she says.

She orders disaster supplies. Rapid response medical and preparedness kits include small amounts of food, water, flashlight and a



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Jamie Baxter started as the Tribe's Emergency Preparedness coordinator in March.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio to get people through the first few days. She would like to see "a little go-bag" next to everyone's bed and in every Tribal office, with another at home in the garage. She thinks of the bags like people have an extra set of eyeglasses; just in case.

"Right now, I'm doing things incrementally," Baxter says.

She started with a just-implemented mass notification process for everybody on the Tribal campus, in Tribal housing and in the community in the event that something happens on Tribal property, such as a road closure or major accident.

"To give credit," she says, "the Tribe's Information Technology Department brought the mass notification process to the Tribe – I just implemented it."

With that said, she also advises that in the area, "Risks are kind of minimal. We've had some local flooding and some local events, but

no major disasters. We've been very fortunate.

"Our biggest threat is the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a potential earthquake fault along the coastline from British Columbia down to northern California, including, of course, the coasts of Oregon and Washington.

"If the whole thing ruptures, that's a mass disaster."

One of her responsibilities, Baxter says, is putting in the time to search for faults in the local area. She studies maps from the U.S. Geological Service and the Oregon Department of Geology and Min-

eral Industries.

"And there's always the chance of a chemical event if a truck goes over carrying refrigerant, for example. That's one of the bad things. If it happens, we have to respond quickly."

Different Tribal agencies and businesses have their own emergency plans, Baxter says. She mentions the casino among others.

"My job is not to dictate how others should plan, but to help with the coordination, to keep in touch with them. I'm here more as a resource person, to help in any way I can.

"The Chief (Tribal Police Chief Al LaChance; she operates under his program) has been great," she adds. "He is really interested in doing the right thing and bringing the right training and education to the Tribe. He's committed to helping us be prepared."

Look for Baxter giving talks, taking questions and answers on campus and off.

"This is a great job for me at this time in my career," she says. "I want to build a department that is an example to other Tribal nations. I've always loved the Tribe and had friends here. And I really love being able to go the opposite way to traffic."

Her husband, Jeff, is an electrical engineer who manages a software integration company based in Albany. Together, they have five children and seven grandchildren.

Jeff says she lives and breathes this stuff. "He's used to it," she says. "It's just part of who I am." ■

Elder Bingo moved

Elder Bingo will be held at 12:30 p.m. the second and fourth Saturday of the month at the Elders' Activity Center.

For more information, contact Elder Activity Assistant Daniel Ham at 503-879-2233. ■