

March 4, 2024 10:00 A.M.

## PLANNING MEETING AGENDA

TELECONFERENCE: 1-219-803-8769 PIN# 160 108 500#

Video call link: [meet.google.com/ahs-epsf-aep](https://meet.google.com/ahs-epsf-aep)

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. INVOCATION
- IV. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA
- V. COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:

1.

### VI. REPORTS:

#### \*Council Delegate Report:

1. NM State Legislation Update
2. Safety Complex-Updates on meeting with Parsons and Delores Greyeyes (DCD)—Discuss the cost of the Project Management Team—Cost of the Architect of \$800,000
3. IGA Language Amendment with State of NM--
4. Virtual Teleconference Legislation—Tohatchi already has a resolution to Approve Teleconference—it may be recommended—look at the instructions from DOJ
5. Report on Winter Session
6. Revised IGA and Draft Cover Letter sent out for Discussion
7. Update on New Regulations on Cemetery and Burial/ Homesite Regulations
8. Update on \$17,000 for Flatbed –possible substitute for Dump Trailer
9. Request for Staff Vehicle to Conduct Business—Dump Truck for District 14–New Chapter Truck for
10. Report on Senator Lente's Efforts on Allocating Funds for Language Retention—Mckinley County Schools Low Performance—DODE Partnership

#### \*Community Service Coordinator/Officials' /CLUPC Report:

1. Status of Recent Report on Disapproved Reauthorization of the \$78,000 Powerline, Warehouse Construction Funds, Red Willow for \$170,000 and Senior Center
2. DCD Meeting with Mr. Waseta and their Commitment on the \$80,000 and \$100,000 for Septic and Leach Replacements
3. Meeting Update with NTUA –Water, Power, House Wiring, Septic Tank and Leach Field, Solar Power
4. East Flats Water Drilling Pre-Construction Meeting and Status of the East Flats Participants-follow-up on returned homesites—Set up meeting with NTUA (Rex Kontz Team) on East Flats—Staff needs to Push the Homesites for East Flats Participants—Have them sign up for Septic Tank and Leach Field Replacements
5. ARPA—Status of Assessments with LAM and 6-30-2024 Encumbrance Deadline
6. Water Break in Chapter Compound—NTUA keeps Postponing
7. Cemetery Expansion – Update on the processing of documents to Land Department-
8. Audit Status (meet with ASC), Inventory, Records Management,
9. 5-year Land Withdrawal for Professional Housing and Commercial Development
10. Bike Trail Documents to DOJ
11. Status of Senior Center discrepancies
12. Highway Lighting-Updated Resolution with Updated Cost Figures—need to look for Construction Funds





March 04, 2024 10:00 A.M.

## PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

MAR 22 AM 8:23

TELECONFERENCE: 219-803-8769 PIN: 160 108 500#

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/ahs-epsf-aep>

**I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:21am**

**II. ROLL CALL:** President Sonny Moore, Vice President Mike Halona, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, and Grazing Officer, Gerald Moore.

**III. INVOCATION:** President Moore

**IV. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA**

**V. COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**

**Nicole Sombrero – NTUA Choice Wireless:** The ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> is to acknowledge the new equipment that we put up on our tower to present to the community. The services we improve on the tower is for broadband which is internet services. I would like to request to do a full presentation on Choice Wireless during your Chapter meeting.

**Elvis Bitsilly –** What is Choice Wireless going to do with the ACP program? I received mail that this program will be terminating. Will there be a new program you will be offering to us? There is internet service here at Chapter but it is not reliable.

**Nicole –** We have a lot of people on the ACP program which is the “affordable connectivity program” and also known as the free internet services that NTUA has. It was a grant from the federal government that paid for your services. A decision was made that February 7<sup>th</sup> would be the last day they will provide any new services to customers. Currently, we are in what I like to call the “I don’t know phase.” Congress and the federal government are still trying to decide who will be taking over the funding for this program. What we are hearing is it might be going to the State.

On the Choice wireless side of things, we are planning how we can decommission if the program is terminated. Because it’s a political aspect, the State does not want to let go of all these people and we’ve been letting the customers know to reach out to their Senators and State Representatives to raise their concerns because it’s a service that you need. April 2024 is the projected date when they will run out of funds for the program. Choice Wireless is considering giving a discount to these individuals for certain number of months until they can find a program that works for them.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford –** I believe our major concern is how strong the internet is going to be? Especially in a rural area with mountains, will the connection be strong there?

**Elvis Bitsilly –** I’ve had issues with my connection where I had to call your service center in Chinle to get reconnected. I feel your internet is not very reliable. I hope this new upgrade on your tower will be very dependable.

**Vice President Halona –** What type of equipment are you putting up?

**Nicole –** It is called Tarana, it’s the new game changer in the telecommunication world.

**Kevin Mitchell –** Just an to announce, this week is the 1<sup>st</sup> round of the state basketball tournament and the girls and boys will be playing on their home court on Thursday and Friday.

**Priscilla Duncan –** I would like to mention the Tohatchi girls’ basketball coach needs to be humble and show sportsmanship. The people who stream the live games can see how she is constantly screaming at the girls. She should be made aware our community does not condone this behavior.

**Dorinda Barney –** I had NNDOT clear out the sand dunes alongside of the road to make it passable, but with the recent wind the sand dunes are back onto the road. I got a call from Cornelius and he states they plan to be back out there to clear the road again, but only was access to a grader. The frontend loader is being transported to tohajiilee for 2 weeks. He is hoping the Chapter will be able to assist with the clearing of the



road. What NNDOT is doing is clearing away the sand dunes which is quick fix, but the sand comes back again with all the wind we have been having. There has to be a way to repair that whole area to keep the wind from piling up into sand dunes.

Secondly, I want to mention how we have been having issues with cattle wandering around the artesian well every day. Before it was the feral horses, now it's these cattle who are making a mess of the place. I counted 20 head of cattle and who they belong to, I don't know. The majority of the cows are black and have purple tags on each side of the ears, some have red and orange tags. My guess is they are coming across from Coyote Canyon. I do remember you asking me to write a letter to you regarding the livestock at the artisan well. The water coming up does not even go into the water trough and the pond next to the well is dirty and contaminated by the dead livestock who have died near by the pond. I believe the only way to deter the animals is to fence in the artisan well. I also brought this issue up at the grazing meeting last year and grazing officer Tsosie said all animals have a right to drink from all water wells, but that's not the issue. We are trying to preserve our grazing area for our livestock and since Navajo Nation is now educating on conservation, livestock owners and permittees should take care of their livestock. Our area has become so desolate and dry and I'm worried that if things do not change it will continue and we won't have a blade of grass left for our sheep. I'm asking for assistance from the Chapter and the grazing officer. I understand years back, there were plans to run a fence between Tohatchi and Mexican Springs, but there was no funding available.

There was also a wild horse around up in the area and we were not informed about this. I think the local homesteads in the area should be notified when they plan to do a round up. It's better to be informed than to wonder why people are driving around hauling stock trailers.

**Grazing Officer Moore** – A compliant form would need to be submitted and I do know who those cows belong to. These cows are the ones that go up to the Allison's place and come back down to your place.

**President Moore** – If need be, I'm willing to write a letter on your behalf as well.

Next week, we have scheduled a 3-day conservation workshop. We are looking for 20 participants.

**Sam Natonabah** – Open range for our livestock can sometimes cause conflicts and animosity between neighbors. We have the same problem with hot springs area.

**Caroline Tom** – the road my sister described has become a safety hazard. The road has two large high piles of dirt (sand dunes) on each side and in the middle was the original road. When the rains start up, the road will be flooded and become unpassable. The dirt needs to be packed down where it's not blowing around. There has to be some long-range plan to keep this road assessable for the residents. The land out there has become barren without vegetation. Also, the other area which needs to be address is where the water has been running through the road. The current culvert is not working like it should be and this road will cave in once the rains start coming down. Like I mention, it's become a safety hazard and I would not want someone to get stuck in the mud.

As far as the land and water, we have accommodated surrounding neighbor. Now, there is nothing left, no foliage or vegetation. We don't let our livestock out, because there is nothing for them to eat out there. They are fed inside the corral, but there are people who fail to care for their livestock and these animals are trespassing and eating up what is left of the vegetation here. There is an artesian well near us which has water running without a trough. This well has been running for as long as I can remember and I have thought of capping it off, but it might blow up from the pressure. It might be better to have it fenced it and notify Water Resource Department for assistance.

**President Moore** – I can start working on the road situation and as far as the livestock, I'll refer that issue to the Grazing Officer. For years now, people have gotten use to having a large number of livestock, more than what is on their grazing permits. But since we have been in a drought for several years now, it's the livestock that are suffering from lack of care from their owners. Permittees are asked to reduced their herd, but they don't want to that. I've talked with our Grazing Officer and encourage him to educate our livestock owners but it still goes back to the livestock owners, they need to take responsibility for their livestock. And I don't know what happened to the fencing project. Maybe the Grazing Officer can look into that for us.

We need to start looking at what we can do as livestock owners. We have VP Halona here who can probably assist with this. As Division Director for Natural Resources, they are responsible for the range and water.

**Lucinda Barney** – Once the rain starts, the accumulation of the water from Twin Lakes and Mexican Springs will start to flow down toward road 9653. Is there any funding the Chapter can apply for, like funds that were



never used and being reallocated to a different project?

**President Moore** – We are talking about 2 different things, the road itself and controlling the rain runoff. It's going to take some meetings to make that happen. I can probably start on that this week.

**Lucinda Barney** – What happen to FEMA fundings?

**Vice President Halona** – It would have to be declared as an emergency to use FEMA funding. That is the challenge. Even though the Navajo Nation has declared an emergency, FEMA will not reimburse the Navajo Nation.

## VI. REPORTS:

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3. IGA Language Amendment with State of NM. – no update.
4. Virtual Teleconference Legislation -
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7. Update on New Regulations on cemetery and burial/homesite.
8. Update on \$17,000 for Flatbed – possible substitute for Dump Trailer.
9. Request for Staff Vehicle to conduct business – Dump Truck for District 14 and new chapter truck.
10. Report on Senator Lente's efforts on allocating funds for language retention and partnership with DOD

**President Moore** – We do not have the Council Delegate nor the LDA here with us today. I'll do my best to update you on their agenda items. The biggest issue we have right now is not knowing how much State Capital funds we have: \$78,000 for powerline, \$170,000 for Red Willow, and the warehouse project which we need to reauthorize with the deadlines coming up. Somehow DCD received information that these funds will be reverted back to the State. We had Representative Johnson here at the last meeting and she stated the funds have been reauthorized and won't be reverted back to the State. But my understanding is, it's not official until the Governor has signed off on these projects.

We are also ready to start building the proposed Safety Complex, and we have some funds available with DCD. We are currently looking for funds to hire an architect and a project manager who will take on the responsibility of management. We've asked to use the remaining funds from the State to hire an architect but we are told "professional fees" are not to be covered using these funds. We are working on submitting a TIF (Tribal Infrastructure Funds) application. You can request for planning funds, design funds, or construction funds and we thought it best to apply for the construction fund. We are also estimating the cost of the Safety Complex will be around \$15 million. I'm very grateful for 2 individuals with the Parsons team, Mr. Darryl Sam, and Eric Livingston. Even though we don't have funds to continue to pay them for their services, they have given us an estimated cost of the Safety Complex and they are also advertising on Window Rock and sending out RFQ (Request for Qualifications). If that goes through, we can select an architect to design the Safety Complex. We need access to the funds at DCD which were allocated to our Chapter for the Safety Complex. Parsons has stated it will cost us around \$1 million to hire an architect and \$800,000 for the project management fee. So, that's \$1.8 million dollars and the complex itself is going to cost around \$15 million. When you apply for TIF funds, you can only request for 15% of the total cost of the project which comes out to \$2.3 million.

A while back funds were allocated to all the chapters to purchase heavy equipment with a flatbed trailer. We submitted a resolution for it, but we never received the flatbed trailer. I am thinking about changing that request to a dump trailer instead because we do not have anyone here at the Chapter who has a CDL to haul the flatbed trailer with a backhoe on it. I believe it would be better for the Chapter to invest in a dump trailer to haul supplies, gravel, and dirt. I would like to discuss this with the Council Delegate.

I would also like District 14 chapters to invest in a dump truck which we all can use among the 5 chapters. We could use a staff vehicle for the Chapter because we have staff that travel into Window Rock to do business. They can't use the 1-ton truck because the PEP workers use this vehicle daily.

**Virtual Conference**, we will be amending our resolution to say yes, we approve virtual conferencing. In order to change the law in Title 26, we need 56 chapters on Navajo to say yes to virtual conferencing. This



would give community members and registered voters the opportunity to listen in and participate in the discussions and the ability to vote on resolutions. Our chapter is setup for virtual conferencing and we voted to continue with virtual conferencing.

**Tohatchi Public Schools** - The education of our children here in Tohatchi is always a concern of ours. We feel education is a very important part of our children lives and we want to make sure they are getting the best education possible. With that said, we invite the GMCS superintendent and principals to our meetings to give updates. We appreciate their willingness to share the schools scores, ratings, and how they compare to other schools in the District and State.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I like to speak to the IGAs which comes from the State of NM. I emailed Mr. Lawrence John who oversees the Indian Affairs. I told him about the issues we are having with our IGA contracts. Within the contract there is a scope of work along with a budget for the projects and what we are being told by the project manager, Dr. Greyeyes is we can't use the State funds for professional services and that we can't hire an architect. Mr. John reviewed the two IGA contract numbers I provided and stated, we can use the funds for professional services and we can hire an architect for the contracts he reviewed. But there are other IGA's which may be tied to the Safety Complex that may have other language about "professional fees." We will need to work with DCD and Dr. Greyeyes.

As far as the public schools, I believe our Board member, Mr. Mitchell is doing excellent work bringing our schools up to par. I appreciate GMCS leadership coming in to our meetings to give us frequent updates on how our schools are competing.

**President Moore** – Senate Pinto awarded us \$1million dollars to go toward the "construction" of the Safety Complex. Which means it cannot be used for planning and design of the facility. When funds are allocated from Santa Fe, the money does not come here to the Chapter, the money goes to W/R. We do have the money to hire an architect but again we are being told we can't use this money for that purpose. We as Chapter Officials were hoping we could get an architect to design the complex before we leave office so the next officials can start working on the construction portion of the Safety Complex.

**Kevin Mitchell** – I would like to ask to have Representative Johnson give a report on the Lente bill which would give money to the cultural language department. Like I stated previously, GMCS stood neutral on this bill because the funding would go to the Navajo Nation and not the Gallup McKinley County Schools. The Navajo Nation did oppose the bill because they felt it was unfair without any indication of equal distribution of funds. Senator George Munoz turn around and took the bill and had it passed through his senate and received the funds. He distributed the funds by giving \$1million to the Zuni Tribe, and gave \$4 million to the Navajo Nation. This is still not an equal distribution; Zuni children would be getting more money per child than a Navajo child because of the number of Navajos compared to Zuni who are a small tribe. My other concern is how is the Nation going to use these funds because these funds could be going to the schools in Arizona as well. And how do they plan to allocate these funds to the chapters or will it be going to GMCS to do the allocation? Representative Johnson was a co-sponsor for this bill and she can explain how the funding will be distributed.

**Elvis Bitsilly** – My understanding of the IGA's is it can only be changed by a bill. The legislators would have to sit down with Indian Affairs and someone would have to sponsor the legislation. The Navajo Nation at one time had their own architect who was hire through CPMD. When a contractor knows the amount of dollars you have to spend on a project they will increase their price. This information should not be divulged when doing business. \$800,000 to hire an architect I feel is an outrageous price to pay. I would like to see the scope of work that they will be doing to design the Safety Complex. I thought there was already a design in place which was provided by Delores Greyeyes. She has never worked with us including the previous NN Council and she is responsible for all NN Safety buildings. Also happening today is Law & Order committee will be discussing Judicial Public Safety facilities fund priority list for fund year 23-24. Tohatchi is back on the list as priority and our Council Delegate needs to push this. The Council Delegate has only limited authority at the Chapter level. As far as the Public Safety Complex is concern, we were suppose to be in partnership with the county, state, and NN. We've had \$2,050,000 allocated for the Safety Complex in the last 2 years. I believe we only spent a \$1million so far. We need to expend this funding and we should be talking with CPMD. They have a project manager, Andy Thomas who worked the demolish of the old Detention Center. DCD staff tend to give you incorrect information about State funds. I would



suggest you schedule a meeting with President Nygren to get some of these issues resolved. Everything I see on this agenda is administrative and they need to start following up on these projects every single day. We have 3 projects which have not been reauthorized nor do we know if they can be reauthorized. We need to start expending those dollars. Red Willow Farm also has \$170,000 which needs to be reauthorized. We were not notified these funds were available. As far as the bike trail, I wrote to Roderick Begay with DOJ and he referred my request to Cynthia Freeman. I don't know if Maria, CSC has heard from DOJ regarding the bike trail. Our State Legislators need to be on top of these projects and I have not seen Senator Pinto here at our Chapter in over a year. She needs to make herself available to her constituents. I would also suggest the Department of Indian Affairs give copies of IGA's to the Chapter as well, not just DCD.

**Kevin Mitchell** – I would like to request to be put on the agenda for the 03-20-24 Chapter meeting. I will try to get someone from DODE here to present as well. GMCS gave DODE a presentation on the curriculum we are using currently and they were very impress. They would like to implement the same curriculum at all DODE schools.

**President Moore** – I would suggest Mr. Mitchell attend the District 14 agency meeting which will be the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April. I would also like to schedule a meeting with DCD director, Mr. Arbin Mitchell soon.

**Caroline Tom** – Just to add to the discussion, I would recommend Council Delegate Notah provide a report to the Chapter if not in person, then by email to answer some of our questions. As a Council Delegate, he probably feels there are more important issues in Window Rock that need his attention. Meanwhile, the chapter does not have anyone to rely on to assist us with our issues. These contracts that are being held up because of the language can be resolved. Also the plan to implement Navajo Language and Culture back into the schools is good idea. Children these days spend the majority of their time on iPhone, iPad, and computers and less time speaking to one another. This is the reason Navajo teaching has all but diminished in the home. Even our Navajo language is not spoken at meetings anymore. I am glad to hear the Navajo language and culture will be brought back into the schools.

I also think the suggestion to meet with the President of NN or Division Directors is a good idea. We need to make them aware of the obstacles we are facing here at the Chapter. The workload of these projects can be overwhelming, and I would recommend splitting up the projects among the officials to make the workload less of a burden. You can also ask community members for assistance as well. Some of us have experience and know the NN processes. I can start a petition and ask why these funds aren't moving in a timely manner and send it to President Nygren.

**Vice President Halona** – Just to remind our community member and everyone else, the process for obtaining a homesite has been streamlined. The Land Department, Fish and Wildlife, and Preservation have streamlined the process and the Resource Committee have agreed to the changes. It is now easier to obtain a homesite lease if there is already a dwelling on the site used by a family. The other is burial and cemetery regulations. We've worked on this for the past 7 years and involved many committees to agree upon this policy. This pamphlet has information on how cemetery should be established, who will manage it and keep records, who will be responsible for it and can there be a fee applied for burial? It also gives information on family plots and there was also a policy written up for the funeral homes for guidance. Now, they have to follow these guidelines, if not they will be charge \$1000 for civil trespassing. Shrines and Memorials will not be allowed alongside the highways anymore, in fact they will start removing these shrines. We also addressed cremation on the Nation which did not have a policy in place. It was decided ashes from the cremation can no longer be scattered on Navajo. You can bring the ashes back in an urn and bury it at a community cemetery. We worked very hard on these policies and varies committees were involved in drafting these policies. The Chapter can look into bringing someone from W/R to give us a in depth presentation on these policies. Please share this information with your family and relatives.

**\*Community Service Coordinator/Officials' Report:**

1. Status of recent report on disapproved reauthorization of the \$78,000 powerline, warehouse construction funds. Red Willow for \$170,000 and Senior Center.
2. DCD Meeting with Mr. Wasetta and their commitment on the \$80,000 and \$100,000 for septic and leach line replacements.
3. Meeting Update with NTUA – Water, Power line, House wiring, Septic b, and Leach field, and Solar Power
4. East Flats Water Drilling Pre-Construction meeting and status of the East flats participants: Follow-up on



5. ARPA – Status of Assessments with LAM and the 06-30-2024 encumbrance deadline.
6. Water break in Chapter Compound – NTUA keeps postponing.
7. Cemetery Expansion – Update on the processing of documents to Land Department.
8. Audit Status – need to meet with ASC
9. 5-year Land Withdrawal for Professional Housing and Commercial Development.
10. Bike Trail documents to DOJ.
11. Status of Senior Center discrepancies.
12. Highway Lighting – Updated Resolution with current cost figures/need to look for construction funds.
13. Website maintenance - training provided to Fern Spencer
14. Heavy Equipment Operator training -
15. CLUPC update meeting with Division of Economic Development – Leonard Francisco Jr.
16. CLUPC on Land Use Recertification
17. Zoom Meetings – will require an annual fee-need a justification memo.

**President Moore – gave update for CSC:** We met with Mr. Waseta with the Division of Community Development regarding the \$80,000 and \$100,000 which was allocated from the State for septic and leach line replacement. He stated he would assign a project manager to these projects but we have not heard who this individual will be. Maria is working with Denise Murphy with IHS so we don't have duplication of names for the projects.

We have been meeting with NTUA as well and that is how we found out, you can apply directly with them to get septic and leach line replaced, house wiring, powerline, waterline extension, and solar power using ARPA funds. Here at the Chapter we have LAM (Loren Miller) coming in to do assessments for bathroom additions. We have a deadline of June 2026 to complete all these projects. For the Eastflats residents, Souder & Miller will start the water drilling projects this month. The families need to have all the infrastructure in place before the drilling can start.

Cemetery Expansion will require a survey of the whole cemetery per Land Administration. They could not find documentation of the survey of the cemetery and the Chapter could not find documentation as well. Hopefully the 1.5 acres that was withdrawn will become official after we get the whole cemetery re-surveyed. With the audit, we asked the ASC, Patricia Begay to help us resolve finding one, but we have not heard from her or her accountant. We will need to follow up with her this week.

The bike trail documents are still with the Department of Justice with attorney, Cynthia Freeman. We are waiting on their guidance on how to handle the payment.

Jared Johnso, supervisor of the Senior Center is working on repairing/replacing the HVAC system behind the Senior Center. He is hoping the NN insurance will cover the repair/replacement of the HVAC.

We are still looking for funds to pay for the highway lightening.

The Chapter sent Ms. Fern Spencer to training on the Webpage. She will be handling the Chapter website.

Heavy Equipment training for our operator, we are finding it difficult to find someone to do a training.

Chapter is also looking into purchasing another router to accommodate the many users at the Chapter.

I am currently working on applying for TIF (Tribal infrastructure Fund) funds to support our shortfall of the Safety Complex.

**\*Red Will Farm's Report/CLUPC**

1. Status of \$170,000 reauthorization of NM State Funds.

**Elvis Bitsilly** – The \$170,000 was for roads and irrigation. As far as the Chooshgai Lake eradication project, ~~BLA~~ is finalizing the last part of the scope of work. All they need is a couple more signatures from upper management. They said they will be starting on this project in March, so hopefully we hear from them soon. This will continue until the whole lake is cleaned up.

Red Willow farmers will start planting in March. We want to start planting early this year so start preparing your plots.

We have our diversion dam/canal projects and got word from Water Resources who want to setup a meeting with Red Willow to start expending the \$467,000 to get the channel way cleared and cleaned up.

2. Three Day Week Work Shop – in March and need participants.

**Sam Natonabah** – I want to request for the heavy equipment operator to assist us in some repairs at the farm before the water starts coming down the canal.



**Elvis Bitsilly President** – We've completed the 5-year Land Withdrawal application process with the Chapter and the Chapter has forward the application to Land Department. We also submitted the GPS reading for the old boarding school area. Once this application is approved through Land Department we will be looking to development the area. The application should take not more than a week for review and then approval. The CLUPC will be having a workshop to review/edit the overall Land Use Plans within our community. We also have learned one of our community members, Laris Manuelito has a project which she will start construction on soon which is south of Tohatchi, about 4 miles, near mile marker 19. The grocery store she is planning to build would be similar to the store in Albuquerque called "Sawmill." Her project will be added to our Land Use Plan

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – NHA was here at our Chapter couple of months ago looking for land for housing. Is this something CLUPC is looking into?

**Elvis Bitsilly** – Yes, this has been a priority for the Chapter for some time now. Professional housing has been part of the plan. Of course you have to have infrastructure and the support of the community. NHA did say they have the money to build new homes, but they are looking for land that has been withdrawn.

**Lucinda Barney** – Professional housing for who? Is it a house they can purchase?

**Elvis Bitsilly** – Professional housing for the doctors, nurses, teachers, and anyone in our community. These homes can be purchased but this will need more discussion to decide what will fit our community best. This could include apartments as well.

**Caroline Tom** – NHA has homes across Navajo and they do not take of the homes that they rent out. I don't know if it's because the occupants feel the home does not belong to them. You see trash in their yards along with broken down vehicles, but NHA does not enforce their policy. I hope this will be brought to NHA's attention when in discussion with them. I believe building professional housing is better for our community. We'll have homes for the professional people who work here. Looking at Navajo Nation wide, NHA has failed to take care of their homes.

**Wanda President Halona** – A couple of things I want you to be aware of which are; about a month ago I attended a meeting with President Nygren, Chief of Staff, Delegate Notah, and Tony Skrelunas who is Division Director for Economic Development to discuss the land next to the clinic. When Ben Shelly, was president we got him to draft a letter to the BIA to abate and demolish the old BIA houses so the land could be clear for us to use. President Nygren has an initiative to build 1000 homes on Navajo and we have identified 500 thus far. So, this project would be a part of President Nygren's initiative. Professional homes will all be mortgage homes, the others will be rental for individuals who do not want to make an investment in a home and the apartments will be for those families who are just getting started. We have to look at this from the bigger scale, so right now we are focusing on Tohatchi. This is what CLUPC needs to do is look at this project on a bigger boarder scale. Withdraw a whole area known as the community of Tohatchi so any further development, it will be done and cleared.

Secondly, utilize the 1950 legislation to have the Chapter establish a 750 feet corridor. They've responded in a letter, but lack a resolution. Along the highway, 750 feet on both sides of the highway was withdrawn in 1950 and it's also been quantified, it's in title 14 and we just need to do the regulations. We as a community need to get prepared, by identifying it and then we start putting together the pieces of the puzzle. Because the number one thing across Navajo is "land." One person objects and everyone backs off and I've been asked "what else is there to do?" Make them a partner, ask them for compensation consideration? but we've been doing this for too long, we don't try different options that are available. We could have more people move to Tohatchi and have them all register at Tohatchi Chapter which would bring in more money from W/R. This is when you start looking at what type of stores would benefit our community. By then we should be a certified Chapter where we can get the tax money and this would increase our ability to provide more and better services and our community would start to grow.

I met with people from Santa Fe two weeks ago, and they are looking for a place to put a sound stage so they can film movies here on Navajo. There are opportunities coming to Navajo and Tohatchi. The highway which



goes through Tohatchi, highway 491 is a big vein, but we are not capitalizing on it. So, if we start thinking bigger everything will expand, that is why having the Public Safety Complex here in Tohatchi is important. I want to say I support what CLUPC is doing and I've shared what is being discussed on a broader scale in W/R. Our children who live off Navajo want to come home and they are use to rule and regulations, terms and conditions of rental agreements. We can establish/design an ordinance to oversee the rental homes which states, no trash in yards, no livestock animals will be allowed for boarding because this effects the community in one way or another.

**Elvis Bitsilly** – Just a comment about the houses up on the mesa (Chooshgai). Why aren't we tapping into those homes to make them available for our community?

**Lucinda Barney** – How far has the rule addressing project gotten?

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford**- There has been a committee formed in W/R and they were given \$35 million to start working on the rural addressing for Navajo, but they need the support of the council and all the Chapters to get this project off the ground. Mr. Leonard Redhorse is the one overseeing this rural addressing project and this is something that is needed across Navajo. I know this has been in the works here at the Chapter for quite some time now and we tried to get the County involved as well, but that did not work out. I would suggest we do a resolution to support Redhorse and the rural addressing efforts.

**Vice President Halona** – They put the rural addressing with Public Safety because they are working in conjunction with 911 emergency, instead of working on two different projects, the 911 and rural addressing will be combined. They have had several different companies look at what method will be used. Utah kind of went off on their own using google advance and google earth. They will be working with the same information that Fed-X, UPS, 911, and amber alert has access to. Some chapters wanted to use Navajo names to name their street, but these entities like Fed-X would not be able to pronounce the names. We will be meeting with a software company from Phoenix who think they can assist Navajo with this project.

**\*Grazing Officer Moore's Report:**

**Grazing Officer Moore** – the feral horse round up which occurred about 3 weeks ago captured 73 feral horses. All the horse had no brand except for one horse. Brand was "TLC" on its hip belonging to Grace James and Andrew Benally. The roundup took place for two days.

There was also an incident which occurred across the street from the clinic. A dog attacked a male individual who was walking on the road. He tried to get a policeman over so he can make an official report to an officer but they never showed up. The Navajo Nation has some kind of code to either site the person or take the dog away. I gave him the number to the animal damage control in Ft. Defiance.

The other thing is the grazing and agriculture land use permit and verification, these individuals are doing their tally counts but there are some who have not had a tally count. These individuals need to do something to show they want to be counted as active permittee. Otherwise, I'm not sure what BIA has plan for these people who are inactive, but there should be more information on this on March 26<sup>th</sup>. As far as I know we have 130 permittees within 14-2 and there are around 30-40 families who are active with their permits. The other 100, I don't know what is going on with them as far as their permits are concerned. I know this has been an issue across Navajo. Back in 1941, there were 12,000 permits issued and out of that there are about only 3000 that are active today.

Again, Chapter will be hosting a Farm and Ranch session on March 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-3pm.

**VII. RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Resolution to Approve Housing Discretionary assistance for Theresa Bryant.
2. Resolution to Support the virtual conferencing at Chapters across the Navajo Nation.
3. Resolution to Authorize the 5.527 acre of the existing cemetery to be surveyed.



VIII. **ANOUNCEMENTS:** Next Chapter Meeting, March 20<sup>th</sup>. District Grazing Committee Meeting, March 6<sup>th</sup> at Tohatchi Chapter at 9am. Red Willow Farm meeting, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. CLUPC meeting, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Conservation Plan work session, March 11-13<sup>th</sup> at 8am.

X. **NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: March 20, 2024 @ 10am**

X. **AJOURNMENT: 1:51pm**

Submitted by;



Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter -

cc: Mr. Sonny Moore, President

Mr. Mike Halona, Vice-President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC

Mr. Nathan Notah, Council Delegate