



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Newly elected Tribal Council member Matthew Haller, left, is congratulated by Tribal Elder and former Tribal Council member Jack Giffen Jr. before the start of the General Council meeting held in Tribal Council Chambers on Sunday, Sept. 10. Haller received 585 votes, the third most votes in this year's Tribal Council election. Incumbent Michael Langley received 584 votes, bringing Haller the win by one vote.

General Council briefed on Spirit Mountain Casino

By Danielle Harrison

Smoke Signals editor

Spirit Mountain Casino Chief Executive Officer Camille Mercier, Chief Operating Officer Clint Johnson and Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board Chairman Andy Jenness gave the first presentation of the 2023-24 General Council meeting cycle on Sunday, Sept. 10.

Mercier gave a 30-minute presentation in executive session and the trio then fielded 20 questions and comments from Tribal members in attendance.

Since the presentation was held in executive session, *Smoke Signals* cannot publish specific details.

In other action, Tribal Election Board member Michael Mercier delivered the Tribal Council election results from Saturday, Sept. 9, that saw two incumbents – Lisa Leno and Chris Mercier – re-elected to three-year terms. First-time challenger Matthew Haller secured the third seat, beating two-term Tribal Council member Michael Langley by one vote.

The one-vote separation between candidates is the closest in an election since 1983's Restoration. The previous record for closest race between third and fourth place during a Tribal Council election occurred in 2015 when Tribal Council member Jon A. George received two more votes than the late Steve Bobb Sr. to capture a seat on Tribal Council.

The next General Council meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 1, and will feature an annual presentation on the Tribe's endowments.

Haylee Dehart, Mike Portwood and David Leno won the \$100 door prizes and Deborah Good, Kelli Matthews, Mike Wilson, Emma Leno and Peter Grout won the \$50 prizes.

The non-executive session portion of the meeting can be viewed by visiting the Tribal government's website at www.grandronde.org and clicking on the Government tab and then Videos.

Tribal members wanting to see the executive session portion should contact Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez at stacia.martin@grandronde.org or call 503-879-2304. ■

Clifford 'leads with joy, empathy and compassion for all those around her'

AWARD continued
from front page

Award. The latter "celebrates a person or entity that demonstrates leadership in shaping, preserving and fostering appreciation of local heritage – past, present and future."

Clifford, 71, has helped guide the city of Springfield and Willamalane Parks in crafting a land acknowledgement. She also supported a mural focused upon Indigenous history in the mid-Willamette Valley and designed and organized the annual Red Dress Poetry in the Park event that honors missing and murdered Indigenous women.

"Marta has devoted her life's work to bringing awareness of Native American issues in and around the city of Springfield and strives to be a good caretaker of Kalapuya Illihi," said Stephanie Tabibian (Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Indian Reservation), an education assistant director at the University of Oregon's College of Education, in her nominating letter, citing Clifford's work on Poetry in the Park held at Springfield's Heron Park.

Tabibian said that Clifford juggles her volunteer activities while also working a full-time job.

"Marta also collaborates with Willamalane, providing guidance on appropriate land acknowledgements and park signage, and conducting Kalapuya Talking

Stones tours for staff. In addition to all this, and a full-time job, she is the Elder-in-Residence at the University of Oregon Theatre Department and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Academic Residential Community. Whenever there is a community discussion regarding making improvements for Indigenous and Tribal representation in Springfield, Marta is there – always willing to assist, teach and provide feedback. She leads with joy, empathy and compassion for all those around her."

In addition, Clifford and Theresa May, University of Oregon professor of Theatre Arts, co-founded the Illioo Native Theatre, which celebrates and showcases Native, First Nations and Indigenous dramatists and artists through productions, concert readings and workshops.

Illioo recently received \$52,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation to support "Blue-Jay's Canoe," a new form of play developed in collaboration with Oregon Indigenous community members and knowledge holders, and focusing on water-related lifeways of Oregon's Indigenous peoples.

Clifford, who works full-time as a government procurement specialist for the Government Contract Assistance Program, lives in Springfield with her husband, Al. ■

Tribal nonemergency text line

The Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department has a nonemergency text line at 541-921-2927.

"If you have a nonemergency situation or question, feel free to contact my officer via text through this line," said Grand Ronde Tribal Police Chief Jake McKnight. "When one of my officers receives the text, they will call you back when they have time."

McKnight said that emergency situations still require calling 911. For more information, contact McKnight at 503-879-1474. ■