



## Gaming Authority: Developing and Managing our Casino

**T**he Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Gaming Authority (MWTGA) is responsible for the development and management of our gaming operations, including project First Light Resort Casino. The Tribe setup the MWTGA as an instrumental tool to organize and manage gaming activities and to protect Tribal Members and Tribal assets.

The MWTGA is different from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Gaming Commission. The Gaming Commission is responsible for ensuring our casino is compliant with regulatory requirements, including the National Indian Gaming Commission regulations. The Commission will also be responsible for interacting with the State and ensuring proper licensing of employees and games.

The MWTGA was setup as a separate business enterprise that is responsible for all loans associated with the project. It's very similar to a business owner setting up a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). The owner,

in this case the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, sets up a business enterprise to keep personal assets like our Community and Government Center separate and not liable for the business's debt. That's why the Tribe and Tribal Members are not responsible for any loans associated with project First Light Casino.

We are in the final stages of securing our Land in Trust and are now prepared to break ground on a \$500 million dollar destination resort casino as soon as our land is taken into trust. The proposed budget being voted on at the March 8, 2015 General Membership meeting includes over \$300 million in loans that will be tapped into as soon as we are able to break ground. Additional funding to bridge the gap between funds needed to break ground and to complete the \$500 million dollar project will be borrowed from either the Genting Group or third parties, whoever offers the best terms.

The Gaming Authority has currently

invested close to \$99 million in the preparation of the casino. The amount spent and our current progress on the project has placed us in a good financial position since our competitors in the State have spent significantly more on preparation of their casinos. **Also, since this debt will be paid back from Casino/Resort assets only, if we do not open a casino/resort we will not have to pay back the debt (The MWTGA would essentially be disbanded). The Genting Group would be forced to write off the entire amount of debt to zero unless we are able to salvage any value of the project assets.**

The MWTGA is currently comprised of Cedric Cromwell, President; Robert Hendricks, Sr. Treasurer; Yvonne Avant, Secretary; Charles Foster, Board Member; Marie Stone, Interim Board Member; and Melissa Hill, Project Associate. If you have any questions about the MWTGA, please contact Project Associate Melissa Hill at [mhill@mwtribe.com](mailto:mhill@mwtribe.com).

## Tribal Council Election Results

**T**he Ballots were tallied for the Tribal Council Election held on Sunday, February 8 and two challengers and four incumbents came out on top. The 553 tribal members that came out to vote set a new record turnout for a non-officer election.

Incumbents Winnie Johnson-Graham, Yvonne Avant, Carlton H. Hendricks Jr., and Cheryl Frye-Cromwell were reelected to the council; challengers Robert Dias and Winona Pocknett also gained seats. Incumbents Laura E. Miranda and Patricia (Trish) Keliinui were beat out by three and nine votes respectively. Also running for election were Aaron Tobey Jr., Robyn Tobey Stamps and Danielle Hill.

"I want to first thank all tribal citizens who voted in this important election," Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council chairman Cedric Cromwell said. "I also want to extend my congratulations to the winners. I look forward to working with each of them as we embark on a critical year for the future of our tribe."

Winnie received the most votes with 280; Robert and Winona each received 266 votes; Yvonne received 262; Carlton received 257; and Cheryl received 248.

"I would be remiss if I didn't also thank the candidates who ran but were not elected," Chairman Cromwell said. "I thank them for sharing their views and for their willingness to step up and make their voices heard."

Laura received a total of 245 votes;

Trish got 239 votes; Aaron received 222; Robyn received 190; and Danielle received 161.

Incoming council member Robert Dias, a Mashpee Department of Public Works supervisor and Mashpee resident, said that his top priority is to keep the youth educated and on the right path, "as they will be the future of our tribe."

Another newly elected member, Winona Pocknett, said that she chose to run to help her tribe. "I love my tribe and would love to keep the traditions and the culture alive," she said. She said that when the children of the tribe are older and the current leaders are gone, the children should know how to keep the traditions alive.

Winnie Johnson-Graham.....	280
Robert Dias.....	266
Winona Pocknett.....	266
Yvonne Avant.....	262
Carlton Hendricks Jr.....	257
Cheryl Frye-Cromwell.....	248
Laura Tobey Miranda.....	245
Patricia "Trish" Keliinui.....	239
Aaron Tobey.....	222
Robyn Tobey Stamps.....	190
Danielle Hill.....	161

## Harlem Rockets to Perform on March 22

The Harlem Rockets, a comedy basketball team, will play the Mashpee Wampanoag Dream Team on Sunday, March 22 at the Community and Government Center at 3:00 PM. The fun, family event is sure to bring cheers and laughs to all. Our Elders are hosting the event.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students if purchased in advance at the front desk at the Community and Government Center. Tickets will also be available at the door for \$12 and \$7 for students. Tickets are discounted to \$5 in advance and at the door for elders.

To help cover the costs associated with this fundraising event, elders are looking for sponsors. There are a variety of sponsor levels from \$1,000 to less than \$500.

Tribal Councilors Carlos Hendricks and Robert Dias are organizing 25 to 30 basketball players for the Mashpee Wampanoag Dream Team. If you are interested in playing on the team, please contact Carlos or Robert at [chendricks@mwtribe.com](mailto:chendricks@mwtribe.com) or [rdias@mwtribe.com](mailto:rdias@mwtribe.com).

All proceeds from the event will benefit elder services. For more information or to sponsor the event, please contact Joanne Frye or Latoya Green at (508) 477-0208 x182.