

AVCP will attend AFN Convention



Willie Kasayulie (center), Executive Board Member of the Association of Village Council Presidents is representing AVCP at this week's AFN Convention.

Tundra Times photo

by Louise Sagmoen

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As Association of Village Council Presidents Executive Board Member Willie Kasayulie readied for his trip to Anchorage to attend the Alaska Federation of Natives convention he had a clarification to make — AVCP will be attending the annual AFN Convention. Kasayulie is representing AVCP.

In a telephone interview Kasayulie said, "We're heading over (to Anchorage) to attend the convention."

According to information released Oct. 20, the non-profit corporation, AVCP, had approved a resolution calling for the organization's withdrawal from AFN. "There's a sentence in there that says the resolution has to be ratified by the villages," Kasayulie explained later. He added the ratification process could take from six months to a year. The resolution must be ratified by a majority of the member villages in the region. In the meantime AVCP is still an AFN member.

Kasayulie added, "AVCP will be represented during the convention. AVCP isn't going to pull out right away. It might take months (for ratification)."

Kasayulie expressed uncertainty about AFN's reaction. "I hope AFN doesn't feel we're pulling out right away. We're not," Kasayulie said as he was on his way into Anchorage to represent AVCP at the convention.

AFN President Jamie Leask said, "Until that resolution is officially passed it will not effect their (AVCP) standing. There will be no change. I expect AVCP to be seated," Leask said.

The resolution to withdraw from AFN was presented by the village of Chetornak, where the United Tribes of Alaska chairman Charlie Kairatuak lives. Some AVCP members feared the resolution would weaken AVCP's voice at the convention, although they support the concept of tribal governments.

Kasayulie said in his interview, "I feel Charlie (Kairatuak) was a little ahead of us. He should have

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at least gotten the consensus of the board. We have to think together, not make trouble. I think he stepped over his limit. It's gotta be the executive board's authority (to make the decision to withdraw)."

Insiders at AVCP say that this is just the latest in what has been an ongoing, but publicly subdued, power struggle within the organization. Some staffers at AVCP will privately admit that the Chefnak resolution to withdraw from AFN was met with resentment from some who feel that "UTA is trying to take

over AVCP."

Although there were no dissenting voices when the vote on the resolution was taken, some delegates did speak out against it — carefully — before the vote; one insider noted that the resolution was the only one that came to the convention floor without a recommendation from the Resolutions Committee.

Eddie Hoffman, traditional chief of AVCP, in an interview from his hospital bed in Anchorage, said that AVCP should not withdraw from AFN. "I don't like that," Hoffman said. "We're doing all right; we should stay that way."

AFN, which is made up of members from the regional and non-profit corporations will convene Oct. 24-26 at the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage.

AVCP is a non-profit corporation which represents Alaska's Southwest region.

The theme of this year's convention is education. In addition to many presentations and discussions about the importance of education to Alaska Natives, it is expected that there will be discussion on the AFN board's recent decision to restructure the organization to include more representation from rural villages, as well as some lively discussion of the 1991 resolutions and the election of AFN's new Chairman.

The Convention itself will be preceded by Youth and Elder Conventions earlier in the week. The week's activities will be capped by the annual *Tundra Times Banquet* Saturday evening at the Egan Convention Center.