

Andy Hello everyone and welcome to our podcast. My name is Andy Taylor and I am the Public relations assistant for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. And today I have Becky Goulet. Becky, how are you?

Becky Good. Thank you.

Andy All right, Becky, tell us about yourself. What is your job title?

Becky I work in tribal court and my job title is Deputy Court Administrator.

Andy And how long have you been with the courts?

Becky Oh, about 24 years.

Andy Oh, just a short while. A little bit. So let's get to know you a little bit, Becky. What, what is your favorite hobby?

Becky Right now my favorite hobby is canning.

Andy All right. What are we canning?

Becky Just about everything. Mostly tomatoes and apples right now.

Andy It's the season?

Becky Yes, it is.

Andy And when you're not canning, what do you do?

Becky Spend time with grandkids.

Andy Nice. And how many grandkids you got?

Becky Six.

Andy That's awesome. I love the babies. What is your favorite vacation that you've ever taken.

Becky My favorite vacation is we went to Hawaii and did nothing. Sit on a beach and went to a luau.

Andy That's probably going to be one of my favorite vacations too. My favorite vacation that we've ever taken is we we like to go out to no man's land. Washougal, Washington. We have this cabin we've rented a couple times now, and there's no cell phone service. There is no internet. It's just us in this cabin, and it's on the lake.

Andy Or, I guess the Washougal River. And so we have just been playing in the river, collecting rocks, swimming and enjoying no time frames.

Becky So fun!

Andy It's amazing. So I agree, that's probably.... plus you were in the warm weather.

Becky We were in the sun.

Andy Well, Becky, you seem like a very stylish person. I've always admired your style. You're always fancy. I don't know how to get dressed. I just wear a lot of black. I don't know how to match anything. Do you shop a lot?

Becky Not really.

Andy No?

Becky I try to find base pieces that you can add stuff to.

Andy What does that mean?

Becky You know, like if you have black slacks and shoes and or boots, then you can add stuff. Sweaters or blouses, layers.

Andy Okay. Yeah. I don't I don't know how to get dressed.

Becky I also had two daughters.

Andy They were probably pretty helpful. Yep. Okay, so let's dive into our agenda, our questions, regarding tribal courts. So tell me about the tribal court set up. How is it operating?

Becky So tribal court is set up. There are two staff, myself and Dianne McLeod, who is the court administrator. We have a chief judge who is Mark B. Williams, and we have an associate judge, Diane Henkel's, and then if needed, we have, pro tem judges that we can call in, if needed. Like for appeal cases.

Andy And what is a pro tem?

Becky It is a judge that we bring in who isn't technically a full time judge. So there part time, on call.

Andy And they are with like the county or other districts.

Becky They're within the state. There, to be a judge. You have to... well we have different types of courts, but for judges like this, they have to be a licensed attorney. And, or, have gone to an accredited law school.

Andy Thank you. So let's talk about maybe some spokespersons that you guys might have with the tribal court system.

Becky So currently we have limited spokespersons. A few of them are attorneys from Newport. We are, looking for additional spokespersons. You do not have to be an attorney to be a spokesperson in our court. So if anybody is interested in becoming a spokesperson in tribal court, you can contact our office for more information. And we could go from there because it's kind of a semi involved.

Becky You know, we have an ordinance, a criteria.

Andy Okay. And so to be sure, I have this right, anybody can sign up for it.

Becky Anybody can be a spokesperson in tribal court.

Andy Okay.

Becky Once they've completed the application process and gone through that okay.

Andy And what does a spokesperson do.

Becky So typically a spokesperson can assist an individual who's accessing services through tribal court. Like you would see an attorney in state court, except we call them spokespersons here in tribal court. And they don't have to be a licensed attorney.

Andy What is the mission of Tribal Court?

Becky I have that right here. The mission is to protect the rights of the tribe and its members, to enforce obligations and law while maintaining the sovereignty of the tribe as an Indian nation.

Andy This is a question that you might not know the answer to. But how long has that been? The tribal court mission like, as far as you can remember, back or.

Becky I'm going to say as far as I can remember back.

Andy That's a good mission though. So what sort of resources are there within our tribal court system?

Becky So within our tribal court system, we are, the judicial branch of the tribal government, and we follow the ordinances that have been set out for tribal court. For instance, we have a housing ordinance where individuals can come if there's issues with housing. We just recently received a grant, and the funds are available with Legal Aid in Newport to qualifying tribal members until June 30th of 2025 for legal assistance with housing cases, restraining orders and responses to Garnishments and legal aid can also offer assistance with legal forms that may require legal advice, such as power of attorney.

Becky So while tribal court offers to notaries, we as staff cannot give legal advice, we can, help you with procedure, how to fill out the forms but not actual legal advice.

Andy All right. And so where do the two notaries how are they found?

Becky That is myself and Dianne, we're in Tribal court.

Andy Okay. And do we have to call and set up an appointment for that?

Becky It works best. Some days we have courts. Some days we take a vacation. So it's best if you give us a call there also are a couple other notaries within the tribe. So if you call, front desk, obviously Diane and I could be your first option. And if we're not here, we could, route you to somebody else.

Andy Okay. And is there a fee for that?

Becky No fee.

Andy Do you serve community and tribal members or, some. Okay, good to know.

Becky Yeah. We're notaries with the state of Oregon, not with the tribe.

Andy So I didn't know there was going to be a difference, but.

Becky Okay, well, some people think that since we work for the tribe, we're a tribal notary.

Andy Okay?

Becky We're really, commissioned through the state of Oregon. So we serve our people.

Andy I like that.

Becky An additional resource that tribal court has is access to our child support liaison. And she is specific for any case from the Siletz Tribe. Regardless if you are being garnished your work wages or for per capita. And she is available for questions and assistance. Her name is Brandi Maldonado. She is out of the Albany DCS office, and she can be contacted with questions regarding child support, specifically, (541) 967-6778.

Andy Okay. And that is really helpful information for our tribe members to reach out to if they have any questions.

Becky Yes. And this year we had attempted to have her available, I believe, three different times. I think we started in the month of May, June or April, May and June, to be available at specific times, for tribal members or members who were being garnished to come down and talk to her to see if they could get their child support issues resolved, or if they needed help filling out paperwork that was required.

Becky She was here for about two hours to answer questions, and we are going to try and do that again. Coming up in 2025.

Andy I find it crazy right now that you're just planning for 2025, but we are almost at the end of the year.

Becky We are.

Andy Is her information on our website anywhere or is it?

Becky It is not. But if you have a question regarding child support, you could call tribal court and we can give you her contact number.

Andy What type of cases are you guys able to handle? I know that you guys don't handle all, but like what do you handle?

Becky So currently, tribal court has jurisdiction for civil cases. So we don't have criminal jurisdiction. So all of our ordinances that are listed on the website are cases that can come through tribal court.

Andy And where would we find that? On the tribal website? Just in tribal court, yes.

Becky So if you go to the tribe's website, tribal court is under the tribal government tab, and we are listed as court and justice. And then there is, a tab for ordinances.

Andy And then what kind of cases can't you handle and why?

Becky How we don't handle criminal cases. And tribal court is only allowed to handle cases that we have an ordinance for.

Andy You guys can handle certain divorces, right?

Becky Correct.

Andy But not family law style divorces.

Becky So you'd have to read our divorce ordinance. Okay, so, it's pretty specific. So while it doesn't disallow for family law, they do have to agree upon it.

Andy Okay? We're not going to fight about it in court. We're going to agree that this is, you know, the the dissolution of our marriage. But you know, we're still family kind of thing.

Becky More like. We're going to split the kids. This is what we have. This is what we agree on. You're not gonna be able to come in and say, you have the judge decide what's going where and who gets what. And, okay.

Andy And I know that you guys handle adoptions because I handled my adoption through tribal court. Yes, it was an epic moment. It was a pretty amazing time. So, but again, it was not, it was all agreed on. And so I was able to have my husband, adopt my oldest son pretty seamlessly.

Becky Yep. And that is in our juvenile code. So it's all laid out.

Andy It was awesome. Okay. So are there any additional services that you guys offer. Probably. But you're on the spot.

Becky We're super helpful. No. I can't think of any additional services. I mean all services related to questions for tribal court. We do have a notary service.

Andy And of course, that new grant.

Becky Yes, we have the new grant. So that'll be exciting to, offer certain services that we haven't been able to offer before. Because we have been getting a lot of questions about power of attorney. What type of form, which is all considered legal advice. So that'll be nice to be able to refer them to legal aid, that they could get the help that they need.

Andy Are there any fees in tribal court?

Becky So there are certain fees when you are filing a case. And those are also listed on the website.

Andy Okay. So in CTSI.nsn.us, then Tribal Government, then Tribal Courts?

Becky Correct.

Andy Fee list is right there. Okay. And is there fees for members nonmembers. Is it higher for non, well... you can't file if you are a nonmember. Correct?

Becky It depends.

Andy Depends on if maybe you had a child who was a member kind of thing.

Becky It's type of case. Because don't forget we also have jurisdiction over Chinook winds.

Andy Oh okay. That's good to know. All right.

Becky So the fee list is based on the type of case, not based on the person filing.

Andy I wouldn't have thought that. Yes. Okay.

Becky So the fee for filing, say, a complaint or an appeal is going to be the same. If you were a tribal member or a non tribal member.

Andy Good to know. Thank you. So are all the forms needed to file anything, in tribal court online or do you have additional forms or is it, you know, case by case.

Becky It's case by case. And then there are some of our more requested forms online that individuals can access. And if you don't see it online, we can get it to you.

Andy So contact your tribal court reps if you need help with that.

Becky Correct.

Andy So who do we contact with questions about tribal court? I mean, obviously you said earlier we can call the front desk and they can route you up or route person up to you. Do we contact you? Do we contact.

Becky You can contact tribal court. All of our contact information is also on the website. If you're not a big website user, our phone numbers (541) 444-8228. And Diane and I will be happy to help you however we can.

Andy Is there anything that you think that we should cover that we didn't cover, that you think is really valuable for our membership and our listeners to know?

Becky I think if you have a question, you're probably better off to give us a call and see if it's something, that's available through tribal court.

Becky And then also with this new grant, we may be able to refer you to Legal aid, for certain assistance.

Andy I want to ask about the grant just a little bit more.

Becky Okay.

Andy How did we do? We apply for that?

Becky We did apply for that.

Andy Okay.

Becky That's the first grant I've ever written. Yeah, maybe my last, but congratulations. Thank you.

Andy So. And that was through the state.

Becky That was through the DOJ BIA.

Andy So the Department of Justice.

Becky Yes. Bureau of Indian Affairs, we receive those funds... Well we received our letter, I believe, July 14th of 2024. And we're working through all the red tape, received approval for our contract with Legal

Aid, I believe, at the September tribal council meeting. So now those funds are available. We have a contract signed so we can refer tribal members for, specific, cases to them, and then legal aid will determine if they qualify.

Becky Okay. So that's exciting because people are always asking, do you have access to attorneys or, you know, legal help? And unfortunately, our answer up until now has been no.

Andy Right.

Becky So that's that's exciting that we have this extra resource for tribal members to access for at least a year.

Andy For at least a year. That's awesome. Do we want to talk about per capita course, cases. Sure. How does how do those get handled per capita.

Becky So per capita is covered under the distribution ordinance and tribal Council has.

Andy Allowed.

Becky For collection of tribal members per capita for moneys owed to the IRS, money owed to child support and moneys owed to the tribe.

Andy So if it was moneys owed to the IRS versus via like taxes.

Becky Yes.

Andy Okay. And then child support just back owed unpaid child support. Unpaid for moneys owed to the tribe. That's maybe housing or bills or,

Becky Anything the tribe has paid for of a tribal member that has to be repaid, that hasn't been repaid. Comes through as a request from that department to travel court.

Andy And then people will get a letter in the mail. I've seen the notices. They've come to us for the newspaper, for tribal court dates per capita, etc. So they get a letter, that tribal member gets a letter in the mail. You get ahold of them however you can, and then they show up for court and appeal it or maybe negotiate it.

Andy How does that process work?

Becky So requests for per capita cannot be appealed. Okay. But you can be present at your hearing. And tribal court tries to access every avenue to get hold of tribal members. This year we started putting notices out, I think what October, November. To make sure you have your addresses up to date with enrollment. Enrollment is the hub tribal court gets their information from enrollment.

Becky That's how we know where you are, what address to send your paperwork to. So we start that in March. Departments and agencies send their information to us. We start gathering our list, verifying addresses, setting up cases. And then I believe hearing notices go out the 1st of May to tribal members. We put notices in the paper of any individual that doesn't have a valid address on file.

Becky With enrollment in an effort to get word to them and then hearings are always the first Monday or Tuesday after the 4th of July.

Andy Okay. So there's plenty of time for them to at least for you guys specifically, even to even try and get a hold of them. Correct. Okay.

Becky Yeah, we do try our absolute hardest to make sure everybody that has been submitted for per capita has noticed that their per capita is going to be garnished.

Andy I know you guys are doing your best to notify them of per capita cases. When you notify somebody of another court case against them, somehow somebody came to our court, said, hey, we're going to, you know, file this petition for against this person, say, Andy Taylor like, and we're going to file a petition against Andy Taylor. You guys would notify me, by whatever means possible, as much as you can to try and get me to show up.

Becky So that would determine based on the type of case that was filed against you.

Andy Okay.

Becky But our second highest cases would be for garnishments.

Andy Okay.

Becky And those typically come from an agency. And then we verify if you are employed with the tribe because those are based on employment, not membership.

Andy Okay.

Becky And then we would hope that your current address is on file with your payroll department. It sure is. That would be where your notice would go.

Andy Okay. This this is a complicated system over there. And courts it.

Becky It is and it's all case specific. Right. So if someone wanted to sue you for something, they would have to serve you. Tribal court would just be the paper collector. And then that individual would have to prove to tribal court that they did, in fact, serve you for that case timeframe to be valid and start.

Andy There's so many specifics.

Becky There are.

Andy So specific.

Becky Tribal court is a rule follower.

Andy I knew that, I have one final question because you have never been on our show before.

Becky Yes.

Andy What is your favorite tribal event that you have ever attended?

Becky Pow-Wow.

Andy Which one?

Becky Any.

Andy Any powwow? Yes. Okay. What is your favorite thing about Nesika Illahee?

Becky My mom has made it a tradition that her and I are in grand entry every year, which sometimes takes an act of God. And then, of course, I go shopping afterwards.

Andy Okay. At the vendors or the.... Okay. And then what about restoration then?

Becky You know what I, I think I've made it to one restoration.

Andy Okay.

Becky I don't know what it is about. Pow-wow in November doesn't seem as attractive as a pow-wow in August in the sunshine.

Andy So then you could say that your favorite pow-wow is Nesika Illahee then?

Becky Our main powwow.

Andy Our main powwow. It's one of my favorite events.

Becky Yeah, there's something about being outside in the sunshine, with family, with food, I don't know.

Andy I agree it's the sunshine for me. I think, you know, I get a lot of people in here that talk about Run to the Rogue and and I've never been on Run to the Rogue, I will admit I've never been on it, so I don't I don't know for sure, but I everybody always comes back so tired.

Becky I've always done the first part, which is probably the easiest part.

Andy That first mile. Yes, yes.

Becky And I haven't been down to the end, but not during Run to the Rogue.

Andy Well, if that is everything, Becky, I'd like to thank you for coming on the podcast and letting our listeners know about tribal courts and all the things you guys offer.

Becky Thank you so much.

Andy All right. Have a great one!

Becky You, too.