

Tribal Council OKs 2021 spending plan

By Dean Rhodes
Smoke Signals editor

Tribal Council approved the spending plan for 2021 that reflects a 0.9 percent decrease in expenditures from 2020 during its Wednesday, Dec. 16, meeting.

The draft budget was detailed for Tribal members in the November *Tilixam Wawa* and explained by Tribal Finance Officer Chris Leno in executive session during the Nov. 1 General Council meeting.

Leno said that there were two comments received from the membership during the comment period that ran through Wednesday, Dec. 2.

During the Tuesday, Dec. 15, Legislative Action Committee meeting, Tribal Council Vice Chair Chris Mercier recalled the days of when the Tribe would approve its annual budget on the afternoon of Dec. 31. Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George thanked all staff members involved in putting together the 2021 spending plan.

- In other action, Tribal Council:
- Approved the 161-page Portland Harbor final supplemental restoration plan and environmental assessment, which evaluates and selects specific restoration alternatives and potential environmental effects of those alternatives. The Tribe is one of the trustees for natural resource assessment within the Portland Harbor superfund site;
 - Approved a contract with Salem Radiology Consultants to review certain dental X-rays for the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center;
 - Approved a Tribal credit card with a \$5,000 limit for Warriors of Hope Program Manager Danielle

Murrell to use in the performance of her job duties;

- Re-appointed Tribal Council member Michael Langley as the Tribe's representative on the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation with a term ending in December 2022;
- Re-appointed Tribal Council member Denise Harvey as the Tribe's principal delegate to the National Indian Gaming Association and the paying of the \$25,000 in annual dues;
- And approved the re-enrollment of one person and the enrollment of seven new non-infants because they meet the requirements outlined in the Tribal Constitution and Enrollment Ordinance.

Also included in the Dec. 16 packet was an approved authorization to proceed that suspended all debt withholdings for the December per capita payment.

During a special Tribal Council meeting held on Tuesday, Dec. 22, Tribal Council approved investing in the Baird Capital Global Fund II account and signed off on easements, covenants, conditions and restrictions at the Chemawa Station property in Keizer that is co-owned with the Siletz Tribe.

Tribal Finance Officer Chris Leno said the Tribe has already invested in Baird's Global Fund I account and is moving its funds into the new fund. Senior Staff Attorney Deneen Aubertin Keller said a similar Chemawa Station declaration will be approved by the Siletz Tribal Council.

To watch the entire meeting, visit the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and click on Government and then Videos. ■

Holiday box prep



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

From left, Tribal member Lynn Robertson, community member Roger Schaff, Tribal descendant Laura Mix and Tribal member Claudia Leno fill holiday food boxes at the Grand Ronde Food Bank – *iskam mək^hmək haws* – on Monday, Dec. 14. Approximately 600 holiday food boxes were distributed to 300 families on Saturday, Dec. 19.

Afterhours health line

Tribal members can contact the Afterhours Health Line for questions about health care concerns they may have when the clinic is not open. You can reach the Afterhours Health Line by calling 503-879-2002 and follow the prompts. The Afterhours Health Line will coordinate care and communicate with Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center providers. ■

\$2.2 trillion CARES Act was passed by Congress in March 2020

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that has been constantly shifting and changing.”

Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes reaped about \$200 million in direct payments from the departments of the Treasury and Interior in CARES Act funding, including \$11 million to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, almost \$26 million to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and about \$39 million to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

The \$2.2 trillion CARES Act was passed by Congress in March and Oregon Tribes initially received a combined \$152.7 million in funding, according to a Harvard study that used Treasury's publicly announced formula for determining payments to Tribes. The study estimated that the Grand Ronde Tribe initially received approximately \$33 million in funding. The exact amount, according to the U.S. government website, was in the ballpark at \$31.6 million.

After a hold on 40 percent of the \$8 billion allocated for Tribes ended upon settlement of whether Alaska Native corporations were eligible to receive CARES Act funding, Treasury dispersed the balance to help Native American Tribes weather the COVID-19 storm.

In addition to making direct general welfare payments to Tribal members, the Grand Ronde Tribe has used the federal funding to start a technology grant to buy computers for Tribal member students who must attend school through distance learning, as well as for

Elders to keep them connected with the Tribe and their families.

Funds also have been used to help the Education Department conduct outreach to Tribal students over the summer by sending out boxes filled with educational activities and hire additional employees through the end of 2020.

The Tribe's Housing Department helped Tribal members with mortgage and rental assistance and funds have been used to pay Tribal employees who have worked on COVID-19-related activities or been affected by Tribal office closures caused by the virus.

Community Health hired two COVID-19 relief community health representatives using the funds and the Tribe purchased personal protective equipment for governmental and casino employees and guests.

Other CARES Act-funded projects have included improvements on the Rail Depot and partially funding a pilot child care program in Grand Ronde.

Most recently, the Tribe approved a contract using CARES Act funding to update the audio-visual equipment in Tribal Council Chambers that will allow virtual interaction with the membership.

The CARES Act funding did come with one very important stipulation – that it be spent by the end of 2020. Tribal Finance Officer Chris Leno declined to say how much unspent funds the Grand Ronde Tribe still has left.

However, many Tribes nationwide are hoping the new Congress will extend the spending deadline so that the unspent federal monies can be used to fund Tribal services into 2021. ■

Holiday surprise



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

Nutrition Program Manager Kristy Criss-Lawson, left, and Activities Assistant Virginia Kimsey-Roof presented holiday food baskets during the weekly box lunch distribution held at the Elders Activity Center on Wednesday, Dec. 23. Along with the holiday baskets, which included a turkey coupon, Elders also received gifts.