



October 18, 2024 10:00am

## TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 11:04AM
- II. ROLL CALL: President Sonny Moore, Vice President Mike Halona, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, Grazing Officer Moore, and Council Delegate Notah
- III. INVOCATION: Elvis Bitsilly
- IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:  
Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Fern Spencer 2<sup>nd</sup> Priscilla Duncan Vote: 27-0-1
- V. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:  
Motion to include to read on your own: 1<sup>st</sup> Orlinda Nez 2<sup>nd</sup> Leonard Notah Vote: 28-0-1
- VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
  - 1.
- VII. NEW BUSINESS:
  1. September 2023 Financial Report -

SEPTEMBER BALANCE FUND		
1	Chapter Activities Gen Fund	\$24,164.61
2	NN General Fund	\$7.49
3	Land Claims Trust	\$13,481.19
8	Supplemental Youth Fund	\$19,692.32
9	Housing Discretionary Fund	\$7,606.91
10	LGA Grant Fund	\$45,982.15
12	Chapter Stipends	\$11,839.08
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$679.98
15	PEP Fund	<b>-\$4,514.15</b>
17	Emergency Fund	\$8,072.02
23	NN Sales Tax	\$107,447.92
25	NN CIP - \$180,000	\$29,612.26
27	NN CIP - \$200,000	\$3,877.78
40	Unhealthy Food Tax	\$89,720.99
61	Senior Citizen Fund	\$2,162.99
51	NAPI	\$2,299.66
26	Red Willow Farm	\$2,190.37
34	Agriculture & Infrastructure	\$3.68
	Total Fund Balances	<b>\$364,327.25</b>

**President Moore** – Our fiscal year ended on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 and we have begun our new year as well.



**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Our accountant, Ms. Muskett has been providing the financial reports to us in a timely manner. President Moore and I are the oversight for the financial reports and they are posted at the Chapter House monthly. The Balance Sheet, Bank Reconciliation, the Well Fargo Bank Statement, and the Check Register were covered. Balance sheets show books are in balance for month of September 2023. The Bank deposits were also reconciled and were all accounted for. The budget to Actual report is always available at your request.

**President Moore** – The balance sheet shows we are in balance. We will be carrying over the balances from our accounts to the new 2024 fiscal year. I don't like to see negative balances and we do have a negative balance of \$4514.15 in our PEP fund. We should not be operating like this; we should know how much we have in each account fund daily. So, we've instructed the staff to operate with a little more efficiency and to work together to avoid negative balances. I also made some assignments for the staff where they will need to start tracking fuel cost. This is one of our largest expenditures. I would like to know how they spend on a monthly basis just on fuel? This can be done by going back several years and comparing the data and this includes how much the Chapter receives annually from Window Rock as our budget. I would like to see numbers from the past 5 years to current.

**Lee Rodgers** – Why has the Senior Center been closed down and what is being done to re-open the facility?

**President Moore** – We had the person who oversees the Senior Center Program here at the Chapter meeting. Lesita Desiderio who is a supervisor from Window Rock and was requesting for funds from the Chapter to assist with the re-opening of the Chapter. We informed her the Chapter has very little money for repair and maintenance of the Senior Center. After meeting with Maria, we decided to assist with the service of all the fire extinguishers in the Center. We also have some wiring issues which the Secretary/Treasurer's brother will be repairing. The other findings with the Chapter are small where we can either clean or replace the items. Once all this is completed, we will have environmental health department come back out to do another inspection. With our new budget for 2024, I've asked Maria to put in a little more money into the Senior Center account. The supervisor for the Senior Center, Jared was given \$391 from Chapter for repairs which we do not know if items were purchased if so, what was purchased. Our job is to help as much as we can to re-open the Senior Center. Maria and I will be working on this to try to get some of the items corrected.

**Motion to Accept the September 30, 2023 Financial Report:**

**Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Fern Spencer 2<sup>nd</sup> Tommy Badonie Vote: 26-0-1**

## **VIII. RESOLUTIONS:**

1. **001-10-2024: Resolution to approve the CLUPC membership for FY 2024.**

**President Moore** – Every year according to Title 26, new and current members are re-appointed to the Land Use Committee (CLUPC). This year we have Delphine Bitsilly, Fern Spencer, Larry Rodgers, Byron Bitsoie Sr., and the new member is Elvis Bitsilly.

**Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Lee Rodgers 2<sup>nd</sup> Shirley Chato Vote: 27-0-1**

2. **002-10-2024: Resolution to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.**

**President Moore** – This is the money the Chapter received for Fiscal Year 2024. The biggest change this year is the Veterans received an allocation of \$5000 which came with stipulations as to how this funding can be used. The Chapter will be meeting with the Veterans on this allocation. The amount of the allocation from Window Rock for fiscal year 2024 budget is \$317,825.00. We received for Personnel \$100,596.00, Stipend \$38,080.00, General Funds \$3,480.00, Housing Discretionary \$12,500.00, LGA Grant Fund \$14,102.00, PEP Fund \$97,883.00 - **\$4,514.15** that's in the negative.

**FY 2024 General Funds - \$301,161.00**

**Land Claims Trust Fund - \$14,815.00**

**Spec Rev Scholarship - \$1,849.00**

**Grand Total Amount = \$317,825.00**



**Motion:** 1<sup>st</sup> Shirley Chato 2<sup>nd</sup> Tommy Badonie Vote: 24-0-1

3. **003-10-2024: Resolution to approve the carry-over funds from Fiscal Year 2023.**

**President Moore** – This is the amount (\$364,325.07) that was left from fiscal year 2023 which ended on September 30<sup>th</sup> and will be carried over into the new fiscal year of 2024.

General Activity Fund		\$24,164.61
NN General Fund		\$7.49
Land Claims Trust		\$13,481.19
Summer Youth Employment		\$19,692.32
Housing Discretionary		\$7,606.91
Local Governance Grant -LGA		\$45,982.15
Chapter Stipend Fund		\$11,839.08
Scholarship Claims		\$679.98
Public Employment Projects		<b>(-\$4,514.15)</b>
NAPI Fund		\$2,299.66
Emergency Fund		\$8,072.02
NN Sales Tax		\$447,921.07
\$180,000.00 Supplemental CIP		\$29,612.26
\$200,000.00 CIP		\$3,877.78
Senior Center		\$2,162.99
Unhealthy Food Tax Fund		\$89,718.81
Red Willow Farm		\$2,190.37
Agriculture and Infrastructure		\$3.68
General Fix Assets		\$880,726.90
Total Carry-Over Budget		\$364,325.07
Grand Total Including Fix Assets		\$1,245,051.97

**Motion:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tommy Badonie 2<sup>nd</sup> Fern Spencer Vote: 25-0-1

4. **004-10-2024: Resolution to Approve the FY 2023 Chapter's Activities General Fund Account Revenue Budget (Fund 01) in the amount of \$5,077.04 for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – July, August, September 2023.**

	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Revenues 2023	Original Budget	Budget Amount	New Amount
6300	Office Supplies	\$3,038.36		\$3,038.36
6303	Operating Supplies	\$1,595.06		\$1,595.06
6322	Diesel Fuel	\$3,700.00	\$1000.00	\$4,700.00
6350	Purchase - Hay	\$1,200.00		\$1,200.00
6352	Purchase – Food (chapter)	\$3,675.17		\$3,675.17
6353	Purchase - Wood	\$1,339.17	\$577.04	\$1,916.21
6354	Purchase – Coal/Pellets	\$222.02	\$1000.00	\$1,222.02
6404	Other Lease/Rentals	\$1,911.18	\$500.00	\$2,411.18
6504	Repair & Mant. – Buildings	\$1,026.49	\$1000.00	\$2,026.49
6603	Other Professional Fees	\$385.26	\$1000.00	\$1,385.26
6610	Advertising/Promotional Exp	\$1,652.07		\$1,652.07
6620	Gift and Awards	\$1,455.42		\$1,455.42
6722	Financial Assistance - Funerals	\$2,964.41		\$2,964.41
Totals		\$24,164.61	<b>\$5,077.04</b>	\$24,241.65



**Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Delphine Bitsilly 2<sup>nd</sup> Marjorie Francisco Vote: 23-0-1**

5. **005-10-2024: Resolution to support the DINE' Native American Church to oppose the Decriminalization of the use of Peyote and Mescaline at the States, Local Government, and the United States territories led by the Council of Peyote Way of Life Coalition. -**

**Herman Denetdale** – The Native American Church of NM, Inc., and I'm representing the Tohatchi Chapter in district 14 and we are going across Navajo asking for support on this topic. There is also another entity called the Council of Peyote Way of Life Coalition. Next week the committee will be traveling to Washington, DC and this supporting resolution from Tohatchi Chapter will be taken along to Washington. We are opposing the pharmaceutical companies from extracting the mescaline from the Peyote plants for their use. I was raised on the Native American Church and the use of peyote for healing and the blessing way. So, we are very much against pharmaceutical companies getting their hands on the mescaline found in the peyote.

**Lee Rodgers** – I've been a medical interpreter for UNMH for the past 5 years and I also learned about traditional healing plants from my mother. Those of us who use peyote don't use it frivolously, it is respected and handled very careful. When it is used in the church, it's not abused, it's not use to get stone and get crazy. Just enough peyote to do the prayer and to cure. This is what the white man do not understand. They think they can extract the mescaline and start giving it to patients. What is going to happen to the patients who don't have respect for the medicine? Some of our own people don't have respect for it. Once the pharmaceuticals get a whole of the mescaline and start using it on patients and the patients have side effects or something bad happens, the government will take the use of peyote away from us saying they have data. We cannot allow this to happen. The government needs to respect our way of life and religion as indigenous people.

**Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Shirley Chato 2<sup>nd</sup> Tammy Bitsilly Vote: 19-0-1:**

## **IX. PRESENTERS:**

1. **Genevieve Jackson** – I have the experience and the ability to communicate. The Gallup McKinley County School should be coming out here and asking the community what kind of school you want. I don't know if the community was involved in the design of the new school. The other thing you need to do is coordinate with the schools, have passion for the students, and you have to have cooperation with the parents. It's a two-way street working with the school and the students. I used to be on the commission committee and I know as Navajos we don't have a strong voice. My grandchildren attended Central High School in Gallup and you compare this school with Miyamura High School where all the kids of the doctors and lawyers go to school. There is a huge difference in the appearance of the two schools and the quality of the education. I would like to know why the Central High School has not been rebuilt or the quality of education been improved. I'm not afraid to ask these questions. We need a strong voice and someone who is assertive. I consider myself to hold these attributes and I will make the superintendent, Mr. Mike Hyatt work for the Navajo children. There will be no more suspensions and dropouts. Gallup McKinley County Schools has the highest rates in these two areas. I'm sure you've heard of the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit, Ms. Yazzie sued the Gallup Public School District about 5 years ago. To this day, our Navajo children are not getting quality education. I used to be on the Gallup School Board for 4 years and at the time there was a female superintendent overseeing the schools. We approached her several times to request for bilingual Navajo classes at all the Schools under Gallup, but she did not listen to our requests. So, we had to let her go as the superintendent. After my 4 years were up as School Board member, I stepped down and Mr. Kevin Mitchell was elected in. We need to stand together for our children's education. So, vote Genevieve Jackson.
2. **Kevin Mitchell** – I live here in Tohatchi and I've been a School Board member for the past 12 years. I've gone through many trainings and conferences to keep myself updated with the educational system at the state and national level. One of the things I would like to make clear about the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit is this lawsuit was not against Gallup McKinley County Schools, it was a lawsuit against the State



of New Mexico. Furthermore, the lawsuit was paid for by Gallup McKinley County School. We are the ones who got Ms. Yazzie to come forth to file the lawsuit. So, the information which was previously shared is incorrect. We paid for the lawsuit on behalf of Ms. Yazzie and we fought hard on this lawsuit against the State. As far as the investigation being done on suspensions, they number they provided were incorrect, and we have that in writing. Ms. Jackson when you were on the board, you had one of the highest numbers of suspensions: 174 suspensions including expulsion in one year when you were on the board and that's also in black and white. As you all know I come to the chapters in District 14 to report our progress with data and numbers. It's all in black in white where we stand at the State level and the district level. We show the proof when I present with the Superintendent and other School officials when giving updates. One of the main jobs of a School Board member is the budget and when I came aboard, we were barely making payroll. They were trying to shut down and consolidation 3 of our schools; Navajo Mid School, Twin Lakes Elementary, and Crownpoint Mid School. We didn't let that happen and now Twin Lakes Elementary is one of the highest thriving schools in the district. Now, we are at the best financial status that Gallup McKinley County has ever been in history. As your Board member, I will make sure that continues. As far as the new high school being built here in Tohatchi, is not being funded by ARPA money. We have brought in over \$80,000 million just this year for our elementary, mid school, and high school. The ground breaking for the new high school will be in December. I want to make sure this continues and the projects get completed. I passed out a listing of accomplishments completed in the last 7 years with Mr. Mike Hyatt and his administration.

3. **Leonard Notah** – I'm from Tohatchi and attended the schools here. My children have been attending schools here as well. I wonder about how the schools are being run and what kind of work they are doing and I say, they should be doing this or that. So, I decided to run for Gallup McKinley County School Board. I want to have an input in the planning and decision making of our schools. I want our children to have the best education possible. Because I have a child in public school, I want the best for her. Education is important and critical and that is why I became a teacher and being a teacher is not an easy job. You have to always be prepared to serve the children on a daily basis. The administration of Gallup McKinley County Schools is aware and they come up with the guidelines for school curriculum. I believe the teachers should be at the table when the school curriculum is planned because they are the ones who will be using this material. It's important that they are there and I support these teachers. I know exactly what they have to endure and because of that I left the profession. I understand after speaking with a teacher who teaches in Navajo said they are losing teachers to Central Consolidated Schools because they are treated better. I want to see if I can reverse this and I've made it one of my priorities to assist in this process.

Also, we have to take care of our custodians and bus drivers by making sure they are receiving the base rate or higher of income as other states. We shouldn't be treating our employees like that but instead we should be supporting them. If our employees are happy that will come down to the students as well. I picked up this paper which states "GMCS back in the hotseat." I don't know how many times the county has been in litigation not only for the discrepancy of discipline, but they have also been in litigation with their own teachers. The teachers had to go to court to fight for their rights to work and to fight for their wages. No wonder they are leaving. All these things are things that happen in the past, but I plan to look forward and to make sure we do not end up in court again. It's actually a waste of money when we are paying thousands of dollars to lawyers. Where can this money be used better, in our schools and to hire teachers. The school had a grand idea, let's pay a bonus to the teachers, \$18,000 because they want to get teachers here, but teachers will only stay at the most, 2 years. If we did our jobs right, we shouldn't have to pay that \$18,000. They should already want to come here, that's the kind of school I want to establish. We all have concerns for our schools, our children, and how the basketball



program is going. But there are things happening in Gallup which is not being shared with the public. A good example is the Gallup softball coach, she won a state championship but without notice to the public or parents she was let go as the coach. The very next day it was announced they had already replaced her with a new coach. This cannot be happening; it does not look good for the district and it's not good for moral or the schools. These are topics I want to address because I feel these issues are important. I do have the support and endorsement of the employees and the teacher's union which I am very proud of. I have a lot of respect for myself and respect for the people I deal with. If I am elected, I plan to work closely with Superintendent Hyatt, employees, school board members, and all the schools in our area. I received my education here in Tohatchi and because of my education I am doing well financially and have become self-sufficient. This is what I want for our children if I am elected. Please consider my candidacy.

4. **Maria, CSC on Coal tickets** – I and the AMS, Jeannie Muskett took a training with Navajo Transitional Energy Company. They have new rules in regards to the coal tickets which we give out during this time of the year. Each chapter received 100-200 coal tickets which they can give out to their community members who used coal to help heat their homes. This year if a registered voter wants a coal ticket they have to sit and listen to a 10-minute video on how they are to use the coal tickets. The video will explain the process on how the coal will be distributed to your vehicle. You will not be given a ticket if you have not seen the video. We were also given a listing of names of community members who will not be eligible for coal tickets this year because they did not use their ticket, or you showed up there at coal distribution intoxicated, or other reasons why they denied you. We work closely with the staff at Navajo Transitional Energy and they will keep track of the tickets that we issue from the Chapter. I have brochures that also explains how to use your coal ticket, the dates and time they are open for business which begin on October 25<sup>th</sup>. If you have issues with not being able to pick up coal yourself, you can call Navajo Transitional Energy and they can assist you.

**Priscilla Duncan** – Will the Chapter have coal available to the community for the elderly?

**Maria, CSC** – Yes, we will have coal here at the Chapter for our elderly population during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November. We will have it announced on the radio when the coal is delivered.

**Question:** When will you be showing the video again and why are they doing the coal ticket in this way now?

**Maria, CSC** – We will be showing the video every Tuesday here at the Chapter. They changed the process of the tickets because some people were not using their ticket or they were selling their ticket. Also, we are purchasing wood to assist our elderly who use wood to heat their homes. This is under the assistance program for our elders.

**Lee Rodgers** – If the legislation does not go through for the virtual conferencing instead goes to a referendum, are you going to continue as status quo and let people listen in even though they don't have the privilege to vote or give their opinions?

**President Moore** – Because we are setup for virtual meetings, we as a Chapter will continue with it and make use of our equipment.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I was listening to the Council Session yesterday and they were saying that at least 56 chapters across Navajo have to be in support of this legislation. Tohatchi Chapter did submit a resolution in favor of the continuance of teleconference meetings. I believe the biggest issue the Council Delegates had with teleconference meetings was how is the Chapter going to identify people on the call who say they are registered voters. In my opinion there are ways to identify individuals who are registered voters. You can setup a link to the individual and they would have to use a password to login to the call. There are several ways to identify people and the people who do call in are very few. It would not take long to identify each caller, but some Council Delegate were against it, but we should be



embracing technology and not be shying away from it.

**Vice President Halona** – this legislation was table so it will give them some time to reconsider, but there was a strong movement saying to send it back to the local level and let them make the decision. Why are we dictating to the Chapters telling them how they should run their local government. So, it might come back to having the Chapters make the decision to continue with teleconferencing and how they will be able to handle it. Doing a referendum will cost a lot of money and we would have to wait a whole year to make the decision. I think we just need to make the decision ourselves here at the local level. We have several people listening into the meeting today and can't be here physically for whatever reason and they should have the option to participate by calling into the meetings. This will give them the ability to speak and share their opinion because they are part of the community which is important.

**Grazing Officer Moore** – Just to give you an update on my activities which are on-going homesite applications, homesite disputes within families. Other activities are grazing permits, probates, transfers, tally counts, and complaints. I recently met with Land Department, the homesite division who are in the process of developing a Utube or PowerPoint on how to probate old homesite leases that has been abandon or the process on how to transfer an abandon homesite. I also want to mention, enforcement of tribal laws is an issue.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Next Planning Meeting November 8th @ 10am, District Grazing Committee meeting November 1st at Naschitti Chapter @ 9am. Red Willow Farm Board Meeting October 24<sup>th</sup> @ 1pm at Chapter. Veterans Day on November 10<sup>th</sup> and planning meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup> with the Veterans Organization @ 9am. November 11<sup>th</sup> in Window Rock, there will be a Veterans Celebration. They will be having a bull riding and team roping event at the fair ground along with a dinner and other activities. Native American Church of NM will be having service for the Veterans at Mr. Herman Denetdale's residence on November 4&5.

**II. NEXT MEETING DATE: November 8, 2023 Planning Meeting @ 10am.**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT: 1:17pm**

**Motion: 1<sup>st</sup> Fern Spencer 2<sup>nd</sup> Lee Rodgers**

Submitted by,



Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter **October 26, 2023**

cc: Mr. Sonny Moore, President

Mr. Mike Halona, Vice-President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC