

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Tribal Chambers ~ Nixon, NV January 2, 2026, Regular Incoming

Members Present:

Steven Wadsworth, Tribal Chairman
Nicholas Cortez, Councilmember
Judith Davis, Councilmember
Loren Decker, Councilmember
Nathan Dunn, Councilmember

Edward Ely III, Vice Chairman
John Guerrero, Councilmember
Della John, Councilmember
Ceira Sampson, Councilmember
Georgina Wadsworth, Councilmember

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Wadsworth called the January 2, 2026, Regular Incoming Tribal Council meeting of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council to order at 6:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Brenda A. Henry, Tribal Council Secretary. All Councilmembers were present at the roll call and a quorum was established for this meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Wadsworth presented the agenda.

Councilmember Decker requested to add a discussion under new business for the position of the Pyramid Lake Fisheries Director.

Councilmember Dunn motioned to *approve the agenda with the addition*. Councilmember Sampson seconded the motion. Votes were nine (9) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED**

PUBLIC COMMENT.

Carla Eben, Tribal member. Ms. Eben wanted to ensure the Tribe follows FMLA, because her job should have been protected, she should have been offered something else. She felt like it was her against the HR Department when they're supposed to be helping them; they're supposed to protect the Tribe, but she is a part of the Tribe too. She would like the Council to follow up on that or get familiar with it because she had to learn about it and feel like it wasn't in her best interest.

Councilmember John stepped down from her Council position to make a public comment.

Della John, Tribal member. Ms. John said they approved mitigation for flood damage which may come down the river and it's concerning because of their farmland, if it gets washed away, they can't ask for that water right anymore because it's not in production. With the atmospheric river, the snow and rain, she wonders how prepared the Tribe is in case there is a flood because they have terraced their boundaries and they're going to get the water out of Reno as fast as possible. The water is going to hit the Reservation, their farmlands and people who live close to the river. She's concerned because where they live in Wadsworth, their whole field is gone, her husband tried to mitigate it with equipment, but they lost the field and she's sure she is not the only one. The Tribe received \$17 million mitigation money, and they put it in interest and did zero projects for the river flooding. That is her concern because they should have been doing projects, there should have been a priority list, but nobody is looking for it. Not sure what department this falls under but the farmers themselves may need to get together and form a coalition so they can protect their farmland because if you lose the irrigation water, they can't ask for it. It's not going to be in the river system, it's not going to come down the river and get into the fields and go to the lake once that happens, the farmlands are gone and there is no more production which is one of their most important water rights, they can't lose it. It'll be like Dodge Flats where they have 38,000-acre feet up there, they can't use it, it stays in the system, the Water Master puts it anywhere he wants it, whoever he feels is going to need it, but it's not coming to the Reservation. The Governor has already changed the Water Master; he got rid of the old Federal Water Master, and she doesn't know what impact that is going to have on the Reservation. It seems like they're opening public lands, they will probably try to open Reservation lands because a lot of people look at the Reservation, they think it's all public land. The Tribe owns it, which is kind of true because it's held in trust for the Indians. They have to be strong and protect water rights. Councilmember John returned to her Council seat.

Leona Collins, Tribal member. Ms. Collins congratulated the incumbents who've been reelected. The Council needs an ethics policy; it would come to the Council but there would never be any action on it. It's time for one to be drafted for the Council to follow. There also needs to be meeting with the general membership regarding the financial status of the Tribe. It's discussed at the meetings but not everyone attends meeting, the information needs to be put out to the membership. There are some on the Council that have been on for one/two years now and what progress has been made, is there any forward progress, is there anything going to be done with economic development, how are they going to get revenue for the Tribe, this information is important to the membership. She heard on the news there is a possibility of another government shutdown on January 30th, is there any plans for the Tribe in case that happens.

Jette Porrazzo, Executive Director, Stop Sierra Reflections for Good Coalition in Washoe Valley. Mr. Perrazzo said they have partnered with the Washoe Tribe who he is helping with a landmark land back deal and wanted to invite the Tribe to join them in solidarity. He also heard the Tribe might need help in this type of situation and wants to offer his skills as a multimedia journalist and a paralegal. Years ago, the Tribe helped him out when he was in a bad situation and wanted to help the Tribe out. There is a big development in Washoe Valley they are working on stopping, he is unable to talk logistics but would like to consult with the Tribe's legal counsel and Chairman. He's been in contact with Chairman Sorrell and Billy Hawk Enos and they're preparing for something this coming week but wanted to reach out to the Tribe. There is a website the Council can check out, they have an official state and county petition to stop the development and to give the land back to the Washoe Tribe for Conservation Stewardship only. It's about 1,000 acres in Washoe Valley. They also have the backing of Washoe Valley residents as well. Over 800 have already signed the petition. ssgr4gc.org

NEW BUSINESS

1. Selection of Tribal Council Representatives for Boards.

Chairman Wadsworth stated all the incumbents are staying on. Vice Chairman Ely mentioned he would like to step down from the NUMU Inc Board. Councilmember Dunn said in regard to Vice Chairman Ely, it's crucial they keep consistency with the members because they are almost at that point where they are almost done with litigation but if it's the Vice Chairman's personal choice to step down. Vice Chairman Ely asked who else is on two boards? He was appointed by the Council to the PL Fisheries BOT and NUMU Inc. Councilmember John said she was also on two boards.

a. Pyramid Lake Fisheries Board of Trustees (BOT).

Councilmember Dunn served out the remaining year on the PL Fisheries BOT.

Councilmember Cortez nominated Councilmember Dunn to serve as the Council representative on the PL Fisheries BOT, with Councilmember Decker seconding the nomination. Councilmember Dunn accepted the nomination.

Vice Chairman Ely motioned to *appoint Councilmember Dunn to the Pyramid Lake Fisheries Board of Trustees as the Tribal Council Representative for one year*. Councilmember Decker seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with one (1) **abstention** (Dunn). **MOTION PASSED**

b. Pyramid Lake Tribal Health Clinic Health Board.

Councilmember Sampson has nominated Councilmember Cortez. Councilmember John seconded the nomination.

Councilmember Dunn motioned to *appoint Councilmember Cortez to the Pyramid Lake Tribal Health Clinic Health Board as the Tribal Council Representative*. Councilmember Davis seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with one (1) **abstention** (Cortez). **MOTION PASSED**

c. NUMU Inc. Board of Directors.

Vice Chairman Ely nominated Councilmember John. Councilmember Decker seconded the nomination.

It was confirmed this position was only until the lawsuit was completed. Councilmember Davis stated that was the original motion.

Chairman Wadsworth said that relates to what Vice Chairman Ely was saying about possibly stepping away from the board, there were discussions years ago when he was on the board as Vice Chairman about finally opening it up for the public. How does the Council feel about allowing the Vice Chairman to step away and get someone to the public seated. Councilmember Cortez said with the current directive to have those that are currently seated to see it through because they would have the knowledge to finish the litigation. Councilmember Dunn added then they can open it up to the public because that was the original plan. Councilmember Davis agreed that once the litigation was complete, they can open it up except for the Tribal Council liaison. Councilmember John said it's important because when they put the Council on the

corporation board, it's called piercing the corporate veil, so they can't apply for funding or grants due to conflict but it's a special purpose appointment just to get the title and land back.

Vice Chairman Ely motioned to *appoint Councilmember John to the NUMU Inc Board of Directors*. Councilmember Cortez seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with one (1) **abstention** (John). **MOTION PASSED**

2. Discussion Tribal Council Retreat.

The Council agreed on Sunday, January 11, 2026, at 10 a.m. in Tribal Chambers to hold their retreat. This is only for the Council and not open to the public.

Chairman Wadsworth said some topics would be the ethics policy and discussion on the direction the Tribe is going. Jolyne Sander said the ethics code is sitting at the Law and Order Committee's table now and they have a meeting next week. It should be moving quickly since it's already gone for a legal review.

Councilmember Cortez added community meetings to the discussion for the retreat to provide information to the communities.

Ms. Collins said it's important for every Councilmember to attend.

3. Selection Law and Order committee Vacancy (1 vacancy)

Councilmember Cortez had a question about one of the applications because last year this individual applied for a committee and isn't sure they had the residence for the full year as advertised in the posting. It was noted it was less than a year. It was confirmed per the ordinance that states the committee shall consist of five members who shall be at least 21 years of age and be a resident of the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation for one year.

Chairman Wadsworth said they have two applicants: Stephanie TwoHearts and Maureen Williams plus an option to repost. Ms. Sander asked if the applicant from the first posting resubmitted her application. The response was she did not resubmit.

Stephanie TwoHearts received one (1) vote, Maureen Williams received four (4) votes and four (4) votes to repost. Chairman Wadsworth chose Maureen Williams to break the tie.

Councilmember Davis said they need to clarify the discussion about being a resident for one year because they just voted with discussion that one might not have met the requirements, but they proceeded with the vote anyway. She doesn't want to set a precedence where they discuss individual status then keep them in for the vote in the future, which needs to be clear.

Councilmember Guerrero said it was clear in the posting that they must live on the Reservation for a year.

Councilmember Davis said per their discussion they just had; one didn't qualify because of that one year, so they should not have voted, that applicant should have been eliminated from the vote. That is what she was trying to get across but they already voted so they need to make that clear.

Chairman Wadsworth said they will get that clarified. He recommended they add a box to the committee/board application form about how long they have lived on the Reservation based on one of their other discussions it's dependent on which board or committee has these requirements, because not all of them have that requirement. When it comes to Elections on the residency requirements it goes back to the Election Board to determine whether they meet the qualifications. They don't have anything for boards and committees.

Something to add to their list for the retreat.

Councilmember Cortez thinks it would follow the complaint process; you would make a complaint against the board for violation of residency requirements as a complaint.

Councilmember Dunn asked what everyone thought about a new practice where they have people running for committees and boards to be present so they can speak and the audience can hear what they are saying instead of the Council voting on an application.

Ms. Collins said while the Council is talking about qualifications for boards and committees, have they considered term limits. There are some standing committees they can't do anything about, but they might be able to set term limits on the others. Chairman Wadsworth said it would depend on the board or committee and what they have in their bylaws. Each board and committee are different, and it was noted the Health Board, Housing and Fisheries have term limits. Councilmember Davis said they all do except for the three standing committees that don't: Law and Order Committee, Election Board, and Enrollment Committee.

Stephanie TwoHearts, explained she was approved for a land assignment in 2020 and wasn't given an address. She has been fighting with the Roads Department, PUD, and asking for assistance just to get an address. She has put down payment on a home twice with Clayton Homes and each time it's been the Tribe impeding. And now the Council is saying her residency is an issue, but she can't even get her land established to be able to continue living on the Reservation. It doesn't make sense how the Council puts limits on people but then the Council is the reason her and her children haven't been able to get established in their own home. They have to live with family in order to even be able to make anything better here. For six years now she has been trying to get established and the Council has denied various applications because of that simple aspect, when her knowledge and everything else isn't impeding her. Chairman Wadsworth said that is a fair assessment of the current situation. Ms. Sander said Housing is the department that gives out the addresses for the new residents. Ms. TwoHearts said she went to the Housing but because the roads have to be graded and there is no funding, all she got was excuses. They told her to go to the Land and Resource Committee, but they wouldn't even look up from their notebooks when she was trying to ask questions. There are people in these positions who are not open to understanding or listening to people when people are trying to improve things and fight for positive impacts. The Council is

talking about a government shutdown, and she is a small business licensed owner where her funds could be put back into the economy and it's not fair to her or her children who are enrolled members when they are not allowed to be involved because they haven't lived here that long. It doesn't make sense.

Richard Frazier, Tribal Land Manager, said he's mentioned this before at this level for a number of years, but recently it came down to a funding issue because those roads, sites and addresses in Sutcliffe are not being handled. It's not whether they are getting an address from Housing, it's the funding that comes out of here to put those roads in. Chairman Wadsworth said he was thinking about a conversation at this level where it was brought up and this is something they will have to discuss at the retreat which is a Tribal Planner on staff which may help the situation for issues specifically like this. Councilmember John said they have a Transportation Planner who works and determines what are Tribal roads, gravel roads, and paved roads. This could be coordinated with the staff they already have on board.

Councilmember Dunn said it's up to the landowner or the person that applies for that land assignment to grade the roads to their property. That's something they need to do to educate the public.

Ms. TwoHearts stated legally, it's up to the Tribe to bring the water and the sewer lines to the boundary and then it's from the boundary line to wherever the water and sewer is going to be that is up to the member. Chairman Wadsworth said no that issue has come up many times to the Council level and it's not how it works legally. Ms. TwoHearts asked when it was removed out of the Land and Resource Ordinance because she spoke to Ben John about it, when she first applied and that was what she was told by PUD.

Ms. Sander said this is one of the things the Council needs to look at during their retreat, is the infrastructure and when they had the ARPA funds and other funds it was discussed. With them on the board and giving out these assignments, these individuals are made aware of water, electricity, and roads, they don't realize the cost until they start looking into it, all of these need to be in place. The Tribe isn't going to put it in for them. The question she was going to ask was did the Council establish whether Ms. TwoHearts is a resident or not. Ms. TwoHearts stated she is a resident; she resides on Tufa Rock Road in Sutcliffe with her grandfather and aunt while trying to get her land assignment established. She had the payment included in the payment they were putting in for the home but because they don't have an address, she couldn't get a bid for the well. She had lived with her grandparents her whole life but lived in Reno for a year last year but then because of everything that was happening she moved back home to help family and has been back since last summer.

Ms. Sander asked that the Council meet with the boards and committees. She just got back on the Law and Order Committee after being off for about six years and it's different. There are issues because there are no communications with the Council and what their expectations are. Does the Council get copies of the minutes? If they did, they would have known that the ethics code was sitting with the committee waiting for action. Originally when the Council decided to have the second meeting it was for inter-department, boards, and committees but she didn't see the boards and committees present. For her sitting on the boards and committees that she sits on, if she wasn't in these Council meetings listening to what the Council is discussing she would have no clue to what is going on boards and committee wise or what the Council is looking for in the boards and committees. When Randy Hunter was the Programs Manager, he

came to all the board and committee meetings, and she hasn't seen anybody else since; it might be wise for the Council to be more involved. It was mentioned to have the Chairmans of the boards and committees come before the Council to provide a briefing every month.

Councilmember Cortez said comments were made by multiple community members about committees not following Roberts Rules of Order; there is a resolution for the Council to use it as a guideline, but the committees are not and it might just be not having any education on it because of turnover or change in positions.

Councilmember Dunn asked if they could put them on the agenda for the second meeting and start that practice. Chairman Wadsworth clarified the Chairman of the boards, committees, or a representative to attend the second meeting to provide a report.

Ms. Sander said this would also be a good time for the Council to follow up with any directives, something they ran into with the Elections Board, if there were directives from the Council because some of the boards are constantly changing.

Councilmember Davis said from her view, they don't see some committees or boards because they may have a department head or Executive Team member they work with and may have to go through them who will speak on their behalf. Chairman Wadsworth said it kind of goes against the chain of command because they're going from a non-employee to employee up to non-employees here and it makes it confusing. And for the public, that's not all the boards and committees because some of them don't report to a department, they're on their own.

4. Kemp Jones LLP Tribal Attorney Contract with Resolution. *Chris Mixson, Tribal Attorney, Kemp Jones LLP*

Mr. Mixson is requesting approval of their two-year Water Attorney Contract with resolution. The prior contract ended on December 31, 2025, and this one is for CY2026-27, the only difference, he is requesting a small increase of his hourly rate of \$325 to \$350 an hour, this would only be for him and nobody else, the other attorneys and the firm would remain the same.

Councilmember Dunn motioned to *approve the Kemp Jones LLP CY2026-27 Tribal Attorney Contract with resolution*. Councilmember Cortez seconded the motion. Votes were nine (9) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED. RESOLUTION NO.: PL 002-26 KEMP JONES LLP TRIBAL ATTORNEY CONTRACT**

5. Discussion Pyramid Lake Fisheries Director.

Councilmember Decker said it's been almost a year and wanted to get the Council's thoughts on reconsidering the one applicant for the position because anybody is better than having nobody in that position. Councilmember Davis said they have an interim in the position that knows the Fisheries. Councilmember Dunn said it's up to the candidate to do the footwork; if they treat one person with special interests and then they have to treat everybody else the same. Councilmember Davis added they are bypassing the board. Councilmember Sampson commented on the statement that anybody is better than

nobody; Finance is a perfect example, look at where they are currently at. They really need to review the applicants.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Tribal Council, Councilmember Dunn 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 7:12 p.m.

Submitted by,



Brenda A. Henry
Tribal Council Secretary

CERTIFICATION

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 6th day of **February 2026**, having **ten (10)** members present, constituting a quorum, by the vote of **nine (9)** FOR and **zero (0)** OPPOSED, with **zero (0)** ABSTENTIONS.

Minutes attested and concurred by: 
Steven Wadsworth, Tribal Chairman
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council

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