

Tribal Council OKs grant application to expand Behavioral Health

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved applying for a \$500,000 Indian Community Development Block Grant that, if received, would help the Tribe expand behavioral health services offered by the Health & Wellness Center.

But not without some hesitancy. The federal grant would help design and construct a 1,900-square-foot addition that would provide space for group counseling rooms, offices and confidential lobby space.

According to the resolution approved by Tribal Council in a 5-2 vote, the current Behavioral Health Department offices are small and cannot effectively accommodate family counseling and large group sessions. The demand for drug and alcohol group sessions has almost doubled, the resolution adds.

If the grant is received, the Tribe would need to fund a \$167,000 minimum match in 2018. Building operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$15,000 annually.

The proposed matching grants funds and annual operating costs prompted Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George and Tribal Council member Denise Harvey to vote against the application, citing current review of the Tribal budget and the unknown revenue effect of the opening of the Cowlitz casino in southwestern Washington in late April.

George and Harvey also said they were concerned that the public comment period was still occurring at the time of Tribal Council consideration.

Tribal Council member Kathleen

George said she was originally opposed to applying for the grant for the same reasons, but supported it after finding out that the Tribe can decline the grant if it is awarded and the Tribe has determined that it cannot afford to assume the added yearly expenses. Tribal Council member Brenda Tuomi also supported the application based on the opportunity to have another discussion later.

"I don't think there is anybody on this Tribal Council who doesn't want more mental health services for this Tribe," Kathleen George said. "I don't think that is the issue at all. I think what you are seeing is Tribal Council people struggling with a little bit is that if this grant were awarded it would commit us to \$167,000 in matching funds and \$15,000 per year to support the new construction."

"The issue is simply that we are in the process of doing contingency budgeting and making plans for what at this point is still an unknown impact to our revenue from the new facility."

During the Tuesday, May 2, Legislative Action Committee meeting, Jon A. George said that the Health & Wellness Center was originally designed so that the four wings can be extended.

"It was a medicine wheel when you have an aerial view," Tribal Council Vice Chair Cheryl A. Kennedy, who was the first Health Department director for the Tribe, said. "The top of it is a cedar basket. The tiles were changed so it has a little bit different look now, but that was always the idea, but each

of the corridors were all built to be expanded so we would not have a different shape."

Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno also reported that revenues at Spirit Mountain Casino during the first week of the Cowlitz casino's opening were even with those of the same week in 2016, which is good news since the Tribe estimated annual revenues of more than \$70 million in 2016 and substantially less in 2017.

In other action, Tribal Council:

- Approved an amendment to a contract with Industrial Economics, the Tribe's technical consultant for Portland Harbor and related cleanup and natural resources damage activities, that would update the two scopes of work to reflect current tasks;
- Approved the agenda for the Sunday, May 7, General Council meeting, which will give the membership an overview on the Tribe's strategy for dealing with effects of the Cowlitz casino;
- Re-appointed Jerri Schmidt to the Grand Ronde Gaming Com-

- mission for a three-year term;
- And approved a three-year agreement with Automated Elections Services of Rio Rancho, N.M., to provide the Tribe with continued technical support services during Tribal elections.

Also included in the May 3 Tribal Council packet were authorizations to proceed that allow the University of Oregon to use the Tribal logo for its science campus funding endeavors and directs the Tribal Cannabis Economic Opportunities Team to work with the Tribal Attorney's Office and Finance Officer to conduct a risk analysis and identify issues that may arise if the Tribe decided to engage in different sectors of the cannabis industry.

Cultural Resources Department employees Jordan Mercier and Brian Krehbiel and Tribal youth Kailiyah Krehbiel performed the cultural drumming and singing to open the meeting.

The entire meeting can be viewed on the Tribal website, www.grandronde.org, by clicking on the News tab and then Video. ■

We Want To Hear From You!

That's right, the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center Comment Box is located at the entrance of the Health & Wellness Center, next to the drinking fountain.

Share your experience, good or bad with us! We look forward to hearing what you have to say. ■



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2017 SPRING CELEBRATION

Sharing our traditions: Teaching our children to build strong tribal nations.

SAVE THE DATE

Please join us for the Legislative Commission on Indian Services/Nine Tribes Spring Celebration and kickoff to the 2017 American Indian week in Oregon.

Thursday, May 18, 2017
 Ceremony 9:30am to 11:30am
 Additional presentations during noon hour
 Oregon State Capitol Rotunda

*Special Thanks to Grand Ronde and Spirit Mountain Casino for providing lunchtime refreshments

*Clockwise from top left: Root Digging, CTOUR, Children at Pow Wow, CTRC, Boys Fishing, Klamath, Toddler's 1st cedar bark skin, CTOUR

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May is NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH. YOU can make a difference in a child's life.

Our Foster Care Program actively recruits and certifies applicants who are willing to open their hearts and homes and provide temporary to long-term care for our children in foster care. Requesting more information is the first step in making a positive difference in the life of a child.

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