

Ballots to be mailed June 13

SESSIONS continued from front page

of General Council and enrollment requirements.

Since this is a BIA election, Tribal members have to register with the BIA to vote. On Tuesday, May 18, voter registration packets were mailed to eligible Tribal members and the registration forms must be received at the designated post office box in New Mexico by Tuesday, June 7, for a Tribal member to vote in the election.

Tribal Attorney Rob Greene urged Tribal members not to wait until the last minute to send in their registration forms since they have to be mailed.

Ballots will be mailed on Monday, June 13, to Tribal members who registered to vote with the BIA, and ballots must be received at the Grand Ronde post office by Friday, July 8, to count.

Greene and Senior Staff Attorney Deneen Aubertin Keller split duty in explaining the two proposed constitutional amendments, which were approved by identical 5-2 Tribal Council votes on April 6.

The first proposed amendment would reduce the General Council participation requirements for exercising the power of initiative or referendum and the calling of special General Council meetings.

Greene said that initiatives are something new, such as if General

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Council wanted to pass its own ordinance, and referendums are a reconsideration of something that Tribal Council proposed or previously enacted.

The amendment would reduce the number of General Council signatures required for an initiative or referendum petition from 33 percent of the voting-age membership to 15 percent. Greene said that using current Tribal enrollment numbers, the amendment would reduce the number of signatures needed from 1,323 to 601.

In addition, the amendment would reduce the number of qualified voters who must vote in an initiative or referendum election from at least 30 percent – or 1,202 Tribal members using current enrollment numbers – to 20 percent, or 802 Tribal members.

The amendment does not affect the required margin of approval, which would remain at 66.7 percent of those actually voting to make the election results binding on Tribal Council.

However, Greene said, there are exceptions to the amendment. Or-

dinances and resolutions related to “fundamental decisions,” changes to Tribal reserves and endowments, sale or disposition of natural resources or enrollment requirements will still require at least 30 percent of the General Council membership to sign a petition. “Fundamental decisions,” as defined by the Tribal Constitution, include such unlikely events as termination or diminishment of the Tribe’s Reservation, for example.

The amendment also reduces the number of General Council member signatures required to call a special General Council meeting from 33 percent to 15 percent.

Greene fielded a question from a Tribal member regarding the proposed amendment.

The more complex constitutional amendment proposal is about changing Tribal enrollment requirements.

Currently, Tribal membership requirements for new applications include, among other things, that applicants have at least 1/16th Grand Ronde blood quantum, were born to a parent who was a member of the Tribe at the time of the applicant’s birth and at the time of application, unless the parent is deceased.

Grand Ronde blood is currently defined as “all Indian blood derived from a direct ancestor whose name validly appears on the official Tribal membership roll prepared under the Restoration Act, which may be corrected by Tribal Council with approval from the Secretary of the Interior.”

The proposed amendment would eliminate the requirements that an applicant be born to a parent who was a member of the Grand Ronde Tribe at the time of their birth, as well as the requirement that their parent be a Tribal member at the time of their application.

It also would change the definition of Grand Ronde blood to allow applicants to use all Indian blood derived from a direct ancestor who not only validly appears on the Restoration Roll, but also the Tribal membership roll prepared by the Tribe between Nov. 30, 1984, and Sept. 14, 1999.

The effect, Greene said, could be that applicants who have previously been denied membership because they did not meet the current enrollment requirements may qualify if they re-apply and new applicants may apply and now qualify.

How many? Greene said the number of descendants who could be enrolled if the amendment passes is unknown. Other unknowns include the possibility that some Tribal members will face disenrollment for dual enrollment or other rea-

sons when research is completed regarding “other blood” to be included as Grand Ronde blood and whether DNA testing of nonTribal ancestors to prove “other blood” may be required.

The number of applications denied admission into the Tribe between September 1999 and March 2016 include 113 people for having less than 1/16th Grand Ronde blood quantum, 25 applicants for not having an ancestor on the Restoration Roll, 114 people for not having an ancestor on the Restoration Roll and not having a parent on the roll at the time of their birth, and 176 applicants for not having a parent on the roll.

Before handing the educational presentation over the Keller, Greene reminded Tribal members that the burden to provide documents and other evidence to prove that they meet the enrollment requirements will remain on all applicants.

Keller then guided attendees through examples of how adopting the proposed enrollment requirements could benefit hypothetical applicants in some situations, as well as have no effect in other situations.

“Changing the definition of Grand Ronde blood for purposes of enrollment will increase some individual’s Grand Ronde blood quantum or Indian blood listed on the Tribe’s roll,” she said. “The changed definition would allow an applicant to include all Indian blood from ancestors who were on the Restoration Roll or the Tribe’s roll between Restoration and Sept. 14, 1999 (date of the first constitutional amendment), to calculate whether an applicant meets the minimum blood quantum requirement.”

However, Keller said, the amendment, if approved, would still allow for situations where first cousins with the same lineage and blood quantum could be treated differently in that one cousin could be enrolled and the other cousin could not based on the date of their respective parent’s enrollment.

After the educational presentation, Greene, Keller and Member Services Manager Penny DeLoe fielded questions from the audience.

In closing, Greene said that since this is a BIA election, Tribal members with questions should contact Administrative Officer Lori Anderson at the Warm Springs Agency at 541-553-2439.

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In addition, Tribal Council signed an authorization to proceed to mail out a special edition of *Tilixam Wawa* that will include the PowerPoint presentation used at the educational sessions. The special section was sent to the Tribe’s printing contractor on Tuesday, May 24, and will be mailed first class. ■



HELP BUILD OUR FLOAT

2016 Spirit Mountain Grand Floral Parade

June 8 – 9, 2016

VOLUNTEERS

Room for 30 Employees (*First Come First Served*). All volunteers will be entered in a raffle for City Fair passes with unlimited carnival rides or Rose Cup Race tickets. Folding chairs will be available for those who can not stand for any length of time.

WHERE

Meet at the Main Entrance (*by Mountain View Sports Bar*) at 7:45am.

The bus departs at 8:15am and returns to the casino at 4:30pm.

A continental breakfast and box lunch will be provided. When calling to reserve your space, please specify what kind of sandwich you prefer (*Ham, Turkey, Roast Beef or Tuna*).

PTO

If this is your regularly scheduled day to work, you must request PTO from your department.

CONTACT

Please call Sponsorship Administrator Jocelyn Huffman at 503-879-3054 by June 6, 2016 to register.

Don't forget to place your lunch order, and get any necessary PTO approved.