

PAWNEE NATION OF OKLAHOMA

Election Act

of the Pawnee Nation



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Section 1. **Authority:** This Election Act is hereby enacted by the Pawnee Business council under authority delegated by Article IV, Section 4-i, of the Constitution of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.

Section 2. **Purpose:** The Purpose of this Act is to repeal the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma’s Election Act of 2016 and to establish the rules and procedures for conducting election authorized in Article IV, Section 4-i of the Constitution. The intent of the Election Act is to establish procedures for fair elections and to insure the secrecy and sanctity of the ballot. The regulations and procedures contained in this Act will be administered by an Election Commission.

Citation: This enactment may be cited as the 2016 Election Act of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.

Section 3. **Definitions:**

Business Council – The Pawnee Business Council, the elected governing body of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma established by Article IV, of the Tribal Constitution.

Constitution – The Constitution of the Pawnee Nation amended June 14, 2008 as amended.

Dates of Events – In determining the date of any event pertaining to elections, neither the day of the election nor the day of the event will be counted.

Election Commission – The general Election Commission will be established by the Pawnee Business Council. The Chairman and the Secretary will be appointed to serve for 4 years and all other Commission seats will serve 2 years.

Election Notice – The official notice that an election shall be held on a specific date shall be issued by the Election Commission.

Section 4. **Election Officials:**

The Pawnee Business Council shall appoint an Election Commission. The Commission will have overall responsibility for the conduct of all elections and its’ duties will include, but are not limited to, the following:

(A) Election Commission: The Election Commission shall consist of:

Chairman – The Chairman shall be the presiding member and responsible for the overall activities of the Election Commission, including the safekeeping of ballots and ballot box(s).

Secretary – The Secretary shall record and maintain accurate minutes of meetings and records pertaining to an election. The Secretary shall certify the authenticity of these records and be responsible for providing all Election Committee certifications except where otherwise provided herein after each

Election Committee Meeting. All records shall be filed with the Secretary of Tribe within five (5) working days of each meeting.

Clerk – The Clerk shall assist in the conduct of the elections and check off the voters on the list of qualified voters. Each clerk shall keep a separate record of the members voting which shall be cross-checked frequently by the Chairman or his/her designee in order to insure accuracy.

Sergeant-at-Arms – The Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain order at the polls and enforce the election laws. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall have these powers from the time the polls open until declaration of all election results are final.

Alternate – The Alternate is required to know and understand all Commissioners duties in the case of an absence of a Commissioner and is required to participate in all elections.

(B) Publication of Election Notice: At least 60-days prior to the date of an election of Pawnee Business Council members a public notice of the election will be made and notices will be posted at the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pawnee Agency and other sites as designated by the Election Commission. The Pawnee Chief, the Chaticks si Chaticks Newsletter, and the internet will carry the election notice as a public service announcement.

(C) Election Supplies: The Election Commission shall arrange for delivery of election supplies.

(D) Rulings of Eligibility of Candidates: The Election Commission shall have the authority to rule upon the eligibility of the candidates, and their decision will be final.

Section 5. Voter Qualifications:

(A) Resident Voters: Any member of the Pawnee Tribe who is eighteen (18) years of age or over on the date of the election.

Voter identification will be in the form of either a Pawnee Nation membership identification card, Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB), or a state issued identification.

(B) Absentee Voters: Any member of the Pawnee Tribe who is eighteen (18) years of age or over on the date of the election who expects to be absent from the polling place on the day of election. (see Section 8, Absentee Voting)

Voter identification – two (2) forms are required: a Pawnee Nation membership card or Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) and a state issued identification.

Section 6. Ballots:

- (A) **Form of Ballot:** Ballots shall be designed by the Election Commission.
- i. **Challenged Ballots:** All Challenged ballots shall be clearly marked on the ballot as “Challenged”
 - ii. **Spoiled Ballots:** All spoiled ballots shall be clearly marked on the ballot as “Spoiled”.
 - iii. **Numbering:** Each ballot shall be numbered.
 - iv. **Paper:** Resident Voter ballot shall be on secure paper, Electronic ballots will be in PDF Format.
 - v. **Electronic Ballot:** RESERVED for future modification
- (B) **Number of Ballots:** Ballots will be supplied by the Election Commission in sufficient quantity to ensure each voter is provided with a ballot.
- (C) **Delivery and Receipt of Ballots:** The Chairman of the Election Commission shall have all election materials delivered to the polling place. The Clerk shall be responsible for all election materials as provided in Section 2 of this Act.

Ballot Box: The Ballot box shall be secured with a lock and key. The key to the lock shall be given to the Chairman of the Election Commission at the polling place.

Section 7. Voting List:

Placement for List of Registered Voters: On the day of election, the Clerk of the Election Commission shall place a list of all eligible voters at the polling site.

Section 8. Absentee Voting: In accordance with the Pawnee Nation Constitution, Absentee Ballots shall be issued for all elections.

- (A) **Basis for providing Absentee Ballots:** Whenever a qualified voter expects to be absent for any reason, they can request an absentee ballot for the election provided in Section 8 (B).
- (B) **Requesting and Issuing Absentee Ballots:** All requests for absentee ballots shall be made in writing and received by the Election Commission at the following address, Pawnee Nation Election Commission, PO Box 600, Pawnee, Oklahoma 74058, no less than twenty-one (21) days before Election Day. Upon receipt of a valid request, the Election Commission shall forward to the voter all necessary forms to be used in the pending election. Any ballots received after 12:00 noon on the day of the election shall not be counted.

The Election Commission Clerk shall maintain a file of all requests. The file shall consist of the date, name, and address of all persons mailed absentee ballots. Each ballot shall be marked "Absentee Ballot" and the date of issuance.

After issuance of the absentee ballot, the Election Commission shall list each person sent an absentee ballot and that individual shall not be allowed to vote at the polling place for the election unless Section 10 (b) Special Circumstances apply.

ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST FORMS SHALL BE ACCEPTED BY FAX OR EMAIL.

- (C) **Execution and Return of Ballots and Certification:** The voter shall mark their ballot and tear off the numbered stub and handle as indicated below:
- i. Fold the ballot and place in the provided inner envelope.
 - ii. The voter shall sign the certification.
 - iii. The pre-addressed envelope shall be mailed to the Election Commission, to meet the noon Deadline on the Election Day.
 - iv. All absentee ballots must be postmarked 48 hours prior to the Election Day.

ANY ABSENTEE BALLOT NOT PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTING SHALL NOT BE COUNTED.

- v. Absentee Ballots: Absentee ballots shall remain in a locked box at the Pawnee Nation Office until 1:00 pm on the day of the election. The Election Commission Clerk, escorted by Pawnee Nation Law Enforcement, shall transport the locked absentee box to the election site to the Election Commission.

NO ABSENTEE BALLOTS SHALL BE SUBMITTED OR RECEIVED OTHER THAN PROVIDED FOR IN THIS SECTION, WHICH IS VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, UPS OR FEDEX. (NOTE: Absentee ballots cannot be hand carried to polling place)

Section 9. Duties of Poll Officials and Voters:

The duties of the Chairman, Secretary, and Clerk in the conduct of the balloting shall be as follows:

- (A) The Chairman shall be in charge of the polling place and responsible for the availability of voting booths.
- (B) The election officials shall be present at the polling place on Election Day from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm and until the tally has been recorded and reported. The empty ballot box shall be locked and remain locked until time to count the ballots.

- (C) Each voter states their name to the clerk and signs the poll book. The election officials shall then determine the voter's eligibility and issue a ballot.
- (D) Upon receipt of a ballot the voter shall go to a voting booth and mark their ballot. Only one person shall occupy a voting booth at one time except as provided in Section 9 (F).
- (E) The voter shall mark their ballot with an X or check mark and deposit their ballot before leaving the polling place. Either mark, to be valid must be identifiable with the appropriate square or place on the ballot. After the ballot is marked, the voter shall tear off the stub and deposit the folded ballot in the ballot box.
- (F) When a voter presents for a ballot and states that he/she, because of physical disability or infirmity, is unable to mark their ballot, one of the election officials shall have the voter swear to the following:
 - "Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you are unable to mark your ballot for voting because of physical disability or infirmity?"
- (G) Should the voter qualify himself/herself, two polling place officials shall give the voter the assistance they need. The voter must state, without suggestion from the officials, the way they wish to vote. In no instances shall an election official by word, action or expression, attempt to influence the voter as to how they should vote.
- (H) Any person waiting in line to vote at closing time shall be permitted to vote, but those presenting themselves after the hour for closing of the polls shall not be permitted to vote. The Sergeant-at-Arms will monitor and enforce.

Section 10. Handling Special Circumstances:

- (A) **Spoiled Ballot:** If a voter spoils their ballot, they should deposit the spoiled ballot in a special "spoiled ballot" box. The election officials shall provide the voter with another ballot and write on the stub of the spoiled ballot "Spoiled." The official shall write on the new ballot "Duplicate of Spoiled Ballot" and the ballot number.
- (B) **Challenged Ballot:** A voter, who has been assigned to an absentee ballot and checks in at the polling place shall be issued a "Challenged Ballot" that shall be stamped (Challenged) on the stub and ballot, and then shall be placed in a special "Challenged Ballot" box immediately after the voter has cast their vote. The Election Commission shall verify that the issued ballot has not been returned and the challenged ballot shall be counted.
- (C) **Alternates for Polling Officials:** Should an election official of the polling place become ill or have an unforeseen emergency, the Chairman of the election

commission shall be notified immediately so that an alternate may assume the responsibilities of the vacated position.

- (D) **Campaigning and Loitering:** No person shall be allowed to campaign or loiter within one hundred (100) feet of the election site during voting hours. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall maintain order during the election.
- (E) **Ties:** In the event that two or more candidates are tied for a Pawnee Business Council position for which they filed, the Election Commission shall conduct a recount of ballots. ***Should a tie exist at the completion of the recount, a run-off election will be held. (see Section 10 (F))***
- (F) **Run-Off Elections:** A candidate must receive 51% of the votes in order to be elected. If the count shows that the highest number of votes cast for any one (1) candidate is less than 51% of the votes cast, a run-off election shall be held within sixty (60) days between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast in the general election. In the event of a tie vote between the candidates, two (2) names shall be on the run-off ballot. The Election Commission shall supervise the run-off election using the rules and procedures followed in the general election.

Section 11. Canvas of Election Results:

The Chairman, Secretary and Clerk shall count and record the votes as soon as the polls close and notify the President of the Pawnee Business Council of the results. All marked, unmarked and Absentee Ballots shall be turned over to the Chairman after closing the polls. The Chairman shall issue a signed receipt for the ballots and have the ballots locked in the Pawnee Nation Office for two (2) years before being destroyed, where they will be available for inspection under the supervision of the Pawnee Business Council.

- (A) **Poll Watchers:** Each candidate is *entitled to choose one person to observe the counting of ballots on their behalf.* In elections to vote on Tribal Questions, the Election Commission may designate two (2) watchers for the side of Tribal Question under consideration. No watcher shall in any way interfere or hinder the election officials in exercising their duties and responsibilities.
- (B) **Counting the Ballots at the Polling Place:** Immediately after closing the polls, the Election Commission shall count the votes cast, in the following manner: As the ballots are opened, the Chairman shall verbally announce and display the choice or choices indicated on the ballot. The Secretary, Clerk and poll watchers shall record such information on tally sheets. *The winning candidates for the Pawnee Business Council shall be determined by a vote of 51%.* Upon completion of the tally, the Chairman shall execute a certification of the voting results and post a copy of such notice as identified in Section 4 (B).
- (C) **Preparation for Counting Absentee Ballots:** The Election Commission Clerk and one other polling official shall count the ballots. Each outer envelope shall

remain unopened at that point. The Clerk shall then determine whether the person whose name is signed to the certification is a registered voter and by verifying against the absentee voting list. The sealed inner envelope shall then be dropped into the ballot box and remain there until the count of absentee ballots.

- (D) **Counting Absentee Ballots:** The Chairman of the Election Commission shall open the absentee ballot box, and count the ballots as set forth in Section 11 (B).
- (E) **Announcing Results of Election:** Immediately upon completion of the count, the Chairman of the Election Commission shall convey to the Pawnee Business Council President the results of the voting.
- (F) **Return of Election Materials:** The marked ballots, all unused ballots, the tally sheets, and the original Certificate of Results shall be placed in the ballot box. The boxes shall be locked and delivered by the Secretary and Clerk of the Election Commission to the Pawnee Nation Office.
- (G) **Improperly Marked Ballots:** Should a portion of a ballot be miss-marked, it shall not be excluded from the tally, only the part which is correctly executed shall be counted. Any ballot, on which the intent of the voter cannot be determined, shall be preserved and filed with the other ballots for safekeeping with the notation placed on the face of the ballot indicating it was not counted.

Section 12. Challenges of Election Results:

- (A) **Request for Recounts:** Any qualified voter of the Nation may at any time within three (3) business days of the announcement of the result of an election, file with the Chairman of the Election Commission a challenge for the results of the election and request a recount. The request shall specify the candidate or position on behalf of which the request is being filed.

The request for a recount must be in writing with reason given, signed and accompanied by a \$500.00 recount fee by Cashier's Check or Money Order. The recount fee is non-refundable.

Upon receipt of the request for recount and the recount fee, the Election Commission shall conduct a recount of the votes. Poll watchers are allowed to be present at all recount proceedings. No challenge(s) not made within the time frame provided will be considered.

- (B) **Protests Not Involving Recounts:** Any qualified voter of the Pawnee Nation may at any time within three (3) business days of the announcement of the result of an election, file with the Chairman of the Election Commission a written and signed protest or challenge concerning any aspect of the election. The Chairman of the Election Board shall respond within one week following the

closing of the protest period. All decisions made by the Election Commission on protests are final.

Section 13. Types of Elections

(A) Election of Business Council Members:

- i. **Election Date:** Elections shall be conducted on the first Saturday in May and of each odd numbered year. (Article 4, Section 4, Constitution of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma).
- ii. **Term in Office:** The President, Treasurer, and the First and Second Council Members shall be elected to a four (4) year term. The Vice-President, Secretary, and the Third and Fourth Council Members shall be elected to a four (4) year term. (Terms shall be staggered in that sequence)
- iii. **Eligibility:** All members of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma who have reached the age of 25 (twenty-five) years, are eligible to file their candidacy for the Pawnee Business Council with the following exceptions:
 1. those persons previously convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of a felony; or
 2. those persons receiving a dishonorable discharge from military service, "See Candidate Form." (A candidate who served in the military shall produce their DD 214, Discharge Form.)

Any member of the Pawnee Nation filing for office shall not be eligible if they are indebted to the Pawnee Nation for any amount. (Note: In the event the debt is paid, that member will be eligible to file.)

- iv. **Filing for Office:** A qualified person seeking election as a member of the Pawnee Business Council must personally file a written notice, providing two (2) forms of identification such as a Pawnee Nation Identification Card, driver's license or Social Security Card, accompanied by a Waiver (see application packet) and a non-refundable Filing Fee of \$300.00 payable by money order or cashier's check with the Election Commission. Eligible candidates can only file for one position. Filing Fees shall be used for election expenses.
- v. **Eligibility of Candidates:** The Election Commission shall promptly review all filings for the Pawnee Business Council, whether

challenged or not, and confirm the eligibility of each candidate. If the Election Commission determines that a candidate is not eligible, the Election Commission shall notify each candidate that their candidacy is being challenged and will provide the reason(s) for the challenge. The candidate shall be required to provide satisfactory proof of eligibility within two (2) days after notification, or he/she shall be declared ineligible. The Pawnee Nation Election Commission decision on eligibility shall be final.

- vi. **Challenge of Candidates:** Any voter may challenge the eligibility of any person to be a candidate by filing a written statement and a Non-Refundable \$100.00 filing fee (payable by Cashier's Check or Money Order) with the Pawnee Nation Election Commission setting forth the grounds for the challenge. The challenge must be filed within five (5) days of posting the list of candidates. The Election Commission shall promptly notify the candidates in writing stating the basis for the challenge and the person filing the challenge shall furnish proof that he/she is ineligible to be a candidate. The Pawnee Nation Election Commission shall rule on each challenge and each person shall be notified by certified mail of their decision.

THERE WILL BE NO REFUND OF CHALLENGES OR FILING FEES.

HOW TO CHALLENGE:

A voter list challenge is initiated by filing a written petition with the Election Commission. No specific form of petition shall be required although the petition shall:

1. Clearly indicate the substance of the challenge
2. Specify the name
3. Include supporting evidence

- vii. **Appeal to Tribal Court:** Any candidate who aggrieved by order of the Election Commission on eligibility may appeal that decision to the Pawnee Tribal Court. The court shall use expedient proceedings in the determination of the cases prior to the deadline for receipt of request for Absentee Ballots.

(B) Constitutional Amendments

- i. An election proposed under Constitution Article XI (Amendments) shall be held by the Election Commission within sixty (60) days of the Business Council vote to propose, or the receipt of a petition proposing the amendment - *Unless the body proposing the amendment asks for a time extension.*

- ii. The Election Commission shall set a date for the election and give public notice at least sixty (60) days before.
- iii. The ballot shall allow a vote on at least each Article that is proposed to be amended, added, or deleted.
- iv. The Business Council resolution or the petition proposing the vote shall indicate a yes or no vote on any one or more provisions as a group.

(C) Special Elections

- i. An election to fill a vacancy under Article IV shall follow the rules of this section. The Election Commission shall follow other applicable provisions of this Act to the extent practical given the priority of meeting the Constitutional deadline. Matters not addressed in this section are subject to the sole discretion of the Election Commission.
- ii. A Special Election may be held by mail only balloting using the Enrollment Office address list. To mitigate the possibility that an eligible voter is unable to vote because of a wrong address or U.S. Postal Service problem causing an eligible voter to not receive a ballot; the Election Commission shall make provision for persons whose ballot was returned by the U.S. Postal Service as undelivered to have the ballot delivered or given to them upon proof of identity and a correct mailing address. If a ballot was sent but not received or returned, an eligible voter shall be allowed to submit a challenge ballot. Neither the Election Commission nor the Business Council shall be responsible for the inability of a member to vote because of a wrong address for the member or error by the U.S. Postal Service.