



February 26, 2024 @ 10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING AGENDA

AUDIO TELECONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: (575) 567-3331 PIN: 290 206 733#

JOIN WITH GOOGLE MEET: <https://meet.google.com/vsc-zdtr-mbz?authuser=0&hs=122>

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. INVOCATION
- IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
- V. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 22, 2024 MEETING MINUTES
- VI. PRESENTATION
 1. Kevin Mitchell/GMCS -
 2. Joan Thompson/Levina Benally -
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - 1.
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS
 1. January 2024 Financial Report
- IX. RESOLUTIONS:
 1. 020-02-2024 - Resolution to approve a Budget transfer within Fund 23, NN Sales Tax funds in the amount of \$1,000 to replenish Office Equipment.
 2. 021-02-2024 - Resolution to approve a Budget transfer within Fund 01, NN Chapter activities General Fund in the amount of \$1,000 to replenish the other Professional Fee.
 3. 022-02-2024 - Resolution to approve a Budget for the emergency Fund 17 to allocate the anticipated expenditures for the emergency legislation # CJA-11-24 in the amount of \$35,000 distribution to all 110 Chapters under the Navajo Nation.
 4. 023-02-2024 - Resolution to approve the purchase of new phones for the Chapter staff.
 5. 024-02-2024 -Resolution to support Nancy Allison's request for assistance from the Veterans Housing Program.
- X. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Reminder: The Navajo Nation Department of Agricultural Farm and Garden Incentive Program ends on March 31st. This is the deadline to sign-up for the program and you can google Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture to get more information.
- XI. NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME: March 04, 2024 (Planning Meeting)
- XII. ADJOURNMENT:



February 26, 2024 10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:26 AM
- II. ROLL CALL: President Sonny Moore, Vice President Mike Halona, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, and Grazing Office Moore
- III. INVOCATION: Manuel Shirleson
- IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Motion: 1st Lillian Barney 2nd Charles Arviso Vote: 19-0-1
- V. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 22, 2024 MEETING MINUTES:
Motion to include to read on your own:
Motion: Mary Tsinnie 2nd Kevin Mitchell Vote: 18-0-1
- VI. PRESENTERS:

Kevin Mitchell (GMCS) – School Board Official for District 1. Thank you to the community of Tohatchi for entrusting me with your children's education and allowing me to continue being your voice. The Chapter sent me an email with questions regarding the Chapter's concerns on academics of our community schools. I have answered these questions and have the document available for you to read. I will be taking this document to all the Chapters in District 14. In the document, we listed all the rankings of the 600 schools in the state of NM. Our school is one of the fastest growing in academics. We are doing very well and increasing our proficiency level compared to all the schools in the state of NM. We recently had our NM School Board Conference and we've come a long way with our Navajo Language and Culture curriculum. We met with DODE and they are very impressed with the curriculum GMCS has in place. They have asked GMCS if they can use the Navajo Language and Culture curriculum in their school districts which includes NM and AZ.

I also want to mention House Bill 134 which was introduced by Representative Derrick Lente, which we were neutral on but I was glad the NN finally stepped up to make a decision. This money would have been going to tribes and not the schools. The Pueblo tribes would have received over \$2000 per student while the Navajo students (GMCS) would be receiving \$6 per student. The Navajo Nation realize this in equality in the amounts and they opposed this and ask them to change the language and amount so it is equal and fair for all students.

Charles Arviso – Can you give update on the new school? And is the new school going to have a Liberal Arts program; like band and ROTC?

Kevin Mitchell – We have applied to have an official ROTC program here at the school. We are waiting to have it approved. As far as band and a wrestling team, we have tried to hire instructors for these programs but have had no luck. We can try to advertise again, but the request has to be made from the students. We did find a cheerleading sponsor and will have a squad soon.

Mr. Wade Bell: Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Instructions and Assessments with GMCS. I am also overseeing our partnership with DODE – This is my 25th year in the district and I'm also a product of this district. I will be talking about literacy and the 3 different levels. Layer one is where everybody gets a

reading and English class from kindergarten to 12th grade. In the elementary it's usually 90 minutes English Language Arts and in high school and mid school its time with the reading teacher and also time with the English teacher. Layer one is where everybody gets the instruction, and when I talk about the different layers it means the more intensive support so when I talk about layer 2 that's above. They are all going to get core, reading that we learn in the classrooms but some kids need a little more help than what's available in the classrooms. So the teacher pulls them aside and does a little bit more with them outside of that. There are kids who still struggle with reading. We have a 3rd layer where they get core from their teacher, intervention from their teacher as well, also they might get services from another program such as special education services which they have to qualify for. So, when I talk about reading, I'm talking about 3 different levels that we provide students. All the students get layer 1 which is our universal core, this is instruction provided at grade level. This is where I really had to work with teachers not making the curriculum. They worry about students getting behind so they make the curriculum about 3 grade levels behind, we don't do that anymore. Every student deserves the right to be taught at their grade level and that's what we do in layer 1. There is minor intervention, if we see kids that are struggling, we have a 15 block in that 90 minutes where we pull them off to the side and work with them individually and that is in the core. We focus on Standards, what are the students suppose to be learning, it might be language standards, how to use the language. Reading standards for informational text, reading newspapers, magazines, text journal. Reading standards for literature, reading standards for foundational skills which were missing when I took this position. Phonetics skills, how to make sounds for each of those meaningful letters, this is something that I really emphasized. There is also speaking and listening standards and you have to start with the listening standards first before you go into any other standards if a student can't listen, they probably won't be able to do the other standards. This is where you really start your kindergarten and pre-school curriculum at is listening and then at writing standard are our final standards. Everything is based on these sets of standards. After we have these standards, we build the district unit test. So, what questions match these standards? We make sure every question is 100% tied. Once the teachers have the standards and assessments, they start writing their lesson plans to meet that level. Our state requires every elementary teacher to take the course and letters which is learning how to teach reading. It's very intense and it take our teachers about 2 years and it's on their own and we pay them contract hours to take this. Once we build our instructions we now need to check to see if our kids actually have master it. We assess every student in 1st grade for the possibility of Dyslexia which tells us whether they are at risk for dyslexia. When a parent places their student school there is a little questionnaire, "is there another language spoken in the home?" If they say yes, every student will take this test which means either Navajo or Spanish in our community. If that is their primary language, we have to transition them into English so they can be successful in our system. We also have district unit test are designed by my department for every 3 weeks and we measure all of the schools. How are they doing compared to each other, some school like Tohatchi Elementary you should be very proud of. There are leading our flock in elementary reading right now. The 1st grade teacher, Mr. Stacy Badonie is a fabulous teacher. You should be very proud of him.

We do I-stations which is required by the State one time per month, and we only assess them comparative results 3 times a year. All the students take a state test at the end of the year. We bought the same platform that the State and Nation uses so our students would not have questions taking these tests.

Other programs that we have is computer base programs called I-excel. This gives the student the extra help they need if a teacher is not available. Some additional resources for K-12, special education services, assessment software which are read 180 and math 180, and logic English. This year we have accessibility to social workers.

Sam Natonabah – how do you work with kids who have a problem with stuttering?

Wade Bell – they would qualify for speech language; it would be the speech language pathologist working with the student and the teacher. NM is the only State in the country that allows kids to qualify for that specifically without meeting any other Special Ed services. Speech language can stand on its own because more than 50% of NM students that come into the school system come with a stuttering problem. Tohatchi Middle School is one of the top 3 performing schools in our district. They were awarded a bonus for their excellent work. Teachers/staff/custodians all received a \$1000 bonus.

This year graduates, all they have to do is take the required classes to graduate. Starting next year in 11th grade, the State is requiring a competency portfolio to be built for each graduate, so we have actually already started that. A student has to have 24 credits to graduate and the State has taken out Algebra 2 which worries me, because the State test is 8% Algebra 2.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – My concern is when a teacher is absent and a substitute teacher comes in, why isn't there a lesson plan left by the teacher for the substitute teacher? I understand the substitute teacher is basically just baby-sitting the class for the day.

Wade Bell – That's my area, and I will work on that.

Kevin Mitchell – I attended the National School Board Association convention. At that convention, what I learned is every state has their own test and it's not the same test. The state of NM has one of the hardest test and Arizona has one of the easiest tests. When you hear our state is last in test scores, it's because our kids take a more difficult test. Also, Tohatchi High School will be adding a new class called "financial literacy" and will be counted as a college credit. As far as the data and strategic plans that we provide to the chapters but it does make it difficult when a new governor comes in or a new Superintendent of Public Education and the format of the tests will change as well. So it is difficult to get accurate data for the schools. Currently, we are still waiting on new data from the State. I believe the schools are doing very well and we are doing our best to keep test scores high, but we absolutely need parent involvement. We need parents to encourage and support their children and to make sure they are in school every day. This increases the number of graduates annually.

And just for your information, I was recently elected to be the NM Secretary/Treasurer for the School Board Association.

Elvis Bitsilly – Do the schools still have libraries? I hope our new school will have a state-of-the-art library. I'm just wondering with all the new technology at our finger tips. My other concern is sports, why are the students having problems keeping their grades up so they can participate in sports? Transportation is a problem for the children as well.

Wade Bell – We do still have libraries and called "discovery centers" now. Everything is going digital and we are buying a lot of books for their computers and iPad. We also buy hard cover books as well. We check grades for athletics weekly and if they are struggling, they have to go to get tutoring. We don't put that on the parents we put that on the school system, we setup time for them to be tutored and have after hour academic at each school, elementary, middle, and high school in the district. We drive a lot of kids to Gallup and back for opportunity career center, we also transported kids who are coming in at night for a film festival. So, if there is wiggle room, we will make it happen unless the road is muddy.

Ronda Joe, Navajo Language Instructor from Chooshgai Community School brought in 24 of her students who are studying Navajo Nation government. They will be observing the local government processes.

Vice President Halona – I would like to knowledge the students who are here with us today from Chooshgai School. I would to encourage you to do very well in your classes and to always pay attention. I understand your taking a course in Navajo, but it's not really a course it's a way of life. Your language is who you are and English is a borrowed language. So, when you were born someone spoke the Navajo language into you and gave you a purpose, expectation, and a blessing. Your job now to find out what that is. The

creator gave each and everyone of you a gift and had a special ceremony when you were born. With this gift, it talks to you, but you're not listening. You could be that special someone who can cure cancer if you don't stop and quit. You need to approach each day with a willingness to learn and when you learn to speak your language you become even more valuable and you will have an edge. When you speak your language the "holy people" will listen, understand, and protect you. They will help and guide you along through life. When you speak English to another person, they listen with their minds, but when you speak Navajo, they will listen with their hearts. That's how sacred our language is so keep learning, kids.

Simone Charleston – I'm the School Dean at Tohatchi Elementary School. I've been an educator there for the past 5 years and now this is my 2nd year in leadership. We are here to present the middle of the year data for the elementary school. The data for our K5 student attendance is in the 90% range and our goal is 95% or above which we take into count every month. We started out strong, but with illnesses students are at home. Last year we ended with 88% so we have improved this school year. One thing my principal and I do is we have incentives for pre-school up to 5th grade. If they don't miss more than 2 days of school per month, we provide a popcorn, dance, or hot cocoa party to encourage the kids to attend school every day. It was a challenge to get the kids to come back to school after COVID and get away from the on-line learning which was pretty tough. For our kindergarten and 2nd grade, the data is based off of I-station which is one of the assessments Mr. Bell talked about. The kids are also in the Logic of English program, teaching them how to read so we look at that data. We have "rockstar teachers" in kindergarten and 1st grade who are Lorinda Scott and Stacy Badonie. What we are trying to do is decrease the level one and two students who are struggling with reading, but the trend lines are going up which is great because we want to see growth and it means that they are doing awesome with their reading.

Next, we have math and here again the trend lines are going up including the level one student are growing. The 1st grade data we have a "rockstar teacher" as well. He is really pushing the students who are coming in from different schools to get them up to par in reading. He works very hard to get the students out of the level 1 area. We are super proud of him.

For 2nd grade, it gets a little bit tougher because they have to read a little bit more. In 2nd grade, the students do not take a state test until 3rd grade, so we are trying to get them prepared by reading a little more. Every year in the summer before the beginning of the school year, we come together as a leadership team and we make our goals which we call our "90-day goals" which we try to align with what our data shows from the previous year. So, the data shows there is growth happening and 5th graders have surpassed their goals. Now for the comparisons, where we are as a school. For reading we are ranked in 6th place with the 16 elementary schools in our district. For growth percentages, we are ranked 2nd so we have the biggest growth. For Math we ranked 12th in our district which was interesting because before COVID, we were higher in Math and lower in reading and all of a sudden it switched. We are still improving and expect to raise our ranking for the end of the year assessment. Lastly, I have our language usages and grammar, we ranked 15th and so again we are having discussions on how we can help our students with their language skills. In the growth comparison we were last place with a decrease of a negative 2.0%. We think it was because of new teachers coming in and we had to split 5th grade classes because more students came in this year. That's our data for our school and we are doing everything we can with all the structures and strategic planning which has been put in place.

Vice President Halona – I know the other percentage of growth is at home, what are some of the innovative things that the school is working on to reach out to the parents to get them involved? Secondly, on the other hand how is the school working with the parents who feel like they are not getting the support needed from the school?

Simone Charleston – for parent involvement, we previously had programs where we had parents come in

to show them the same data we provided here for their classroom and their child. This year we are doing family academic nights and have it every quarter along with parent teacher conferences. What I like in this district is parent teacher conferences are a day off for students that way the teachers has whole day devote to the parents and students.

Joan Thompson – New Tohatchi Elementary School Liaison: In the past, the schools here in Tohatchi had to share liaisons but with the assistance of Mr. Bell this is not the case anymore. There is a liaison at each of the schools now. GMCS does have an attendance policy and if a student is not attending school on a regular bases, that’s when I make a home visit. I talk with the parents to see what is preventing the child from attending school daily or why the child is coming to the school tardy. If transportation is an issue, I can pickup up the child from home and take them to school and driving them home after school. I also delivery important documents to parents for signatures. The school hours are Monday through Wednesday from 7:45am and the school is let out at 2:50pm. A student is tardy if they arrive after 7:45am. On Thursday and Friday school starts at 8:45am and let out at 2:50pm. A student is tardy after 8:45am. I would also like to mention as a reminder that the school zone is 15 miles per hour, not 25. Please consider the safety of the children. You can find all this information on the webpage at toe.gmcs.org under the title Synergy.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – So, does the school have an issue with attendance?

Joan Thompson – No, I don’t feel like we have a problem with attendance currently, but again I am new to this position. The liaisons are myself for the elementary school, Carmelita Nez for the middle school, and Melvin Scott for the high school.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. January Financial Report -

JANUARY BALANCE FUND		
1	Chapter Activities Gen Fund	\$19,975.92
2	NN General Fund	\$7.49
3	Land Claims Trust	\$23,677.22
8	Supplemental Youth Fund	\$16,473.60
9	Housing Discretionary Fund	\$19,230.10
10	LGA Grant Fund	\$75,465.18
12	Chapter Stipends	\$39,958.53
13	Scholarship General Fund	\$9,795.00
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$2,528.98
15	PEP Fund	\$63,696.25
16	Veterans Fund	\$5,000.00
17	Emergency Fund	\$6,620.02
23	NN Sales Tax	\$84,376.34
25	NN CIP - \$180,000	\$29,169.23
26	Red Willow	\$1,040.37
27	NN CIP - \$200,000	\$3,877.78
34	Agriculture & Infrastructure	\$3.68
40	Unhealthy Food Tax	\$88,720.99

51	NAPI	\$2,299.66
61	Senior Center	\$2,162.99
	Total Fund Balance	\$494,079.33

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – President Moore and I review the financial reports before we present to the community. For the month of January, our books are in balance and everything has been reconciled back to the bank. Again, as always, these reports are available to the community upon request.

Charles Arviso – the \$5,000 fund for veterans, is someone from the Chapter going to come to the veteran’s meeting to explain what this fund can be used for?

President Moore – the CSC was given instructions on how these funds can be used. I understand while a regular veteran’s meeting is being conducted, you can make a request for assistance, then motion 1st and 2nd and vote. If everyone is in favor of that expenditure then the information will be forwarded to the CSC to prepare a check.

Maria, CSC – the fund can be used for food (\$2,500), if you’re hosting a luncheon/dinner. The other line item is for awards and gifts (\$2,500). Just like all the committees do, the veterans will write a memo to the chapter requesting for funds along with 3 price quotes for the awards/gifts. For the food items, I can coordinate that with the veterans. We need to obtain the legislation for this \$5,000 allocation.

Charles Arviso – Under awards/gifts, is it possible to do monetary awards?

Maria, CSC – No, it would have to be a physical award like a plaque or a Pendleton blanket.

Motion to Accept the January 22, 2024 Financial Report:

Motion: 1st Geneva Begay 2nd Manuel Shirleson Vote: 17-0-1

VII. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **020-02-2024:** Resolution to approve a budget transfer within Fund 23, NN Sales Tax funds in the amount of \$1000 to replenish Office Equipment.

Motion: 1st Manuel Shirleson 2nd Sam Natonabah Vote: 16-0-2

2. **021-02-2024:** Resolution to approve a budget transfer within Fund 01, NN Chapter Activities General Fund in the amount of \$1,000 to replenish the other Professional Fee.

Motion: 1st Lillian Barney 2nd Manuel Shirleson Vote: 16-0-2

3. **022-02-2024:** Resolution to approve a budget transfer within Fund 17, to allocate the anticipated for the emergency legislation #CJA-11-24 in the amount of \$35,000 distribution to all 110 Chapters under the Navajo Nation.

President Moore – how this emergency fund will be used by the Chapter was decided by the Chapter staff, not the officials. The pellets and wood will be purchased by the chapter and it will be distributed from the chapter.

Elvis Bitsilly – I’m glad the Chapter will be adding more into fuel account for the grader and backhoe. Red Willow Farmers will be needing assistance from the heavy equipment operator for the planting season. The cost of fuel for the equipment can be very expensive.

Motion: 1st Sam Natonabah 2nd Charles Arviso Vote: 16-0-2

4. **023-02-2024:** Resolution to approve the purchase of new phones for the Chapter House.

Maria, CSC - 3 of our phones are not working. We have 4 offices including the conference room which has phones and currently my phone and the one in the conference room are the only 2 working phones. We requested for 3 price quotes, Smith & Bagley, Inc. from Gallup, quote: \$211.40 per month, Rockstar, Inc. from Rio Rancho in Albuquerque, quote: \$1466.70 total cost including installation and a monthly fee of \$161.70, Global Communication Solutions in Farmington but they did not enter a quote. Please refer to the resolution.

Charles Arviso – Who is providing phone service to the Chapter now?

Maria, CSC – We are getting service from Frontier but they no longer provide technical support.

Motion: 1st Geneva Begay 2nd Lillian Barney Vote: 16-0-2

5. **024-02-2024: Resolution to support Nancy Allison's request for assistance from the Veterans Housing Program.**

Motion: 1st Sam Natonabah 2nd Manuel Shirleson Vote: 16-0-02

State Representative Wonda Johnson – Worked on your requests for project reauthorization. We received \$2.8 million this past budget session and I will be giving each one of my 15 chapters an allocation. For Tohatchi Chapter, you requested \$50,000 for improvements of the Nakai Community Park. Mr. Elvis Bitsilly was in Santa Fe requesting for reauthorization of the pending projects. We should be getting a list this coming week. We worked on every problem area like healthcare, elders, children, roads & bridges, economic development, and water. Our Governor Grisham is pushing the electric vehicle initiative so I think we need to ask for a presentation at your chapter from the governor's office. I personally don't think we are ready for electric vehicles on the Nation because it is coming to fast and to soon. We still work on our own vehicles, hauling water and hay, and wood. We don't want this initiative to become a mandate. Robin Holder from Tohatchi Elementary brought her students to Santa Fe during the legislative session and came to visit me in my office. The class was introduced in the gallery by the Speaker of the House. Kevin Mitchell also stopped by to request for money for the GMCS. I earmarked dollars for technology for interactive education so we can get more support. I allocated \$3 million for county roads & bridges so, now is the time to meet with your County Commissioner, Danielle Notah and County Manager to request for your county roads and bridges to be renovated. I also assistance Senator Pinto with the Missing and Murder Ingenious Women and Relatives task force. We put some more money in radiation to help the uranium mine workers. I also allocated some money for White Cliffs community for their natural gas infrastructure. I put some money in Gallup Public Safety, our tribal and city police departments don't make that much money for the work that they do.

President Moore – We met with NTUA along with Judith Willoughby last week and Ms. Willoughby had a paper which lists the projects for Tohatchi. The list had 3 projects which were; the warehouse, powerline project for \$78,000, and Red Willow which she stated were not reauthorized.

State Representative Johnson – I believe that list was from last year. I just put in several requests for reauthorization and once it gets approved it will get a stamp. I have those stamp copies with me if you want a copy. The latest reauthorization is still in process so the list you were looking at must be from year 2023. So, you are reauthorized.

This is my 10th year, my 5th term. I am Chair Woman of House Government Elections in Indian Affairs and I'm chair for Indian Affairs during the summer.

- VIII. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Next planning meeting March 4th, Veterans meeting March 8th @ 10am, Grazing Committee meeting March 6th @ 9am, Conservation Workshop March 11-13th, Ribbon Cutting Event March 14th @ 8am, CLUPC meeting March 19th @ 9am, and Ranch & Farm Workshop March 26th @ 9am.
- IX. **NEXT MEETING DATE: March 4, 2024 Planning Meeting @ 10am.**

- X. **ADJOURNMENT:** We lost quorum at 1:35pm after going through the resolutions.

Motion: 1st 2nd

Submitted by,



Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter **March 06, 2024**

cc: Mr. Sonny Moore, President

Mr. Mike Halona, Vice-President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

MS: Maria Allison, CSC

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