

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED NEW TSESHAHT FIRST NATION CUSTOM ELECTION CODE 2020

1) The Tseshaht Voters will now select the Chief Councillor.

Previously, the Voters selected the nine council members and then the councillors selected which of them will be Chief Councillor. Many Tseshaht said they want to select the Chief Councillor and now the Code will provide for that. There will be two ballots: one for Chief Councillor and one for the eight Council members.

2) Incorporation of Tseshaht Culture into the Election Code.

This Election Code will, as much as possible, incorporate Tseshaht culture into the Code by: providing eagle feathers and cedar branches for those who want to hold them while voting, starting the voting day with a chant and a song, putting cedar branches over the polling station doors, and tying the date of the election to the moon cycle. The election will still happen in mid-spring and on a Saturday. However, the exact Saturday for the election will be during a growing moon. Thus, the election will be tied to the Tseshaht view of time and not the calendar used by Canada and other countries.

3) The Establishment of a Tseshaht Advisory and Appeal Process

The Code requires the establishment of a Tseshaht Advisory Committee. That Committee will act as a resource to the Head Electoral Officer and will also hear appeals of decisions. The committee will consist of one Hereditary Chief from Tseshaht and four other Tseshaht members. The committee will be paid for their meeting time at the same rate as other Tseshaht committee members are paid.

4) Criminal Record and Bankruptcy Disclosure

In the past, a criminal record could be a bar to running in an election. This new Code will leave it up to the voters to decide. The person running for office must disclose their criminal record if they have one and the nature of their convictions. However, it will be up to the voter to determine if the conviction is so serious or so recent that it influences their vote.

5) Increasing Voter Participation

This new Code attempts to increase the ways people can vote. There will be a special voting opportunity for those Tseshaht in the Alberni Valley who want to vote but who cannot do so due to physical challenges or because they are hospitalized. The Head Electoral Officer can go to them with a ballot. People living away from home can also vote via email.

-Hugh Braker