

# Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council

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## **SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES** **Tribal Chambers ~ Nixon, NV** **October 8, 2025, Special**

### **Members Present:**

Steven Wadsworth, Tribal Chairman  
Loren Decker, Councilmember  
Nathan Dunn, Councilmember  
Georgina Wadsworth, Councilmember  
Della John, Councilmember

Edward Ely III, Vice Chairman  
Judith Davis, Councilmember  
Nicholas Cortez, Councilmember  
John Guerrero, Councilmember  
Ceira Sampson, Councilmember

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Wadsworth called the October 8, 2025, Special Tribal Council meeting of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council to order at 5:02 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

Brenda A. Henry, Tribal Council Secretary, took roll call. Councilmember John arrived at 5:04 p.m., Councilmember Wadsworth arrived at 5:06 p.m. and Councilmembers Cortez and Davis arrived at 5:10 p.m. All other Councilmembers were present at roll call, and a quorum was established for this meeting.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Wadsworth presented the agenda for the October 8, 2025, Special Council meeting with no changes.

Councilmember Dunn motioned to *approve the October 8, 2025, Special Council meeting*. Councilmember Decker seconded the motion. Votes were five (5) for and zero (0) opposed with zero (0) abstentions.

### **MOTION PASSED**

**PUBLIC COMMENT.** No public comment

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Councilmember John arrived at 5:04 p.m.

### **1. Discussion and Possible Action Furlough and Budget.**

Pamela Wright, Grants Administrator, said she wasn't sure what the Council was looking for since she was not a part of any discussions prior to the decision making for the furloughs but she provided a grants worksheet and grant R&Es for the Council to view. For grant cash flow, everything is moving forward as normal, except for the Institute of Museum Library Services (IMLS) which is one of the Cultural/Library grants. The notice they received from the IMLS said they can keep working however, they won't get reimbursed until the shutdown ends.

Vice Chairman Ely said he was the one who made the motion to have a special meeting, what he is looking for is what departments have funding to keep moving forward. If the shutdown in Washington continues which departments will run out of funding and when should they be concerned? On Friday night it sounded like all departments from the Executive Team (E-Team) members had funding to keep going. It was a cautious move on the Chairman and E-teams part but hearing from all the E-Team members, there was enough funding to keep going. They retracted the furloughs and all departments moved on but he suggested they have a meeting now to hear from the Comptroller but she is not present, or do they even have one, and from the E-Team and the departments, if they are concerned. Departments should know the funding they have, what funding has been turned into the Finance Department and what bills are in and out. He didn't want Ms. Wright to feel like he was putting her on the spot. Ms. Wright said she didn't blame the Council, there was just no communication occurring within their department.

Councilmember Wadsworth arrived at 5:06 p.m.

Vice Chairman Ely asked if there were any grants that stood out on the spreadsheet and the Tribal funding that shows concern where they may need to address while the departments are present. Ms. Wright said she is concerned about a couple of the 638 programs where they received more indirect funding than they have direct funding. Law Enforcement is one program; they have more indirect than they have remaining direct funds. They have \$174,000 remaining as of September 30<sup>th</sup> and if this shutdown continues and there are no further approvals of continuing resolutions from Congress then that fund will probably have to end or shut down for a while until 2026 funding starts. She asked the directors to reach out to their agency representatives to find out what is going on but, of course, now there is nobody in those offices. Departments just need to keep an eye on their budgets. She did an indirect funding comparison as of August 31<sup>st</sup> and the spending on those indirect programs is more than the revenue they received. They will have to watch the spending for the remainder of the year on the indirect programs. As of August, their spending has exceeded the revenue by \$214,000, and she hasn't run indirect for September yet. Law Enforcement has other funding, there are funds in the tribal funds, it's just the one BIA program that might run low. Roads Maintenance might be the other program that would be short.

Councilmembers Cortez and Davis arrived at 5:10 p.m.

Councilmember Dunn asked with the other programs, are they looking at a possibility of half time. Ms. Wright said she didn't think they were at that point yet. When she was hearing the 638 programs were going to get furloughed, she sent an email to the E-Team to tell them that nobody was subject to furlough at that time, and they are not at the time now either. Councilmember Dunn said he asked at the last meeting to just have a plan in place. Chairman Wadsworth said that was the point of having a furlough policy and how

it came into place to take the steps now and to watch what happens in case this goes longer, but obviously that didn't work.

Vice Chairman Ely asked how long they thought they can keep their heads above water considering the situation in Washington, 30-40 days, can they make it that long with all the programs.

Ms. Wright said all the agencies that have responded say they can continue working because they are still able to do drawdowns, all of them with exception to the IMLS program. That is why she is saying they are not at that point yet, until they say you can't access those clearing houses where they bring down the funds, which is when it stops.

Vice Chairman Ely asked if there were any warnings or it's just nope you can't drawdown any more funds. Ms. Wright said it's whatever was in the news. Chairman Wadsworth added that is why he provided the Council with the memos because on Friday they received a memo saying they can continue to operate then they get another one that says you can try but it might not work.

Councilmember Davis asked when they draw down, how far in advance can they draw down? Ms. Wright said the last time they did this, she drew down three months in advance. There is no guideline for this but if they say the clearing houses are still open, they can keep operating month to month like they have been. As the Council knows, they have never been in a situation that lasted longer than a couple of weeks. For the 638 programs they have received all that was allocated for them already and a lot of them have unspent funds, that's why they can keep going. If Congress passes the continuing resolution, then they will get another batch of funds. Historically they will start receiving the 2026 funding in March of that year once they are notified by the funding agency.

Councilmember John said the Tribe moved their fiscal year to January to December because the federal calendar goes from September to October and they wouldn't award the tribes until way later, so the Tribe moved their fiscal year to accommodate receiving the funds. Ms. Wright said it must have occurred before she came on because it was always calendar year and a lot of the grants are fiscal year grants, and it doesn't really impact the Tribe.

Councilmember Decker asked what happens to those two departments when it gets close to where it's going to be a concern. Ms. Wright said it would be up to their supervisors; they would have to prepare and make the necessary motions to prepare for layoffs. They need to participate in those decisions rather than having the finance department tell them they are being cut off.

Vice Chairman Ely asked to hear from the Executive Team members on their concerns about the departments they oversee and how long they think their departments can sustain themselves if the shutdown continues.

Trish Conner, Executive officer said she has concerns if this goes longer than two months, we're already in a deficit budget for this calendar year for our tribal funds and we're basically using the forward funded grant funds, the 638 funds, to pay upfront the reimbursable grants and any shortfall in IDC from the Tribal funds.

Every year they are chomping at \$3 million of that money that is saved for something else, for example a 638 program but they keep using it, they can't keep doing that. It's a bad habit, if the Council would look at the second tab of the spreadsheet provided by Ms. Wright, there is reimbursed verses forward funded, there is a lot of money in forward funded, it looks great but it's meant for certain programs and they have been spending it every year on shortfalls and to front for reimbursements, it's not smart business.

Benjamin John, Business Officer, said the only one he questioned was the Food Distribution Program, the manager reached out to their funding agency and was told they were allowed to use all their funding that was there; they prefer them to do it on a reimbursement but if they need it now, to draw it down and use it for year 2025-26 federal fiscal year. The manager did work on, just in case, how she could reduce staff and still provide services.

Sherry Ely-Mendes, Programs Officer, said she has the same concerns that Ms. Conner mentioned. They are okay now because of the forward funded funds but it's not assured when the government opens up whether they are going to get the funds reimbursed because the agencies she has called are not available because they are furloughed and she's unable to get a firm answer. With the grant funding she is not as concerned because at some point they will resolve their issues at the federal level. She believed they will get funded at the 2025 levels or slightly lower. Her biggest concern is the Tribal budgets because they are cutting into their projected budgets, and she is not sure if their projections are on target or are they lower or are they still \$3 million in the hole. They must make changes to supplant some of the things being spent out. This was before they were brought back because people were coming to her worried about being laid off and she already knew what type of funding was sitting in those 638 programs and there was no need for it. Some programs can even go into 2026.

Ms. Wright said they have always told and expected programs that have Tribal funds and federal funds to spend their federal funds first but that is not happening. As for forward funded funds, they are fine which is why she sent out the email that nobody needs to be furloughed.

Ms. Ely-Mendes said she doesn't think there is an answer for it, if they don't have real money and they're projecting something that is not occurring, it's probably something they need to find out before they do an analysis of what they're going to be like on January 1<sup>st</sup>, regardless of the shutdown, regardless of whether they are going to open back up or not. She thinks every grant will be funded but travel funding is going to be an issue. It's not an issue now because people are spending it because there are some programs that must spend it because they don't have any other funding. What she is talking about is when they will have to spend it and they don't have it. That is her concern, and she agrees with Ms. Wright, they are fully funded, they can get through it and for those with grants they will be funded or will be funded at some point. She has faith in the American government but it's going to take time.

Councilmember Guerrero asked about the 638 contracts for Transportation, that funding is paused. The BIA funding for Transportation, how much on that contract did they draw down. Ms. Wright said Transportation doesn't have 638 programs, they don't have 638 funds, they have program agreement funds which they had to draw all of that down before which is what they did the previous year also. Chairman

Wadsworth added over the last year, he is not 638 in the traditional sense, it's the Programmatic Agreement which is a contract, and they drew it down all up front.

Chairman Wadsworth said for the Natural Resources Department he was speaking with Ms. Wright earlier and there was still about \$283,000 to draw down, but Ms. Wright said since then all their draw downs have been completed up to August but there are about six that ended September 30<sup>th</sup> and she asked the department if they had extensions and they were trying to get those done but she hasn't seen any official approvals for any extensions yet. Chairman Wadsworth said the Pyramid Lake Tribal Health Clinic (PLTHC) has their forward funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the only one she is worried about is the Diabetes Program. Dawna Brown, PLTHC Director said she got word from the Diabetes Program that if they have the funds to spend then they can spend until their funds are dispersed. They moved their two employees over to another fund code to save them and that is the impact they've had. Chairman Wadsworth said the other department he supervises is the Police Department and the Council has received that report already.

Vice Chairman Ely asked if there was an estimated time where they should start being concerned. Ms. Wright said they are still operational, they can still do their monthly drawdowns normally, no program has come to a full stop except for ILMS, who can still work but they won't get reimbursed. Chairman Wadsworth said that's the uncertainty, they can operate now but for how much longer, they don't know. Ms. Wright said in the case of Law Enforcement and one of the Natural Resources older funds from 638, they have more indirect than they need and they were strict about not allowing them to use that money for direct. In these cases, she thinks the Tribe should try to work with them to allow them to reprogram that money so they can be spent 100% instead of just sitting there. It's a fund that is closed because they can't spend out of it anymore, but there is approximately \$200,000 remaining in indirect and that money can be used in direct funding, if the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) would let them. She doesn't know why BIA would pay like that; they never followed the indirect cost rates anyway.

Councilmember John said that is why it's important that the Council gets the breakdown of revenue because they did a lot of work with NV Energy and they had to pay the Tribe 20 years back payment, which should be coming to the General Fund as well as any penalties as well as the new rates. So, they should have that revenue, plus releasing CEMEX, so some of the revenue they had before they still have. When they look at the revenue from last year it was flat, the same as the year before and the year before that, but they're cutting 20% from departments. Ms. Wright said they had a surplus in 2022 or 2023 but that was spent quickly. It should have carried forward but it didn't. Councilmember John said they must be more prudent in doing that because services to the people are what matters, along with what the staff implements, and they be appreciated for the work they do.

Councilmember Decker asked what are they doing with the furlough policy, so they are not in the same situation again? Do they initiate when they start hearing furlough, start looking at finance and the budgets, tell the directors where they're at with their budgets. Ms. Wright said what she would like to see when there is word of a furlough, the directors taking their R&Es from a certain point in time and take those balances that are remaining in those line items and project out to find out how much money they are going to need by a certain period year end.

Councilmember Sampson said she would like to see the directors, supervisors, managers, departments work with their E-Team members and develop a policy for their departments because they know them best and know where to cut within their departments and then up the chain to the Chairman. Because they can't provide services to the people if everyone is laid off.

Councilmember John said she drafted a Laps in Appropriations Policy for the Tribe and provided to past Chairmans and Comptrollers but they still haven't adopted anything like this. She will introduce it again. It's based off the OMB; it's something the federal agencies do when they do this every year.

Ms. Wright said when it comes to policy decisions, she is not sure if she would be allowed into the Executive Session, but that is one thing she wanted to let the Council know is their needs, the Finance Department has outdated policies and their internal controls don't mean anything because processes and technology has changed. Councilmember John said that is how they will get audit findings if they don't follow their own internal controls, it protects the employee, the person handling the funds and the reporting and the Tribe.

Councilmember Cortez said personally he thinks furlough is the last resort. Move it towards the end of the year or remind people to cut some of your hours or cut something else or like Councilmember Wadsworth mentioned, with travel, do that first before they get to the point where they're out of funds, it's time to furlough, run it until they can't anymore. One thing he wanted to say to the directors and the ones that were affected, he is personally sorry they were stressed this past week, it shouldn't have gone the way it went down. There were people with real emotions who were scared, he apologizes because as the Council, they should have been more involved. They should have been planning with the E-Team ahead of time and they failed. He failed by not reaching out to ask what this was going to look like, or if this was coming up, should they be keeping an eye on it? He apologized to all directors in the chambers.

Donna Noel, Natural Resources Director said when the people working under grants get furloughed, it hurts the Tribe because they are not getting paid their salaries and fringe, which all goes to indirect costs. It's something to consider when they are thinking about furloughs.

Brian Wadsworth, Tribal member, said it's a good idea because a while back a previous Comptroller laid out a no travel policy, and he's not sure if she understood the grants already it have outlined within their grants and it hurt the Tribe by not allowing those programs to travel by allowing them to spend down what was written in their grants. The Council should take that into consideration as well instead of doing a blanket policy for all programs.

Councilmember Davis said for now they are status quo, for at least another 30 days. If the furlough is still going in 30 days, she would like to have another meeting like this so they are all on the same page if it happens again, if they are still in a furlough next month and to have the Finance Department in attendance with the director's input.

Councilmember John asked if they are still on for a quarterly budget meeting on October 22, 2025. Chairman confirmed they were scheduled for that date.

Consensus of the Council was to have another meeting on October 29, 2025 at 5 p.m.

Ms. Wright asked the directors to request R&Es from her office; she is not sure why the communication was diverted away but she always handled the R&Es. Chairman Wadsworth asked if that was the duties of the GL account, but Ms. Wright said she had a list of other duties but not grants. Chairman Wadsworth said they will further review the duties.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Cortez motioned to *move into Executive session*. Councilmember Sampson seconded the motion. Votes were nine (9) for and zero (0) opposed with zero (0) abstentions. **MOTION PASSED.** *Tribal Council moved into Executive Session at 5:44 p.m.*

Councilmember Dunn motioned to *move out of Executive session*. Vice Chairman Ely seconded the motion. Votes were nine (9) for and zero (0) opposed with zero (0) abstentions. **MOTION PASSED.** *Tribal Council moved into Executive Session at 6:53 p.m.*

### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Tribal Council, Councilmember Cortez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Ely. Votes taken were all in favor, **motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Submitted by,




Brenda A. Henry  
Tribal Council Secretary

## CERTIFICATION

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The foregoing minutes were adopted by the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council, governing body of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, at a meeting duly held on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, having nine (9) members present, constituting a quorum, by the vote of seven (7) FOR and zero (0) OPPOSED, with one (1) ABSTENTION.

Minutes attested and concurred by:

  
Steven Wadsworth, Tribal Chairman  
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council

*Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council  
October 8, 2025, Special minutes*

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