



THE NAVAJO NATION

TOHATCHI COMMUNITY LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Post Office Box 287 Tohatchi, New Mexico 87325 Tel: (505) 733-2845/2846

Elvis Bitsilly
President

Pernell Halona
Vice-President

Delphine Bitsilly
Recorder

Fern Spencer
Member

Priscilla Duncan
Member

TOHATCHI COMMUNITY LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES September 16, 2025

- I. Call to Order: Time: 9:15 am Roll Call: 5 Invocation: Elvis Bitsilly
- II. Approval of Agenda:
Motion: Fern Spencer 2nd: Priscilla Duncan Vote: 4-0-1
- III. Approval of Minutes: Tuesday August 19, 2025
Waive minutes and accept as is:
Motion: Pernell Halona 2nd: Fern Spencer Vote: 4-0-1
- IV. Old Business:
 - A. Tohatchi Emergency Management Plan

Edmund Tso – introduction and from Teetso, **Winter Preparedness**, have you guys heard of Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, can you tell me what do we do; **Lee Rodgers** – after an emergency has been declared by the President, you go and do your business, you work with the chapters to ensure the emergency plans and operations are working according to protocol, last year we had 10 and now we have 3 working for us, you heard about the tornado, how many of you are ready for winter, who has firewood, who has cattle, livestock, who are we going to call – who are my neighbors, nieces, nephews, who is going to help, you will have some to help all the time, teach at an early age, traditional teaching – get up early to say your prayer with corn pollen and run to the east, educate yourself whether it's Western or traditional teaching, look up, look down and all around, look for hazard, what is **Winter Preparedness** – forms of sleet or snow, rain turns into ice, winter storm can range from freezing rain and ice, Sawmill, Chuska Mountain range, Black Mesa, Navajo Mountain and Shonto are the areas that get hit the most, **Information alerts** – television, Navajo Department of Emergency Management (NDEM), watch the daily weather on TV to see what is happening out there, how many of you get the email from the Navajo Nation Emergency Management for the weather outlook for the weeks, I'm the one who sends them out on Mondays, I ask the chapters to share this information with everyone in the area, Flagstaff, Albuquerque, Grand Junction, Colorado they work together to send out the weather according to the area you live in as a special weather report, **On-line National Weather Service (NWS)**, Apache and Navajo County Alerts including McKinley County, Code Red, **Newspaper** – Gallup Independent and Navajo Times, you can access the weather on your phone, go to Weather Service and type in your zip code, Chapter Bulletin Board and CHR, **Radio** – KTNN and KGAK, and family, friends and relatives, Sign up today start receiving AMBER, Silver, Weather, Missing Endangered Person Alerts, www.alertnn.com (you can narrow down according to your GPS), Text NavajoNation to 888777 (To: 888777 and in text box type NavajoNation), National Weather Service who are a Federal Agency, supersedes state, county and tribe, this one stays on the Navajo Nation, go Emergency Management homepages, counties and love ones to opt in, these are alerts that come out ahead of time;

Elvis Bitsilly – who does this go to when you post; **Edmund Tso** – go to Facebook or social media, McKinley County Facebook post a lot of information and communicate with each other to share the information, What does it mean – **Warning** – take protective action, **Watch** – have a plan of action, **Advisory** – use caution, **Outlook** – prepare a plan of action, how the different types of **Winter Precipitation Form** – rain is snow falls into warm air, melts as rain; freezing rain is snow melts, hits cold air and freezes on ground and objects; sleet – snow melts and refreezes into sleet as it travels into cold air; snow – snow falls through cold air and never melts; Winter Precipitation (Above 32F & Below 32F), **Rain Shadow Effect** – look at Chuska Mountain range, everything on the vegetation on the west slope is nice and green, Ganado to Chinle it starts to get green, when the precipitation comes the energy starts to build up and hangs around up here in the mountain range, the wind comes from the south and southwest as it moves in the east direction, this area between Gallup and Shiprock is the range shadow, that's why it is dry, it picks up again and go towards the Jemez Mountains; **Communications Plan** – do you have a plan with your family – exchange landline & cell numbers with love ones, if it's not documented it never happened, **Emergency Numbers** – NNPd, NNFD, NDEM, NTUA, TMC, Care-provider – individuals who cannot help themselves, NDOT – who is the contact person, Senior Center, **Community** – Chapter Officials, employees and CHR (after hours), **Road Closures** – AZDOT, NMDOT, BIA & NDOT; **Fern Spencer** – who do I call for livestock on road and grazing person says call NMDOT, weeds in the middle of the road, lighting at Yatahey during the winter, they don't fix the lights, who takes care of it, you have to write a letter and who do you write the letter to, the ramps finally are fixed, why do we have to tell them what to do, to go through all these people which is a headache, go through the process; **Edmund Tso** – who owes the roads and who are the stakeholders, go to the website and research, get names, phone numbers and emails, job titles, I always document it and refer back to it, an elderly got stuck in the snow and I went out to rescue him, call CHR and came in, check on your elderly and we get calls from Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Texas, can you check on my elder, are you the main care provider, I can only call the PD, refer it to social services and its elderly neglect, they hang up, in the past we had distribution boxes of food and firewood, our motto is, you don't have to come to us we come to you because it's for the people who are stuck out there, we look at the priority of these people out there and who need help; **Fern Spencer** – who we have as CHR; **Geneva Begay** – Renee Martinez; **Fern Spencer** – who is the head person for CHR; **Edmund Tso** – Philene Herrera, they change all the time, they have limited CHR's, what they can and can't do, **Home Preparedness** – Insulate your home: windows, doors, roofs and cracks, have a fire extinguisher, smoke and CO detectors, know how to turn on & shut off gas & electricity, inspect your chimney, have extra drinking water & firewood, have an extra heat source if outage occurs; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – you doing all these things repairing windows, insulating the house, roofing repair, people don't have the money to do that, it's every chapter in my district, I'm the Council Delegate for district 14, every chapter is having issues with that, limited amount of funds, there's different rules and regulations in how to utilize those funds, get a certain amount of funding every two years, it's minimal from \$500 to \$600 and can't do much with that, there's a lot of people who need help out there especially in the outline areas, you mentioned the Red Cross, do you have a listing of people, foundations or people from the outside who would help with these issues; **Edmund Tso** – American Red Cross, we don't respond to anything until it comes down; **Delegate Nathan Notah** - would any entities other than Red Cross, are you guys aware of any Emergency Preparedness; **Edmund Tso** – it comes on the homeowner and if we start touching this and that, they are supposed to do this, pointing the finger back at us, we are under public safety; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – in the winter time, I've been telling people at chapter meetings, people need to start preparing for the rains that come in the spring, monsoon season, winter months, chapters do have emergency preparedness funding, other chapters have a bit of money in those accounts specifically for emergency preparedness, I tell the people and chapter officials to use those funds to get the wood and what is

necessary, Twin Lakes has a project and sometimes they bring in volunteers to help and pay PEP funds to certain individuals to help bring in wood and things like that, an elder who is a Veteran, he got stuck late at night, his family call the chapter officials and CHR, people did find him, get people who can volunteer;

Edmund Tso – be careful when you pull out the vehicle; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – here's an issue, NDOT even chapters, taking a tractor out there to pull the people out, there's so much liability issues, sometimes the chapters won't step in, the people don't have the money, Emergency Preparedness – your organization may have to look at those issues; **Edmund Tso** – we cover the Navajo Nation, 2-3 years to complete everyone, not enough CHR, PD and Firefighters Navajo Nation wide, they are limited resources, there are resources out you need to reach out to them; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – that's one of the things we need Emergency Preparedness we need to start collecting those resource information; **Edmund Tso** – look at leadership, who is the stakeholder, officials are the ones we look at, courses online are free, educate and move forward; **Lee Rodgers** – Delegate Notah – we do have emergency money, at last budget meeting we were told we cannot use that money unless an emergency is declared, maybe it's up the council delegate to change the language in the legislation that was made, Maria started to dip into it for wood purchase and we can't use it or touch it, otherwise it will be an audit violation, other resources like Southwest Foundation they can get help for minor repairs like windows, doors, roofs and cracks; **Geneva Begay** – he is talking all of Navajo Nation, each chapter should have their own emergency plan and central station where emergency happens and someone reaches out to the chapter for help, family members are the ones to help their elders, where are the family members, cover windows with plastic to save energy, buy plastic and get it out to the elders, the CHR you need to welcome her back in, where's the list of elders who are at risk, caretakers who work 4 hours and are not 24 hour care, there are other care places for them like Ramah Care, Chizh for Cheii is looking for a central station in Tohatchi, where to put it; **Edmund Tso** – Chizh for Cheii, when they drop off the firewood, people start to jump the fence and steal the wood, they should have a facilitate, communities come together with a plan; **Fern Spencer** – the wood – there's this person sitting out there selling the wood, why would we give you wood if you're going to sell it; **Edmund Tso** – same as the hand sanitizer during the pandemic, when people do sell, they must have a resell permit to sell the wood, they have to go to Navajo Nation Forestry and if they don't have it, call Navajo Nation Forestry and tell them there's someone selling wood without a permit; **Pernell Halona** – the emergency management plan, a few years ago district 14 we all got together and worked on the emergency management plan, I never did see the final results, the emergency management plan where did it go and we got one together, the five chapters in district 14 had one; **Edmund Tso** – keep one for that area chapter and who will take care of it, when people write these plans and take it with them, anything you write with the Navajo Nation seal belongs to that organization, Crystal Chapter is different from Tohatchi Chapter, I can return and we can work on a comprehension plan, FEMA – first it was \$1,000,000 then \$250,000 now it's \$100,000, save receipts and document what you can, reach out to us and we'll help you; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – to the CLUPC members you need to have a emergency preparedness plan to get the funding from council, allocate \$60,000 for a particular year, got to have on file, be updated, they give \$60,000 if your chapter has \$30,000 - 40,000 in your account, subtract and give you the balance, for example: the chapter has \$40,000 in account, allocate \$60,000, you won't get the full \$60,000, you will get \$20,000, this will be for all accounts, in terms of funding from council to chapters; **Edmund Tso** – must have the emergency respond plan to get the money, the plans are not set in stone, they are living documents, in Utah they probably will add tornado, cannot enter areas that say do not enter, educate people, no burn stage 2 fire restrictions, BIA said start giving them tickets and have them pay a fine, they warn people ahead of time, raise the price of cigarettes,

Vehicle Preparedness – Inspect your vehicle – wires, tires, gas, jumper cables & GO BAG – blankets, flares, drinking water, snacks, **Winterize your vehicle** – fluids, 4x4, chains, thermostat & extra gas, **Don't drive if**

you do not have to, Let someone know if you are going anywhere, Travel if necessary, use the "Buddy System", Dressing for Cold Weather – Chilly – 2 layers, long layers, Cold – 2 to 3 layers of clothing, 50 degrees during the day and 25 degrees at night, gloves, boots, Extreme Cold – 3 layers of clothing, face mask, warm hat, 2 layers of pants, boots, Cold Related Illness – Frostbite – a serious condition expose to extremely cold temperature; Lee Rodgers – in the winter I tell my son to pack an extra pair of socks, change your socks because your feet start to sweat and that's when the cold begins, instead of running your engine change your socks; Edmund Tso - Hypothermia – expose to extremely cold temperature, symptoms – Adults, shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss and slurred speech drowsiness, Emergency Kit & Supplies – 6 basics you should stock in your home - Water – one gallon/person/day, Food – canned & dry foods, pet & livestock food, First Aid Supplies – gauze pads, tweezers, scissors, latex gloves, antiseptic, roller bandages, Clothing – clothing appropriate for the weather, Tools – flashlight with extra batteries, whistle – distress call is blow 3 times is a sign for SOS - help, compass, mess kit – latex gloves, rain poncho, emergency blankets, matches/lighter, toilet paper, bleach, NOAA weather radio (Optional), portable AM/FM radio, shovel, multi-tool and sanitizer, Special Items – money, credit card, prescription medication, extra glasses, passport, family records & inventory of valuables, Winter Preparedness – Stay Informed – TV, radio, online & newspaper, Have a communication plan – family, friends, schools & emergency numbers; Emergency Kit – last up to 72 hours or 3 days; Home preparedness – home insulation, firewood, fire extinguisher, food, water, medication and smoke detectors, Vehicle preparedness – gas, tires, battery, Identify cold related illnesses – frostbite and hypothermia; Dress warm in loose fitting clothing, Eat right & drink plenty of water, even if you're not thirsty, we know ourself best, Who we are – Navajo Nation Emergency Management – Sharen Sandoval, Edmund Tso, Lyla Smallcanyon, (928) 871-6892 and fax (928) 871-7569, we do the Incident Command System Training, we also do the National Incident System Command Training, they are free online, we also do the Community Emergency Respond Teams, those are volunteers you can get, people say they got CERT but are they trained, no they are not and it's a liability, I've been here before, get people in good standing with the community, in district 14 you can get 4 people from the 5 chapters and help each other, have 20-25 people in the group, what you do the community will follow you as leadership, CERT training is 3-4 days, everyone has something to bring to the table and utilize it, Navajo way we have our own science, ICS courses 100, 200, 700 for beginners and build from that; Pernell Halona – on the emergency management team you had 10 and now 3, what are you doing to increase; Edmund Tso – recruiting, training is hard and they leave, discipline getting up early and working 16-20 hours, people donate their skills, make sure you know what the donation is from the people, check on the items they bring like food and blankets, share the extra donation with other chapters; Fern Spencer – to start a group for district 14 chapters what's the ideal number to start off with; Edmund Tso – 25-30 people, 5 per chapter, ICS to be flexible according to the incident and the victims; Fern Spencer – 8 to 5, do we get paid; Edmund Tso – no we do not get paid, they are volunteers, as long as you have logistical items like food they won't have a problem, food must be cooked onsite; Delphine Bitsilly – what is ICS and CERT; Edmund Tso – Incident Command System (ICS), National Incident Management System, Community Emergency Respond Teams (CERT), NIMS – the county, state, federal level and we use it, the military uses it too, 9/11 happened everyone was on their own plan and if everyone on the same plan there would have been less casualties, Type 1 is national resources across the United States, Type 5 is localized like car accidents, Type 3 is resources versus Type 1, all resources come into play; Delphine Bitsilly – the tornado that happened was your team on location, how did you guys get notified and how did the help get there; Edmund Tso – Shiprock PD notified us, the local resources of people there, they had a plan together before we got there, shelter in place, before we leave we get an assessment of what we need; Geneva Begay – have CPR in the community, give them a little bit of training as First Responder, Red Cross donating \$50.00 for a person who

lost a home to a fire, have coat drive; **Edmund Tso** – out there it gets bad and they call in FEMA, check the mud with a stick before going through with a tractor; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – this relates to the presentation and budget, a good presentation information on the emergency preparedness which is seasonal, we need to put on websites, newspaper and radio ads, consider put in the budget for next year, also any resources available will be helpful; **Edmund Tso** – with the wild fires we adopted the Ready Set Go, translated it into Dine Bizaad, my work cell number (928) 814-0636, email address: edmundtso@navajo-nsn.gov, I will email to Chair Bitsilly and he can distribute to you; **Geneva Begay** – you didn't talk about this, the elders are using the hand sanitizer to start a fire and their hands got burn and died; **Edmund Tso** – be careful what you give out, hygiene kits we asked for non-alcohol with the mouth wash; **Fern Spencer** – our chapter officials to get individuals to be a part of this, how much lean way would we give you to give your presentation, you would have to be here for those 3 days, you with your job; **Edmund Tso** – it depends, usually I hear about it, if I'm doing a class, we go to a Incident 2, depending on the priority we are committed, my supervisor might say go do this and I may say I'm going to deploy right now, we all had to go during the train derailment and fire, a small car crash PD will take care of it, a hazardous accident everyone get involves; **Priscilla Duncan** – didn't you handle the plane crash in Chinle; **Edmund Tso** – no, PD took care of it, the FAA took care of that; **Lee Rodgers** – your CERT members don't get any monetary compensation, can it be up to the chapter to do that, stipend of some sort, it's really hard to get people to volunteer; **Edmund Tso** – get PEP workers to take training then when they deploy they will get paid, the liability – the insurance, PAF, you have to have for the volunteers for workmen's comp.; **Edmund Tso** – you can work with the administrative service center from community development, they have the technical expertise to assist you guys here, we just follow the policy, what you can and can't do, how are you going to go about it, sharing resources with others; **Geneva Begay** – we do have an alarm at Chuska school I'm sure if the alarm is still working, old fire truck working now, fire hydrants not working; **Fern Spencer** – who would take care of that; **Edmund Tso** – go to the fire department and ask them, who takes care of this, it could be BIA or NTUA, when things happen you need to take the whole community approach, the churches involved, the gas stations involved, schools, chapter and general public, NNDOT, identify the person the point of contact, check the facts first; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – I think we need an additional tank; **Elvis Bitsilly** – thank you, administration concerned about an active shooters, is this separate from you; **Edmund Tso** – we do it but mainly with the schools, Doug Watchman – McKinley County Emergency Management, he was the leader for active shooter and active threat, it doesn't have to be a gun, it could be a knife or a bomb, we must be certified trainers, Adam Berry is his supervisor, if you have CERT class here you need 2-3 instructors, we do a mock disaster outside on last day of training; **Fern Spencer** – active shooting, we had training, schools transported students to chapter house, shooting at high school, we had to go to the elementary school; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – we did talk to Gallup McKinley County Schools and Kirtland Central Consolidated school district, they do tell us they do have plans in place to deal with shooters, they did do a mock assessment with 2 schools on the reservation, Two Grey Hills it took 30 minutes before First Responders come on site to the school, in Arizona it took like 50 minutes for responders to show up, schools do need to have a plan and work together; **Edmund Tso** – on the internet if you type FEMA, Whole Community Approach, you can learn about it and now you put into action, ICS courses, if you want to do a ICS course contact me; **Pernell Halona** – thank you for coming in with your presentation; **Edmund Tso** – do ICS course online, a 4 hour course and exam, setup FEMA and student ID number, the number follows you everywhere you go once setup, it follows you; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – did you have this programs with other chapters in the district, Naschitti, Twin Lakes, Coyote Canyon; **Edmund Tso** – DCD website have all our forms – Reference Center – Emergency Management Documents, Equipment Rates, Multi-Purpose Incident Report Form, Declaration of Emergency questions, General Message (ICS 213), Situation Report form, we work with

behavioral health for recovery, speak with one voice as a group; **Elvis Bitsilly** – thank you for coming and presentation very informative.

B. Navajo Nation Broadband Development Plan

Elvis Bitsilly – Sonia Nez will be at next Planning Meeting next month, find out what we need for Tohatchi.

C. Navajo Nation Rural Addressing Plan

Elvis Bitsilly – completed for our chapter, data collection survey done by Aerotek, they will do a final presentation, we will hear from them regarding the signs, meet per chapter.

D. Tohatchi Community Land Use Plan

Elvis Bitsilly – continue the work and finalized the plan, our focus for October and finalize in October, look at additional information we can add – Broadband and Emergency Respond plan is it in there, do we need to add, update the section you are covering and see if the Broadband and Emergency Respond plan are part of your section.

V. New Business:

A. Tohatchi First Responders Substation

Elvis Bitsilly – the Emergency Management Plan we have for Tohatchi, back in 24 it was passed and approved with a resolution May 29, 2024, resolution to improve the new Tohatchi Emergency Respond Plan effective June 1, 2024, there is one in place, the Emergency Respond Plan should be submitted to DOJ for review and approval, it was submitted and we haven't heard back from them yet, I wasn't sure if they were going to come today, the Emergency Management Respond Plan came out of DCD, they are the ones who formulated the template to implement this Emergency Management Respond Plan, it has everything needed for the chapters, contact information, who in our local area are listed in here, the office staff did say most of the information is updated; **Fern Spencer** – can we get a copy of that; **Elvis Bitsilly** – yes, contact information for the schools and Health Center are good, will send to you through email; **Pernell Halona** – is this plan for the district 14; **Elvis Bitsilly** – it's for Tohatchi only, each has chapter have their own, this needs to be in place because of the First Responders Substation; **Fern Spencer** – you guys had a First Responder's meeting, is this based on your plans you initiated or they; **Elvis Bitsilly** – it's both, a plan and design from Twin Arrows; **Fern Spencer** – was that lady here; **Elvis Bitsilly** – she was here at the meeting last week, it's call Tohatchi First Responder Substation, they will sign off on it, talk about the construction and funding, LDA Moore will send information to Council Delegate and to seek funding; **Fern Spencer** – the resolution that was done previously will it have to be updated; **Elvis Bitsilly** – I don't think so it approves this format, this plan sent to DOJ; **Fern Spencer** – I'm thinking of the money factor and it has gone up; **Elvis Bitsilly** – it has double; **Fern Spencer** – do we have to do another resolution if it has gone up; **Elvis Bitsilly** – we are working on amending the price; **Delegate Nathan Notah** – need to amend it, the cost will continue to change; **Elvis Bitsilly** – we need to amend the budget to fit the new cost that we received, \$15.8 million; **Pernell Halona** - \$17 million; **Fern Spencer** - \$18 million; **Elvis Bitsilly** – we can start this once they finalized the approval and ready to go, DPS and Department of Corrections do the signature approvals, we can ask for half of the total \$15 million to start the construction, we can ask for \$8 million to start the construction, if we can get \$8 million by fall or Thanksgiving they can start the construction or bid process, it doesn't have to be the total, planning and design already paid, once the signatures are approved they will bring to the community, there are other resources out there where we can find money not only from the Delegate, get the numbers finalized with Maria and administration set, it's also the highway lighting, the warehouse, the San Juan Lateral Waterline, Delegate Notah knows these are our four projects, the Bike Trail we will fund it through the Unhealthy Food Tax of \$5,000, we don't have to do the bid process 164, the administration will donate \$5,000, whatever remaining balance there is we will take care of it later, it's ongoing.

VI. Resolutions: none

VII. **Announcements:** Public Hearing, Tohatchi Chapter House, September 17, 2025, 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm

VIII. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 @9am-12n

IX. **Adjournment:** 12:43 pm

Delphine Bitsilly

Delphine Bitsilly

Recorder