

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council

*Post Office Box 256
Nixon, Nevada 89424
Telephone: (775) 574-1000
Fax (775) 574-1054*

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

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 Outgoing Tribal Council meeting of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Brenda A. Henry, Tribal Council Secretary. Councilmember Dunn arrived at 5:45 p.m. and Councilmember John arrived at 5:04 p.m. All other Councilmembers were present at the roll call and a quorum was established for this meeting. Councilmember Guerrero was in attendance via zoom.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Wadsworth presented the agenda with the addition under New Business #1a. Discussion and possible action – Protest/Challenge.

Councilmember Cortez requested to move item #2 under the Consent Agenda to its own section under Enrollment to schedule the 3 rejection hearings.

Councilmember Davis motioned to *approve the agenda with the addition and change*. Councilmember Sampson seconded the motion. Votes were seven (7) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**.
MOTION PASSED.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

Councilmember John arrived at 5:04 p.m.

Carla Eben, Tribal member. Ms. Eben stated she retired after working for the Tribe since 2001. She submitted complaint #016. She received the response to that complaint on October 20, 2025, when they had their

meeting. Since the time had expired on that one, she submitted a second complaint which was complaint #017 and to date she has not received a response back. It should have been processed and completed on October 27, 2025. One of her requests in the second complaint was to have her back pay, she was told by the HR Department she had enough donated hours. She was told she had enough donated hours to cover four pay periods which would have taken her to the end of her FMLA or very close to it. She did get payment for the hours she had but, in this complaint, she asked for back pay. Her question to the HR Department was how many people from when this new HR ruling came about with the donated hours, when did it go into effect? And was there anyone else affected by it or denied. She knows there are people who did get paid, but she didn't and that's discrimination. She was told during the payday week that she wouldn't be getting paid and wasn't going to be paid anymore. She doesn't know where but thinks she should be paid those hours

Councilmember Davis requested a response be brought back at the next Council meeting on January 16, 2026.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were presented the consent agenda.

1. Approval Enrollment three (3) Applications with Resolution – Regular Membership
2. Approval of Stetson Engineers November 2025 Invoices.
 - a. Invoice #1336-01-2511, Expert Witness Testimony Hearings
 - b. Invoice #1336-2511, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
 - c. Invoice #2958-004, Indian Ditch Fish Screen
 - d. Invoice #2837-029, Well Design Herman Ditch
 - e. Invoice #2751-046, Numana Dam Fish Passage Project

Councilmember Cortez motioned to *approve items #1 and #3a.b.c.d.& e.* Vice Chairman Ely seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED.**
RESOLUTION NO.: PL 001-26 ENROLLMENT REGULAR MEMBERSHIP (3)

Chairman Wadsworth announced the new Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Members: Za'Niyah Love Little-Ninete, Kekoa William Runge, and Kainoa Adelic Osiris Sauter.

ENROLLMENT Joanne Shaw – Enrollment Officer

1. Approval Enrollment Recommendation to Schedule three (3) Rejection Hearings – Adults

Ms. Shaw is asking to schedule three rejection hearings. She is asking for February 6, 2026, Regular Council meeting, she must have 20 days for notification.

Vice Chairman Ely had motioned to *schedule 3 rejection hearings on February 6, 2026.* Councilmember Decker seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED**

MINUTES

a. December 19, 2025, Special

Councilmember John said on page 11 she was talking about Marble Bluff, with the Tribe giving the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permission to put Pikes Peak fish into the river. She had concerns about the USFWS putting all their four actions into one action, it was okay to kill the rainbow but she didn't like releasing them into the river, she would like that added because she was against it plus allowing them to do the studies up the river when it should be the PL Fisheries doing those studies. She would like all that to be put on the record.

Councilmember Davis had a correction on page 3 where they were talking with Marisa Mauwee, at the end she would like added where the Chairman responded yes to only the legal counsels speaking to each other because she wanted to speak on behalf of their counsel and they said no.

Councilmember Sampson motioned to *table the December 19, 2025, Special minutes for corrections*. Councilmember Davis seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED**

Councilmember Davis asked when they would receive the minutes to November 21, 2025, Special meeting? The minutes would be ready for approval at the January 16, 2026, Special meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Election Board – 2025 General Election. Election Board

Jolyne Sander, Election Board, provided an overview of the 2025 General Election. Polls opened at 6 a.m. and closed at 6 p.m. There were 265 in person votes, 75 absentee ballots were counted for a total of 340 ballots casted and counted. Tribal Council under votes were 103 and the school board under votes were 63. 118 absentee ballots were mailed by Automated Election Services (AES), and a total of 79 absentee ballots were mailed back to the Tribe. 4 ballots were not signed and could not be counted, so there were 75 absentee ballots that were counted and processed. 39 absentee ballots were either not mailed back or did not make it to the Tribal Post Office by Election Day. They did go to the Post Office on Saturday after the mail was in and retrieved 7 ballots which they counted. They had 2 ballots come in the mail since Election Day and those, of course, could not be counted. There were two at the polls who reported they did not receive their absentee ballots, but they didn't follow up with the Tribal Secretary or AES. There was one individual who didn't receive his ballot, and she followed up with Terry Rainey on the status. The ballots can be tracked, she doesn't know why it took so long to get to the Post Office, hoping that individual did receive it but it would have been too late anyways. She's not sure how they can remedy that because they are trying to give everyone the opportunity to vote where they're also collecting mail on Saturday. It's just their responsibility to get them requested and in the mail as quickly as they can. Communication with Mr. Rainey was good this year, between the Tribal Secretary, Enrollment and the Board for address updates.

Top four (4) positions for the Tribal Council seats were Nicholas Cortez with 184 votes, Judith Davis with 165, John Guerrero with 163 and Della John with 146 and Carolyn Harry with 146, a tie for fourth place. School Board was Hailey Dunn with 198 votes, and Jake Chapin with 156.

In accordance with the Tribal Election Ordinance, Section 11.0.1.020 in the event of a tie vote, the ballots shall be immediately recounted by the Tribal Election Board. If the tie vote is confirmed, the Tribal Council shall determine the election by ballot. The ballots were recounted and verified. There is a tie.

Councilmember Davis asked if the under votes were counted. Ms. Sander said the under votes is where individuals voted but only marked one or two people instead of the four. They are still counted; they can vote up to four.

a. Challenge – Carol Smith.

Ms. Sander stated the Council should have received the packet for the challenge from Carol Smith, Tribal member, the Board, met on Tuesday, January 30, 2025, at 8:30 am. and reviewed the challenge. The challenge is against the election itself, which is how Ms. Smith labeled it, but the challenge is actually more about her not being on the ballot which they addressed. There was a timeline for that. *It was asked if the Council would like for her to read each of the points from the challenge along with the Boards response. The response was yes for the record.*

Ms. Sander stated Ms. Smith met the 72-hour deadline in accordance with the Election Ordinance, Chapter 13. The Board reviewed the challenge and came to the following conclusions.

On September 22, 2025, Ms. Smith noticed her name was not on the 2025 candidate's list. Ms. Smith had also received a letter from the Tribal Secretary, Brenda Henry, informing her that her candidacy was deemed non-compliant due to her not being in good standing with the Tribe. The letter also informed Ms. Smith that if she had any questions regarding this letter, it would be addressed to the Election Board. The Board's response: Ms. Smith did not respond to the letter that was sent to her from the Tribal Secretary, nor did she contact the Election Board to question why she was not placed on the candidate's list for the 2025 Election. A timeline was set and accepted by the Tribal Council at the August 1, 2025, meeting. The deadline to protest challenges to the candidates list was September 29 ,2025 at 4:30 p.m. This would have given Ms. Smith seven days to protest or challenge the candidate's list, which she did not. *The Board found this challenge unfounded.*

Ms. Smith challenged the Personnel Policy Section 5-3, Eligibility for Rehire. Ms. Smith states she is not applying for a position but running for public office. The Board's response: although the Tribe's Personnel Policy does not apply to Tribal Council directly. The Election Ordinance 10.01.030 clearly states that candidates will complete and submit paperwork and fingerprints, allowing the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to conduct a full background investigation equal to the high-risk designation as outlined in the Tribe's Personnel Policies and Procedures. Kim Dunn, Tribal Background Investigator, was asked to join the meeting to explain the background process. *The Board found this challenge unfounded.*

Ms. Smith's challenge states she submitted her background information on September 15, 2025, and questions the timeframe as to whether the background was fully completed and adjudicated. The board's response: Ms. Dunn assured the Election Board the background standard operating procedures (SOP) were followed. Ms. Dunn stated that what the board receives is a provisional background, and reference letters

were mailed out, of which two were received back for Ms. Smith. *The Board found this challenge unfounded.* It was noted the Election Board does not receive specific information on the candidate's background and is not provided with specific information as to why they are unfavorable. The Election Board makes a recommendation to Tribal Council on the information that is provided, and a motion is made by Tribal Council and voted on. In this case, the recommendation was presented by the Election Board to Tribal Council on September 19, 2025, the motion was made and voted on.

Ms. Smith challenged that she never received a determination notice of a favorable or unfavorable background. Response from the board is that this is incorrect, as Ms. Smith stated she received a letter from the Tribal Secretary dated September 22, 2025 (copy of letter provided to the Council.) *The Board found this challenge unfounded.*

Ms. Smith challenged that she was slandered by Jolyne Sander in an open Tribal Council meeting on September 19, 2025. The Board's response after reviewing the Tribal Council minutes verbatim, dated September 19, 2025, and was found to be false. The minutes do not reflect what Ms. Smith stated. *The Board found this challenge founded.*

The Election Board then postponed any decisions regarding the challenge until a meeting could be scheduled with Ms. Smith. The Election Board felt Ms. Smith should have the opportunity to meet with the Election Board before making a recommendation regarding the challenge with the Council. The Tribal Secretary was asked to send an email to Ms. Smith requesting her to attend a meeting on January 2, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. Ms. Smith respectfully declined to attend. A copy of the email is attached,

Ms. Sander continued, in accordance with the Pyramid Lake Election Ordinance, Chapter 13, Challenges. Any challenge for protesting the conduct of the election or the election results shall be presented in 72 hours following the posting of the election results. Time will be recorded on it to the Tribal Secretary, and no challenges shall be considered thereafter. The Tribal Secretary shall submit any and all challenges to the Tribal Election Board, following the end of the 72 hours. The Tribal Election Board shall then determine if the challenge is valid and will make the recommendation. The Board's recommendation shall then be presented to Tribal Council. Challenges shall be heard by the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council at the next Regular or Special Tribal Council meeting, and the decision of the Tribal Council shall be final. Only a qualified voter may challenge the process or results of an election.

The Election Board reviewed the response prior to this Council meeting, and a motion was made by Suzie Albright and Karole McQueen, Election Board members, that the challenge to the 2025 Election was unfounded by the Election Board and to move forward to present to the Council. Included for the Council review is the numbered attachments. Ms. Smith was also informed she would be on the agenda but unfortunately with the death of her sister and the viewing at the funeral home, she could not make it. Ms. Sander is speculating but if Ms. Smith had possibly met with them earlier in the morning as requested, they could have addressed a lot of the issues, but she didn't have any interest. Also, this was also discussed at the Council meeting when the Council certified the candidates on September 19, 2025, where they did have one that filed a challenge by the deadline and he was heard at the Council meeting.

Councilmember Decker said he just received the documents. Ms. Sander said all the Council just got the information. The elections were last Saturday, and the Board met three times in the past week on the elections. Councilmember Decker asked if there was a time crunch to allow Ms. Smith to be present to tell her side. Ms. Sander reminded him the Council wouldn't be able to certify the election. Councilmember John said you can't control when someone passes and she deserves to tell the Council her side along with the committee's side. Ms. Sander said the Board agrees and that is why they asked for a meeting with her this morning so they could hear what she had to say and try and resolve any questions. Again, if the challenge was for the election, it's understandable but this challenge was not for the election, if you read the challenge, it was for her not being on the candidate's list. There was a deadline to challenge the candidate's list, and she stated in her letter she was aware she wasn't on the candidate's list on September 22, 2025, when she saw it posted. She also received a letter from the Tribal Secretary on September 22, 2025. This was per the timeline the Council approved which had the deadline to protest or challenge the candidate's list, which was September 29, 2025.

Councilmember John made a motion to *table until Ms. Smith could appear before the Council to state her side*. There was no second to the motion. The motion failed.

Leona Collins asked if the motion to table made by Councilmember John passed, it would have put everything on hold, correct? Chairman Wadsworth stated it would delay the certifying of the 2025 Election results. Councilmember John said it would have possibly required another election. Ms. Sander said she didn't believe her challenge would constitute having a new election. The facts were looked at when the candidate's list came forward to the Council and Ms. Smith had the opportunity to question it then, just like one of the other candidates who was denied the candidacy.

Vice Chairman Ely motioned to *approve the recommendation of the Election Board as they found the challenge unfounded*. Councilmember Davis seconded the motion. Votes were seven (7) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with one (1) **abstention** (John). **MOTION PASSED**

b. 2025 General Election - Certification of Election Results.

Ms. Sander explained they are certifying the result numbers.

Top four (4) positions for the Tribal Council seats were Nicholas Cortez with 184 votes, Judith Davis with 165, John Guerrero with 163 and Della John with 146 and Carolyn Harry with 146, a tie for fourth place.

Top two (2) positions for the School Board were Hailey Dunn with 198 votes, and Jake Chapin with 156.

Councilmember Sampson motioned to *certify the 2025 Election Results*. Councilmember Decker seconded the motion. Votes were six (6) **for** and zero (0) **opposed** with two (2) **abstentions** (John, Cortez). **MOTION PASSED**

c. Discussion and Selection of the 2025 General Election Tie.

Ms. Sander explained per the Election Ordinance, the tie breaker is done by ballot.

Ms. Collin said back in 2018, there was a tie for Vice Chairman between Gina Wadsworth and Alan Mandell and wonders what was done back then to break the tie. Ms. Sander said she checked the minutes and it was done by ballot.

Della John received six (6) votes and Carolyn Harry received one (1) vote. Della John was declared the winner for the fourth seat on the Tribal Council.

Councilmember Dunn arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Councilmember Guerrero said in 2018 the Election Board was supposed to research changing the wording on that last section for breaking a tie by ballot because it can be read two ways. He wasn't positive but thinks it was a directive in the minutes to change. Ms. Sander read from the Election Ordinance Section 1.01.020 Tie Vote. In the event of a tie vote, the ballots shall be recounted immediately by the Tribal Election Board, which they did. If the tie vote is confirmed, which it was, the Tribal council shall determine the election by ballot. That is all it states. They will be working on amendments starting in February. Ms. Collins said back in 2018, the recommendation was to readdress that portion of the ordinance, and it looks like it wasn't done. Councilmember Guerrero said his understanding is the Council is the one that makes the vote. It was confirmed that is what they just did. Councilmember Cortez said it was recommended to make it a little clearer because at the time, it was seen as ambiguous with the Council. Ms. Sander said they are finding a lot in the Election Ordinance as each year goes by, something new, so amendments definitely need to be made again, even though this ordinance was approved in 2024, which was for the Secretarial Election.

2. Request for Approval to Accept Donated Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire Truck. *Don Pelt, Fire Chief*

Mr. Pelt said the department routinely works with their cooperator at BLM on receiving donated surplus fire vehicles and equipment from the BLM who hold an obligation to provide additional fire protection on the Reservation. He was notified in 2025 that the BLM had a 2011 Ford F550 Super Duty four-wheel drive type six fire engine coming out for surplus. The vehicle has 82,782 miles on it with a diesel engine. The vehicle is currently at the Palomino Valley Fire Station. The Chairman had a little concern and asked this be brought to the Council for discussion and decision. The BLM assessment indicated the vehicle had two minor issues, one was an oil leak, and the issue is that a foam injector pump doesn't work. He advised the Chairman the foam injector pumps have a cheap motor in them, and they go out rather quickly. At the Chairman's request he contacted BLM to request how bad the leak was and he was told the truck has a minor leak but doesn't use a lot of oil and doesn't leave a puddle on the ground, it's just seeping around some of the seals and based on a report from Corwin Ford, they said based on the age it's not an uncommon occurrence for them to leak a small amount of oil. This truck was a reserve truck at Palomino Valley and didn't get a lot of use. His recommendation is to accept the truck which will give them a third vehicle for the Sutcliffe Station, which does not have a patrol vehicle. It's a small fire truck to get onto the beaches for RV fires or firework fires as well as getting into the hills for wildfire season.

Councilmember Cortez asked about the price that it would cost for repair. Mr. Pelt said Corwin Ford sent a two-page quote for every single seal and gasket in the truck which came up to \$5,607.22 plus labor at \$12,276.50. That is to replace every single seal and gasket at the same time which is not practical. They did

receive another truck previously from the same station in Palomino Valley three years ago and to date have spent \$1,500 for two front steer tires plus \$4,000 on routine maintenance.

Councilmember Decker asked if he had enough in his line item in case it does gradually gets worse. Mr. Pelt said currently they don't.

Councilmember Dunn asked what he was going to do with the other vehicles. Mr. Pelt said the Chairman was finally able to get the last Comptroller to sign off on surplus those assets. He has already sold three and got them out of the yard. He has another buy, but they are waiting for the weather to calm down so they can get over the hill from California, they will be buying two of the old ambulances. He also has an old pickup and an old fire car marked for sale already, they are phasing them out. It just took a long time to get the asset disposal sheets signed. Councilmember Cortez wanted to know how much it would cost to convert the decals. Mr. Pelt said that it usually runs about \$2,500 but he has some decals in the station from other vehicles that they didn't use, so he can get the decals on the vehicles right away.

Councilmember John said the reason it takes so long is because of the way the property disposal and property management manual works, every item the Tribe gets belongs to the Tribe and they decide what they want to do with the surplus. Mr. Pelt said all their vehicles are offered to other programs before they go up for asset disposal. The vehicles they typically receive come from the Police Department and they're already pretty beat up and worn out but they are offered to other programs in accordance with the policy. Councilmember John said her point is they belong to the Tribe and if they decide to sell it, that money goes to the general fund, it doesn't have to go back to the department because the title is in the Tribe's name, they carry the liability. Mr. Pelt said he understands what is said but there is also a resolution that allows for the Fire Department vehicles which goes into a special earmarked fund for truck and vehicle replacement for the Fire Department. That is under fund code 30314. Chairman Wadsworth said that is the general overall scope they need to get a handle on because their policies are not meshing with each other and they need to clean them up.

Councilmember Decker motioned to *approve the acceptance of the donated BLM Fire Truck*. Councilmember Dunn seconded the motion. Votes were eight (8) **for** and one (1) **opposed** (Ely) with zero (0) **abstentions**. **MOTION PASSED.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

The swearing-in of the new 2026 Tribal Councilmembers commenced during the break before the start of the January 2, 2025, Regular (Incoming) meeting. Councilmember Guerrero was sworn-in separately via zoom.

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 **March 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

//
//
/