



AUG 19 PM 1:03

August 04, 2025 9:00 A.M.

PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

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

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

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 9:23 am**
- II. ROLL CALL:** President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, and CLUPC members: Priscilla Duncan and Fern Spencer.
- III. INVOCATION: Effie Barney**
- IV. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA**
- V. COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**
 - 1. Jonathan Garcia and Sheyenne Love – Kinder Morgan:** We are here to give more information on El Paso Natural Gas Company (EPNG) line which runs through the Navajo Nation on the New Mexico side. Our agreement with the Navajo Nation is up for renewal in October 2025. The pipeline passes through 28 Chapters and we plan to attend each of their meetings to talk about who Kinder Morgan is, what we do, and request for a support letter for the renewal. Kinder Morgan is one of the largest energy infrastructure companies in North America. We provide energy transportation and storage services in a safe, efficient and environmentally responsible manner for the benefit of people, communities and businesses. Kinder Morgan operates the largest natural gas transmission network, including El Paso Natural Gas Company (EPNG). EPNG's system consists of 10,140 miles of pipeline. We are committed to public safety, protecting the environment, and operating our facilities in compliance with industry rules and regulations. Pipelines are monitor 24-7-368 using Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) computer systems. Automated and manual valves along pipeline segments enable them to be shut down and isolated quickly. Inspections of the Rights-of-Way (ROW) is done by air and ground. Above ground markers are displayed along rights-of-way to indicate the presence of buried pipeline. Internal inspections are conducted regularly using sophisticated, computerized in-line inspection equipment also known as "smart pigs" and close interval surveys. Cathodic protection is also used to protect pipelines from external corrosion.
EPNG and the Navajo Nation History
The first pipeline was constructed in 1947 and the 1st series of agreements for rights-of-way between the Navajo Nation and EPNG began in 1957. Approximately 290 miles of right-of-way (ROW) on the Navajo Nation Tribal Trust Lands. El Paso Natural Gas modified the agreements in 1985 and received the most recent approval in 2009 and the current grant will expire in October 25, 2025. El Paso Natural Gas Company L.L.C. (EPNG), a wholly owned subsidiary of Kinder Morgan Inc., is seeking a new Right-of-Way (ROW) grant for its existing natural gas pipelines that cross approximately 290 miles of pipeline corridor and approximately 4,200 acres of existing site locations for various natural gas facilities on the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona and northeastern New Mexico. These natural gas pipeline have been in operation for 50-80 years and are located within existing ROW. The new grant is required for the continued operation and maintenance of the pipelines. No construction or ground disturbance activities will occur as part of this new grant.
Fern Spencer – How many Native Americans do you employ and does Kinder Morgan give financial support to the Navajo Nation?
Jonathan Garcia – It is done through the BIA.
Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Who maintains the El Paso Gas Plant now. The one that is located just north of here near Buffalo Springs? Also, how do you know when part of the underground is damaged?

Jonathan Garcia – I'm not sure but I can find out who maintains the El Paso Gas Plant. As far as locating damage pipes, we send through the pipes a smart pig and it measures the thickness, and if there are abnormalities like a leak then we are flag to dig that section up and repair it and replace it

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – The Chapter was recently asked by another company, Tucson Electric whose powerlines goes right through the Navajo Nation as well. We provided them a support resolution along with a list of things we wanted the Navajo Nation to negotiate for us on our Chapter behalf. For example; scholarship money for our children.

Jonathan Garcia – One thing that is separate that we can do, or I can do specially is we are willing to help the Chapter house with any kind of need that you have. If there is a piece of equipment, school supplies any of that we are happy to include in the resolution up to a certain amount.

Priscilla Duncan – How many years will this new renewal cover? And in the past renewal, did the Navajo Nation negotiate for any kind of compensation?

Jonathan Garcia – I would not know what was negotiate previously with the Navajo Nation, but today we are certainly willing to help the Chapter house. Kinder/Morgan is requesting for another 25 years for the renewal and they acquired El Pasco Natural Gas company back in 2012.

Fern Spencer – My nephew works for Kinder/Morgan at the Hunter's Point station and they do send people out to maintain the El Paso Gas station.

Vice President Rodgers – Where exactly is the main gas station located at that all the gas pipes are coming from?

Jonathan Garcia – Kinder/Morgan just supplies the gas end user, that could be to a power producer or a port LNG facility. We just transport the gas; we don't do anything with it.

Laris Manuelito – Obviously, Kinder/Morgan is not supplying Tohatchi community with gas so where would a person go to get gas? Where is the source of the gas coming from?

Jonathan Garcia – we are a long-haul pipe so we don't have very many little off shoots of distribution, it would be impossible. The supply basin is in Texas which is one of the primary areas.

Laris Manuelito – I believe a new agreement should be drafted between Kinder Morgan and the Navajo Nation. The language is probably outdated and it should be possible for the Chapters to have a say in these negotiations. It seems like and it is historical that the Navajo Nation is always getting pennies on the dollar when the chapters do support resolutions. We are asking for our children, grandchildren, the future generations that we tried to negotiate an agreement that would be beneficial for them.

Jonathan Garcia – I hear you and I will bring that back to our folks in Houston. Currently, Kinder Morgan is paying \$30-33 million annual to the Navajo Nation.

Priscilla Duncan - I would like to suggest funding for our "Highway 491 lighting."

James Silversmith – Just a concern, the community of Tohatchi would like the Chapter to look into slowing the people who speed up and down this road out here. From the turnoff at Speedway to the old Post Office going west has been a problem. These people are probably going 60-80 miles an hour down this road daily. We also have children playing outside and this is an accident waiting to happen. I suggest getting speed bumps put in.

Laris Manuelito – Last Friday I signed my business site lease for Ii'ni Market Place, so now it's going down to Regional Development then it will go to the President to sign. I am asking the officials to request President Buu Nygren to have the signing of this document here at the Chapter. This will have more community involvement and more publicity. This would make it more formal and it will be documented for Tohatchi's history. Secondly, this also give the opportunity to request for \$10-\$15 million funding from SBCI (Small Business Credit Initiative) to start working on a plan and design and to begin construction of the store. Soon, you'll see a sign over at the future construction site saying "future home" With that being said I can move forward with community surveys and I plan to do the 5 chapters in district 14. Community surveys will be organized with the help of the women business owner's organization. They will help setup a survey during the Chapter meeting next month in September where part of the Chapter meeting will be a presentation formally introducing the store. There will be different places who community members to come in and give their ideas and what they would like to see in the store. I will then compile the information and this will give me a solid idea as to what people want to see in the grocery store. The survey will also be on my website and social media. The total cost of the store will be around \$52 million.

2. **Orlynda Dennison – Naschitti Senior Center Supervisor also the delegated supervisor for Tohatchi Senior Center.**

Staff wise, we are fully staff as far as the driver and the cook. We did hire someone for the supervisory position but unfortunately, things did not work out and they left the program. We do have in house applicants for the position and we are reviewing. Mostly like we will be hiring someone from in house as the new supervisor.

The Senior Center is still currently closed and we had OEH (Operational Environmental Health) come in on May 21st to do a walk through which we passed. Now, we are working on obtaining the sanitation permit and when receive the permit we can open the center. I will be hand delivering the sanitation application packet along with a money order to Window Rock. The other thing we are waiting for is our food budget. We currently do not have a food budget for the center and I was told by agency we don't have a food budget for centers which have been closed. So, I asked when can I expect a food budget for Tohatchi? I did not get an answer so I personally messaged our Office Specialist who handles the food purchase order and I'm waiting for her to get back with me. The current food budget that we have right now does not end until the end of September 30th. I have a feeling that we won't be receiving a food budget until after September 30th. I'm sorry for the delay, but we are still serving our home delivery clients, so those are the high-risk elders. The meals are coming out of Naschitti and we are taking clients for the new fiscal year. We currently have 15 elders that we are serving and if you need a ride to Naschitti Senior Center for lunch, you can call the center and the driver can pick you up.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Just to clarify, even though we get the permit we still don't have the food budget, correct? We would have to wait until the new fiscal year?

Orlynda Dennison – Yes, we would have to wait for the new food budget which will not come out until this current one expires after September 30th.

Laris Manuelito – The cost of the sanitation permit is \$10, I just want to say thank you for paying for the cost of the sanitation permit and everything that you are doing to care for our high-risk community members.

Vice President Rodgers - I suggest you take the completed packet to Andrew Soce, he is the gentleman who signs sanitation permits with OEH.

Orlynda Dennison – If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to me at Naschitti (505) 732-4220.

Delphine Bitsilly – What are the qualifications for the supervisory position?

Orlynda Dennison – 1 year of supervisory experience skills is the requirement. If the position gets posted again it would be on the website. Just know there is another process with that, it will go to HR recruiter who will assess the application. They will let you know if your application has been processed forward or it has been denied. From there it goes to DPM (Department of Personnel Management), they will look at it and send it back to our Window Rock office or them to review, then they'll send it to my agency and from my agency to gets sent to me. So it is a long process and afterwards, I will setup an interview and selection will be made and we have to do a whole other packet and a selection letter which gets sent back to Window Rock, our Central Office will sign off on it and they send it back to DPM to let them know a selection has been made.

President Bitsilly – I'm disappointed our Senior Center will not be opened as planned. Do we need to write a letter or memo to your immediate supervisor, Lesita Desidero and her boss to address our issues with our center as far as food budget. The center has been closed for the past 2 years and we've been working on getting the center re-opened so we need to push harder to get the people in Window Rock to work with us. We do have the support of New Mexico State Senator Pinto who approved a letter stating she wants the Senior Center opened so please keep pushing on our behalf.

Orlynda Dennison – I believe a support letter would really help in this instance to let Window Rock how serious we are about re-opening the Senior Center. That would be very helpful.

The new cook is Raylene Herbert; she has gone to culinary school and worked as a chef. The driver is Sharon Lawless and I can bring them to the next meeting to introduce them to the community. They are currently working at Naschitti Senior Center.

President Bitsilly – Once we get the sanitation permit, can the center be opened even though we don't have

the food budget? The chapter had plans to celebrate the re-opening of the center and we were going to provide the food for the celebration. I'm wondering if we could get the center opened while we wait on a food budget?

Orlynda Dennison – I'm not sure, but I can ask my supervisor and get back with you.

Geneva Begay – I've been working with Treva Henio from the USDA program. On June 5th there was flooding near the new construction of the high school. I spoke with the school principal; Mr. Moore and he said the water ruined the baseball field causing the field to bubble up in areas. The field will have to be demolished and reconstructed. The diversion dam is closed and the water is not coming from the run off. So, I am requesting for a resolution from the chapter and we also worked on a proposal letter requesting for federal dollars to help with the diversion dam. The water and run off will be diverted to Chooshgai Lake, to refurnish the water to the canal and down to the farm, then getting the farm level out and reseeded. There is funding at Water Resource in the amount of \$467,000 for a diversion dam which is part of the 25% that could be paid and the remaining 75% could be paid by USDA. I would request a resolution address to USDA and Natural Resources.

Fern Spencer – Was GMCS informed about the damage to the baseball field? The flooding around the high school and the teacher housing area has always been a concern and when plans for the new high school started, the flooding from the run off was brought up but nobody said anything to address the flooding issue.

Geneva Begay – Yes, and according to Mr. Moore, the insurance will cover the repair to the baseball field but he is very concern about the possibility of more flooding in the future.

Fern Spencer – What is going on with the Centennial Bridge, when is it going to be replaced?

President Bitsilly – last I heard, there is a document BIA was waiting on to get clearance. I can follow-up on the bridge.

LDA Moore- They are finishing up the plan and design of the bridge and waiting on the document you me

VI. REPORTS:

*Council Delegate's Report given by LDA Moore –

LDA Moore – Not available for a report

*Community Service Coordinator/Officials' Report:

1. Tohatchi Substation Update –

President Bitsilly – we met with the contractors last Wednesday, Mr. Loren Miller and his staff. The new facility will be called 1st Responders Substation. Delores Greyeyes with Public Safety, EMS, and the Fire Department were in attendance, but the NN Police Department were not at this meeting. We discuss the two choices of the floor plans and the people who will be utilizing the new building gave their inputs on the 2 different plans. This is an on-going project and Mr. Miller and his team hope to have the design of the floor plan completed at the end of the month. In the meantime, we should be looking for funding for the construction of the new substation. We will be requesting more money from the State with Capital Outlay funding.

2. Tohatchi Chapter Rules of Order – This document was provided by Department of Justice.

Fern Spencer – Will this document be readily available for people who they come to the chapter meetings?

Grazing Officer Moore – they have the term “ke” which means showing respect for everyone at the meetings. So, take these rules of order home and read it and we can have a discussion during the Chapter meeting. It may take a little longer but we can learn as we move forward.

Laris Manuelito – DOJ needs to be more specifics, perhaps, we need to ask a representative of DOJ to come out here to explain some of this. I like to table this until someone can explain it.

Vice President Rodgers – I would recommend everyone take the time to read the Chapter's Rule of Order and then we can come together at next meeting to discuss the rules.

3. Highway 491 Lighting –

Vice President Rodgers – We received an update about our funding from NNDOT for the highway. We did still have the funding and it was not reverted back. Assessments have been completed and now we are looking at plans and design. The estimated cost of the plan and design is \$300,000 and we will need to update our resolution to reflect this new amount. We may want to add a 5% contingency to the \$300,000 because of inflation. The other question which we would have to consider is who will be responsible for

the cost of the highway lighting? I would like to do a cost comparison of the different options available for the lighting. I believe Naschitti Chapter is currently paying for the operational cost of the lighting, the monthly bill to have the lights on at night.

4. **Bike Trail Update** – The completed bike trail packet was submitted to President Nygren who rejected it and said it should go through the 164 process first. So, it sounds like we have to start all over again, but Maria, CSC is working with a representative from DOJ.
5. **Tohatchi Chapter Audit Update** – We are currently waiting on our 6 months review. We have submitted all our policies to DOJ and they have since approved our policies. We have been assigned an auditor but each time we start to work with them, changes are made and we get assigned a new auditor. This is very frustrating when we have to start over with each new auditor assigned to us. We are still waiting for the auditor to set a date for our 6-month review.

LDA Moore – two things I want to mention. I will follow up with the Council Delegate on the bike trail as well as the audit.

Priscilla Duncan – Can we get an update on the CHID housing program. Where exactly are we at with our Chapter receiving homes?

***CLUPC Report:**

No report just announced the date of next meeting which is on August 19th at 9:00am.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Any information on the rural addressing project?

Fern Spencer – Not since the meeting at Twin Lakes.

***Red Willow Farm Report –**

Geneva Begay – Red Willow would like to burn all the brush and shrubs and the ash from the burn will bring nutrient back to the soil. The extreme heat made it impossible for our crops to thrive and of course the lack of water, but the summer students planting corn and squash in plant beds here at the chapter and the crop did very well. There is also the New Mexico WIC Seniors Farmers Market program and they have their markets in Farmington, Shiprock, Ramah, and Gallup. The Senior WIC program will give \$50 to purchase produces from the Farmers Markets. The program is also for pregnant women and children who fall within the federal income guidelines. With the incentive program, they paid \$5 million to NAPI, but NAPI could only produce \$2.5 million in food which was given to 41 chapters. Our chapter can look into this program by calling the Department of Agriculture. So, they will be spending another \$2.5 million this year to get the food boxes out to the community.

There is also the ranchers' incentive from the drought insurance with the new company called Navajoland. Currently, we are looking our budget to see if we can give out incentive for 2026.

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

Grazing Officer Moore – The wool buyback program was successful. On day 1 they had 178 producers and collected 44,500 lbs. of wool. Day 2, 147 producers and collected 37,059 lbs. Day 3, they had 205 producers and collected 46,600 lbs. so that was a total of 530 producers. Out of all the wool that was brought in, 80% was unclean, filled with dirt and debris. The 20% was fine wool so we probably need another training in sheep management.

As far as homesite lease: there are no homesite lease in downtown Tohatchi, but everyone wants to live in Tohatchi away from their relatives. We are having issues with illegal dumping and we have witnesses who can identify the individual who is illegally dumping. I'm still doing tally counts for livestock owners which includes the inventory sheet. This inventory of the livestock is mandatory and needs to be submitted with your tally count. Livestock sales have been very good and starts at \$7.50 per pound. If you have a 400 lbs. steer calf, you will be paid \$3,000 for the steer.

Livestock inspections are only being held at Shiprock, Window Rock, and Indian Wells.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – You had mentioned that BIA was holding off on returning grazing permits because they will be reducing their sheep units down to 10 units. Will this affect every permittee where their sheep units will be reduced to 10 units?

Grazing Officer Moore – According to BIA who works with Fish & Wildlife, they have been doing some surveys, assessing the rangeland, conducting studies during the fall, and all the data shows District 14 is in the negative for the number of sheep units allowed to graze. Therefore, those permits that are in probate or transfer are being held up.

*** Veterans update:** Council Delegate Andy Nez sponsoring legislation 0168-25 amending Veterans Advisory Council and Agency Officers. Another one Council Delegate Nez is working on is to have all the Veterans expend all of their accounts so he put in legislation to ask for 12% of our trust fund. Also, District 14 is having a stand down on September 12th at Twin Lakes from 9am-2pm. Veterans regular meeting on August 8th at 10am here at Tohatchi Chapter.

VII. RESOLUTIONS:

1. Resolution supporting El Paso Natural Gas Company, LLC (EPNG) in seeking a new right-of-way (ROW) Grant for the continued operation and maintenance of existing Natural Gas pipelines and related facilities within the Tohatchi Chapter jurisdiction.
2. Resolution requesting and approving natural resources conservation services (NRCS) watershed program in planning assistance for a potential public law (pl) 566 project in Mckinley County, Halona canyon, Tohatchi, NM.
3. Resolution approving a budget transfer within fund 10, the Navajo nation LGA grant fund, in the amount of \$700.00 to cover the negative balance for workmen's comp and operating supplies for the chapter.
4. Resolution approving a budget transfer within fund 23 the Navajo Nation sales tax fund, in the amount of \$1000.00 to cover the negative balance for repair & maintenance chapter.
5. Resolution approving a budget transfer within fund 08, the Navajo Nation supplemental youth funds (SYEP) fund, in the amount of \$100.00 to cover the negative balance in financial assistance funds.
6. Resolution approving a budget transfer within fund 12 the Navajo Nation chapter stipend fund, in the amount of \$120.00 to cover the negative balance for workmen's compensation for the chapter
7. approving a budget transfer within fund 03, the Navajo Nation land claim funds in the amount of \$2000 to cover the negative balance for operating supplies for the chapter.
8. Resolution to adopt and approve the Tohatchi Chapter rules of order providing by Department of Justice.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Grazing Committee meeting on August 6th at Coyote Canyon Chapter at 9am. Also, District 14 Farm & Ranch workshop on August 26th from 9am-3pm. There will be a roping at Moore area on Saturday, August 9th.

IX. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: August 20, 2025 @ 9:00am

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 12:24 pm

Submitted by;



Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter – August 18, 2025

cc: Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, President

Ms. Lee Rodgers, Vice President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC

Mr. Nathan Notah, Council Delegate