

2025 Election - Candidates for Council

Beverly, Joanie



My name is Joanie Beverley. I am a proud citizen born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, and raised by my Beverly and Clark Monacan family. I now live in King William County with my soon-to-be husband and our six children.

I currently serve as an Agricultural Technician for a federally recognized tribe's Food Sovereignty Program, where I work to promote food security and sustainable practices within the community. Before stepping into this role, I gained valuable experience in both management and healthcare, which shaped my passion for serving others. I also have a passion for connecting with our people and traditions, in the hope to gain a greater understanding of our community.

I'm a former Rockbridge Area Master Gardener and an emerging community linguist, deeply committed to helping preserve and revitalize Indigenous language and traditional knowledge. I believe that cultural preservation is essential to the strength and identity of our people.

If I'm elected, know that I am dedicated to strengthening unity and equality within the Nation. I will work hard at finding innovative ways to generate revenue and help to restore and pass down cultural knowledge. In all that I do, my goal is to support the health, heritage, and future of our community.

Beverly, Michael

Michael Beverly is a Navy veteran, retired ironworker, and a proud Monacan Indian who brings years of hands-on leadership and hard work to the table. Now running for a seat on the Monacan Tribal Council, Michael Beverly is committed to strengthening transparency, accountability, and inclusion with tribal governance. His platform includes calling for an independent external audit of tribal finances, making it easier for all tribal members to have their voices heard through automatic mail-in ballot enrollment, and ensuring tribal leadership remains accessible by broadcasting all council meetings. With deep roots in the community and a clear vision for a more open and connected Monacan Nation, Michael Beverly is ready to serve with integrity and dedication.

Branham, Dennis Dean

I am, Dennis Dean Branham, I grew up in Amherst County and am lifelong attendee the St. Paul's Episcopal Church. I have been involved with the Tribal Nation all my life. I served many terms on council, held the office of Assistant Chief and Chief. I have worked all of our powwows and homecomings and may events in between.

While Chief, I sat on the VITAL board to help the Monacan Nation get Federal Recognition. I have an excellent working relationship with the other 10 Tribal Nations of Virginia and have firsthand knowledge of working with State and Local government representatives.

I feel that culture, history and language preservation is extremely important for the Nation to educate our nation's citizens and the public. I am dedicated to ensuring the Nation's children further their education, whether it is going to college or to trade school.

If elected again, I will continue to work hard for the Monacan Nation and its citizens. To strive to further the nation and provide ethical, transparent leadership and to work on ways to create revenue to support programming for the citizens.

Fink, Amber Dionne Rasnick

After many years of traveling with my husband, we were given the gift of settling down in Amherst County. It was a way for our family to be closer to our native roots and help the tribe out whenever we can. I was born in East Tennessee and raised mostly in Central Florida. I always considered it a privilege and an honor as a young girl, when my parents would take me to visit up on Bear Mountain and tell the stories of my Mamaw, Eva Stella Johns, and her mother and Father. My Great-Grandma, Leota, known as Levy, was famous for her turtle soup. It was always as though the magic of our ancestors awaited us each time we got to visit.

I was given the opportunity of a lifetime when I was offered to interview for the Secretary/ Treasurer position in December of 2020. After a lengthy interview process, I was chosen to work for the Nation and our people. Since that time, I have given

it my all. I have volunteered when and wherever I am needed and most of the time have the extra advantage of having my boys in tow. Attending to every Council meeting, only missing one, and every Tribal meeting over the course of the last 3 ½ years. At the last election, I was chosen to be the Monacan Representative. I was grateful for the opportunity to represent our people through such an important time.

If I am chosen to be a Councilor of the Nation, my promise is to always put my best foot forward when interpreting and following the law. I will take into consideration the needs and the wants of our people. I will try to protect our Sovereignty whenever it is threatened, and make sure to always lead with compassion, kindness, integrity, and strive to be a positive role model in our community.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Fink

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Matthews, Rhonda

Hello everyone, my name is Rhonda (Johns) Matthews. I am the daughter of Evelyn (Johns) Freeman Matthews. I was born and raised in Amherst County. I come from the Johns, Robers and Adcock bloodline. I graduated from Amherst High School. I have a daughter and two grandsons whom I adore and love with all my heart.

I served on Council in 2016 for five months. I could not fulfill those duties because of the distance I had to travel, at the time I had gotten married and moved four hours away. I have also volunteered at Powwows, as well as the Elder Center at one point. I provided meals to our elders at that time and enjoyed talking with the elders and listening to some of the stories they would tell of the past.

I am running for a council seat because I would like to see change, and transparency. I would uphold the 2013 Bylaws, I would work for the entire Monacan Indian Nation Tribal Citizens. I will promise to always be honest with the people regardless if it is good or bad. I will not lie to the people. My hope for the Nation is to be one Nation and not a divided Nation. I believe that if we all pull together there is nothing that we cannot accomplish as a whole. My hope for the future of this Nation would to have a few business owned by the nation to be able to sustain this Nation financially, so that we could help all citizens not within the service area. I believe the Voice of the people should be heard and what the people want should matter. I will push for council to meet with the people the month that there is no Tribal meeting. I believe this should be done as part of transparency, so that council can ask the people what they would like to see and also for the citizens to be able to ask questions. I would like to have a governing body that can work together as a whole, and to fight for a resolution to bring unity. I believe as a council member that you should treat all citizens the same regardless of where they come from or who they are. I will work for the people. This Nation has the means to be known for great things if we all work together. I would also like to see a judicial system put in place, that would be something else to discuss with other council members and the Chief and the Assistant Chief. There was a resolution passed back when Kenneth Branham was Chief to have a grievance committee someone for the people to go to if they have a complaint or a grievance with any council member or the Chief and Assistant Chief, I would encourage other council members to get this started.

Thank everyone for taking the time to read my bio.

Moss, Isaiah Branham

I come from a strong line of leaders and culture keepers. My grandfather, Ronnie Branham, was the first elected Chief of our tribe and led the push for our federal recognition. My mom, Holly, raised me to be a strong leader and made sure I stayed involved in our culture from a young age. My aunt, Lou Branham, currently serves as Assistant Chief and travels widely to share knowledge about our tribe and Native peoples in general. These three people have inspired me by dedication and example to be who I am today.

I've been dancing at powwows since I could walk, and now travel all along the East Coast to represent our people and traditions. At each powwow, I make it a point to introduce myself, build connections with other Native communities, and invite dancers to join our own powwow.

I actively participate in our culture and language classes, attend tribal ceremonies, and stay engaged through tribal meetings. I've also served at our community food bank and am currently pursuing my college education while continuing to grow in my understanding of our history and native ways.

In 2023 and 2024, I attended the Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress

(NYCALC) first as a student, then as faculty. This national conference is dedicated to building Native youth into strong leaders equipped with the tools, knowledge, and skills to address environmental and conservation challenges in their home communities. It was also an opportunity for me to connect deeply with other tribes and cultures from across the country.

My goal in running for Tribal Council is to honor the legacy of those who came before me and work toward a future where our culture, language, and people thrive, which will help unite us as a tribe. Also, as a young person who is deeply rooted in our culture, I am committed to increasing youth involvement in our community. I believe my position as a young leader gives me the unique opportunity to bridge the gap between generations. My youth not only provides a fresh perspective but also helps inspire and engage the next generation of leaders, ensuring that we all thrive together.

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Payne, Tiffany Michelle

Meku:huk. I am Tiffany Payne. I am a Beverly, descended from Alexander Beverly.

I was raised in Buckingham County where I still live with my husband, Dennis; our children, Atlas & Ethan; and our rescue dogs, Lainey and Turtle.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management and Development from Bluefield College.

For the last 11 years, I've been a patient educator and advocate specializing in insurance with DaVita Dialysis. I currently support 24 clinics in 4 different states. I'm also an experienced trainer, mentor and serve on hiring committees as needed. Prior to this job, I worked for State Farm for 14 years where I was trained in reading and interpreting contract language.

I love my job because I know I really make a difference every day for people who are experiencing one of the most difficult times of their lives. I have an exceptional ability to empathize with and understand people from all backgrounds and communicate in the way they need so they can understand complex topics.

I'm trustworthy, dependable, organized, and accurate. I'm an all-in kind of person so I'm determined to make sure anything I'm working on will get done the right way. I'm a proactive and resourceful problem-solver who is self-motivated and always meets my deadlines.

My free time usually includes reading mysteries, cross-stitching, and traveling (or planning my next vacation). We're a family of foodies who love to try new cuisines. I love to cook and bake. I've been working on a cookbook for several years that I hope to share with all my family and friends one day.

I grew up knowing I was Native American but not realizing I was next door to my tribe. When I discovered that I am Monacan, I immediately enrolled and started finding ways to be involved. I've attended Culture Classes regularly since they started back up several years ago. I've also been running the Youth Booth at the Powwow since 2023 where we've set fundraising records each year.

I'm running for council because I think it's time for some new voices to be heard. I've had the benefit of seeing things from a different, "outside" perspective for the last several years. I want more communication, transparency, accountability and inclusiveness. We need to learn and grow from the past, not continue to live in it. We owe it to our youth to move forward as a tribe and build a legacy that future generations will be proud of.

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Riley, Bertha

Daughter of Ollie and Lula (Johns) Branham, I have dedicated my life to serving the Monacan people with honesty, compassion, and unwavering commitment. For the past four years, I have proudly served on Council, working tirelessly to represent the voices of our community and advocate for the needs of our people.

My journey in service began with volunteer work at the local food bank, where I devoted my time to helping those in need. That dedication led to a full-time position, allowing me to deepen my connection with the community and serve in an even greater capacity until 2024.

Recognizing the importance of supporting our youth, I initially offered to help with the backpack program. After one year, I assumed full responsibility for the initiative and expanded it to provide not only school supplies, but also two new pairs of shoes for Monacan children each year. I believe every child deserves to feel prepared and confident as they begin their school year.

My passion for service extends beyond our youth. I also devote time each week to our elders, volunteering several days a week at our elders' center. Whether I'm cooking, assisting with crafts, or simply sitting with them to listen to their stories, I cherish the opportunity to honor and learn from those who paved the way for us.

Before the passing Uncle George Whitewolf, I joined him on the powwow trail, supporting his booth and the youth group. Those experiences remain close to my heart, as they strengthened my understanding of cultural preservation and the importance of intergenerational connection.

Running for Council again is not just a decision—it's a calling. I have always stood firmly for what I believe is right, even when it was unpopular. I have never lied to my people, nor would I ever. I have never been afraid to stand up against any government—past or present—when the well-being of our citizens is at stake.

It has been both an honor and a privilege to serve within our government. If reelected, I promise to continue fighting for every Monacan citizen with the same integrity, strength, and dedication that have guided me throughout my life. I will never stop working for you.