

# Local News

## Tribal Caucus Set For Saturday, May 4th at 10 a.m.

Akwasasne -- Members of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe will caucus this week to choose candidates for nine (9) different offices to run in the upcoming June 1, 1996 tribal election.

The caucus will be held at 10 a.m., on Saturday, May 4, in the Community Building. The caucus will be run by the Tribal Election Board according to provisions set forth in the Tribal Constitution and the Tribe's governmental branches.

In the Executive Branch, candidates will be selected to vie for four-year terms for a Tribal Chief and a Vice-Chief.

In the Legislative Branch, three Tribal Council seats will also be on the ballot. One full three-year term and two, one-year terms to complete the unexpired terms of Phillip Tarbell, who has resigned his current seat effective June 30, and Fred White, who passed away in 1995.

The Judicial Branch will have four vacancies to be filled in the

June 21 election, all of which are seven year terms. A Chief Judge, two Associate Judges and an Appeals Judge will all appear on the ballot.

The Elections and Voting Regulations, which were passed last month, outline a wide variety of specific provisions for the nomination and election of tribal officials. The regulations also discuss voter and candidate eligibility, and the new absentee ballot provision.

Copies of the regulations are available in the Tribal Clerk's office. Also, copies of the list of eligible voters for the upcoming election can be reviewed in the offices of the Tribal Clerk and the Tribal Chief Executive's Secretary.

According to the regulations, the Tribal Caucus, which has traditionally been held two weeks before the election, will now be held on the first Saturday in May. The caucus will be run by the Election Board, instead of the Tribal

Council, which has run the caucus in years past.

Anyone who is eligible to vote in the tribal election "has the right to propose or second the nomination of any duly qualified person....," according to the regulations.

Nominated candidates must "establish his or her eligibility by completing and executing a sworn statement that he or she fulfills the eligibility requirements contained (in the regulations). "If a candidate wishes to withdraw from the election, he or she must do so by filing a 'Notice of Withdrawal,' with the Election Board.

Candidate eligibility has changed under the new regulations. In order to run for Chief or Vice Chief, a candidate must: be at least 30 years old; be an enrolled member of the Tribe; "have resided on the U.S. portion of the reservation or lived south of the U.S./Canada border and reside within a designated land claims area for more than

one year; have been nominated by two tribally enrolled members; and not have been convicted of a felony under the major crimes act within the past five years," according to the regulations.

Tribal Council and Tribal Clerk candidates must meet the same criteria with the exception of the age requirement. The candidates for these positions need only be 25 years old.

The eligibility requirement for Judicial Branch positions are outlined in the Constitution, however, the regulations go one step further by requiring judge candidates to meet the same residency requirement as the other elected officials.

All nominations will be reviewed for eligibility by the Election Board in the 10 days following the caucus. When the review is complete, a final list of official candidates will be prepared for the ballot.

### Memorandum

To: Chiefs of the Mohawk Council of Akwasasne  
From: Grand Chief Russell Roundpoint  
Date: May 1, 1996  
Re: Salary Increase

During the past few weeks, there has been a lot of discussion, debate and rumor concerning the salary increase which Council provided to me in my capacity as Grand Chief. It appears that there is a great deal of confusion in the community surrounding this whole issue and members of the community are not in favor of granting a salary increase at this time. I am well aware of the fact that members of Council researched the salary issue and more importantly, found that the funding to cover this increase was available and wouldn't cause any problems with any other program area. I understand from your research, that in the past, the salary for the Grand Chief's position was increased five times between 1986 to 1993. It is also my understanding that those increases were not brought forward for public scrutiny.

I appreciate the generous gesture of a salary increase but I cannot in good conscience accept such an increase if it is causing consternation within the community. I must state that I am somewhat disappointed at the way the whole affair was mishandled and I am somewhat at a loss over the reasons for the opposition to the salary increase in light of the fact that the public seems to have no qualms about paying non-Mohawk consultants upwards of \$450.00 per day for less services. I would like to thank the members of Council for their support and following conversations and consultations with several members of Council, I feel it is appropriate to decline the salary increase and to revert to the previous salary level effective this day.

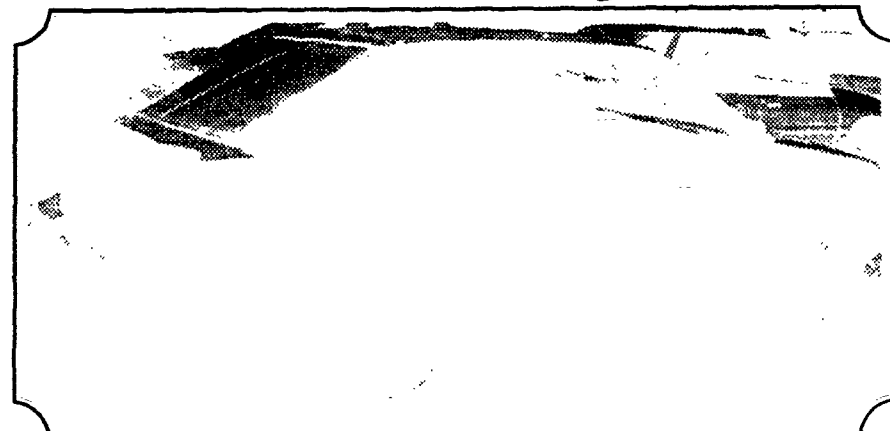
I would suggest that as part of the Governance Manual that the Mohawk Council establish the proper protocol for dealing with issues such as salary increases for elected officials. As usual, I would be pleased to work with you and offer my guidance on this topic. A copy of this letter is also being offered to the local newspapers for public dissemination of my decision and I would hope that the strain felt by certain individuals in the community is eased.

Once Again, thank you for your offer, however, at this time and pending approval from the community, I must decline the salary increase.

Respectfully,

Russell Roundpoint,  
Grand Chief.

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