

## Debate Questions for 2024 Special Election

The Candidate Special Election Debate scheduled for 9/27/2024 was cancelled due to Tropical Storm Helene, and the potentially dangerous conditions created by the storm. Instead, candidates were given just under 24 hours to answer the questions below. Candidates may answer none, any, or all of the questions below, at their discretion. Candidates are encouraged to reach out to Laney Buckley via phone for clarification on any question; Laney will attempt to answer all questions in as timely a fashion as practicable. Documents submitted will be published on the Catawba Nation website at [Catawba.com/election](http://Catawba.com/election).

## Candidate Name: Sue Brown-Gunderson

### Questions

1. What qualifications or experiences do you believe best prepare you to serve our Nation as an Executive Committee member?

I have twenty years of experience working with the Catawba Indian Nation as an assistant to the Executive Director and with ISWA Development Corporation. I have also served on a variety of Boards and Committees within the tribe and as a Tribal representative on the York County Economic Development Board, and No Room For Racism.

Outside of my tribal career, I have combined forty years of experience in real estate as an agent, investing, buying and selling, and managing rental property. I am knowledgeable of the 1031 deferred tax exchange, which I feel will greatly benefit Catawba.

I am a conservative with money and believe in a budget. Furthermore, I am also an honest, trustworthy, hard worker and an independent thinker.

2. What are your top priorities if you are elected to serve on the Catawba Nation Executive Committee?

My four top priorities would be the following

- To work with the current Executive Committee members to help make the Catawba Indian Nation more successful and productive.
- Amend our 1975 constitution to protect our rights and sovereignty.
- Create Job descriptions, requirements, and Policies and procedures for the Executive Committee positions.
- Ensure that all programs and opportunities offered by the nation benefit all by ensuring fair notification to all members and that applicable processes are known.

3. What, if anything, do you think you would like to do differently from the existing Executive Committee?

Follow the General Council directions, be accountable to all the governing bodies that the Catawba Indian Nation has created, and be transparent. Transparency is a must for our nation especially during this state of our tribal government.

4. Please discuss your understanding of the Catawba Nation Settlement Agreement.

The Settlement agreement (October 27, 1993) was a negotiation between the Catawba Indian Nation and the state of SC to resolve a Land Claim. The Termination Act of 1959 was revoked, and the Catawba Indian Nation was restored as a Federal Recognized tribe with rights and services. The services included educational benefits, medical care, and welfare assistance for members with Federal Recognized Tribal Status. The Catawba Indian Nation was awarded fifty million dollars in settlement funds. The money was used to create five trust fund accounts ... Economic Development, Social Services, Education, Land Acquisition, and per capita payment. The Settlement Agreement allowed the Catawba Indian Nation to purchase property and expand the reservation.

5. What is your position on the substance use disorder problem within the Catawba Nation?

I want to make sure we have all the programs needed for substance abuse users and that all people in need are getting the assistance required. I would also like to make sure our youth are involved in safe and healthy programs to prevent substance use and learn healthy ways to deal with stress to avoid involvement with drugs. I would also like to see a work program created for our members who cannot get employment due to failed background checks. A stable job and income could prevent substance abuse and create another chance in life.

6. Regarding enrollment, do you believe DNA tests should be required regardless of whether the Catawba parent of the proposed enrollee is the mother or the father?

If DNA testing is done, the DNA should be done for either parent.

7. Do you believe there should be a timeframe for enrollment eligibility?

The child should be on the roll by six months of birth.

8. What is your approach to providing transparency regarding decisions made with tribal businesses, entities, funding, and staffing/staff engagement?

I am a strong believer in transparency. However, some things are private or confidential and cannot be shared with others. There is a time and a place to share details; we need to remember this. Furthermore, I believe everyone should be held accountable for their actions or wrongdoing in breaking the rules on transparent information as approved by the general council in the transparency ordinance.

But we cannot give it away. It promotes accountability and informs our tribal members of the government's actions.

9. What is your position on developing a cannabis industry on the Catawba reservation?

I will support whatever the General Council approves, as every elected executive committee member should. Of course, we need to be educated on how occasional drug use can lead to more severe drug problems and ensure we have programs available to help tribal members if and when this may occur.

10. The Nation's government has had serious issues with turnover and employee morale. What do you believe is the cause of this and how would you address it?

I cannot speak on the cause since I am not an employee. However, management should have open communication with the employees to avoid miscommunication. This also helps management deal with issues before they become bigger issues. They should also show appreciation to employees daily, have a wellness program, and have a team-building program. They should also encourage employees to work together on goals for the tribe. When Colleagues work together for the betterment of a cause as a team, they are more likely to be more engaged, motivated and productive.

11. As a Nation, unity is important for our prosperity and longevity. What is your approach to creating unity within our Nation?

**Unity** is my primary agenda to help bring peace to the tribe regardless of our differences. I plan to be there for all tribal members regardless of whether we agree or not, not pick sides, and always listen to other people's opinions and ideas. By working together, we can overcome our challenges and create a brighter future.

Teamwork makes the dream work; vote for Sue Brown-Gunderson as your next At-Large Executive Committee Member.