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January 21, 2026 10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

- I. **MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:38 am**
- II. **ROLL CALL: President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, and Grazing Officer Gerald Moore. Priscilla Duncan with CLUPC.**
- III. **INVOCATION: Priscilla Duncan**
- IV. **REVIEW/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Sarah Tom
Amendment: Request made by Laris Manuelito to add "un-table minutes" from the December 1st Planning Meeting under Unfinished Business.
Motion to Accept the amendment requested: Jeremiah Begay 2nd Herman Dennison Vote:15-0-3
- V. **APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2025 MEETING MINUTES:**
Motion to Un-table: 1st Virginia Harvey 2nd Priscilla Duncan Vote: 16-0-2
- VI. **PRESENTERS:**
 1. Lucinda Bitsoi: Tohatchi Middle School Principal – I've worked as a high school teacher, but for the past 5 years I have been the Principal at Tohatchi Middle School. I have been with GMCS for 36 years. I would like to share some information on our school and what is taking place currently with our data, growth proficiency, attendance, discipline, activities, and our Mesa testing. We've completed the testing for the beginning of the year and the middle of the year. We are getting ready for our 2nd semester testing and will be sharing testing dates.
Courses that are offered at Tohatchi Middle School are Math, ELA (English), Social Studies, Financial literacy, Science, Computer class, PE (Health Class), and Pathways (PLTW) which is more career oriented. We also have Science Technology and Energy Environment; Computer Science for Innovators and Green Architecture and we also have Navajo Language and Special Education. We have an enrollment of 124 students with only have 7th and 8th graders. Previously, we had 6th graders as well, but they are now at the elementary school. We had 9 teachers, but since out enrollment has dropped, we have lost teachers. Other school employees are secretaries, counselors, nurse assistant, custodians, and our cooks. Next, I'll talk little about our MESA (NM Measures of Students & Achievement) which is our state text which is given in April/May and we don't receive the scores until October. Last year assessments for the state test includes English, ELA testing, and Math. For the ELA, I included our 6th graders who are now 7th graders. We had 23.8% of our 6th graders and 28.6% of our 7th graders and 49.3% of our 8th graders. Looking at the overall proficient of all the grades it's an increase of 34.7%. We celebrate each small growth steps. From the previous school year we had an increase of 7.6% of growth of the previous year to now. For Math, it is 16.4% overall for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Our 6th graders are at 25.4%, 7th graders is 21.4%, and 8th graders is at 15.5%. We also have our NM Science test which is called ASR and our in-person students, 39% of our 8th graders were proficient from the testing which is a 13.2% growth for school year 2024-2025. We say in-person because included in our enrollment which is not a part of the 124-student enrolled. We have students who do on-line classes, they don't attend school but they are on-line in a different entity and they take their classes there, but they are included.

So, 27.3% of 8th graders are proficient and again that's just 13.2% of growth from school year 2024-2025. We are seeing some increases each year and I've been here for the past 5 years. My first year our scores were very low and I had to work with the students and the teachers to make sure we were progressing. Out of the 7 schools in the district, Tohatchi Middle School was 2nd in overall growth proficient for the State testing in our Gallup McKinley County School District. First, was Thoreau Middle School and I told the students we want to beat Thoreau. We also sharing the results from the testing with the students so they are aware of where they are at. So, we came in 2nd and Crownpoint Middle School came in 3rd. So, I'm happy about that. Back in 2023, we were in 3rd place overall but we have move up in our growth. Some of the contributing factors that made this growth possible for our students' success is we integrated reading across all content areas. Even though they were in PE class, the teacher would give them something to read like an article. Also, are ELA in math at the beginning of class which we call bell work the students are given some Math or Science questions to answer. The teacher would use an aggressive monitoring tool and they would have the students read to the teacher to make sure they are comprehending the vocabulary being used. We also hold the students accountable as well. We want to instill high expectations for our students. We hold our PDs with staff to go over the continuous data review so they know how well their students are doing or not doing. All this is also shared with their students and also the parents during parent/teacher conferences. As an administrator, I have to hold the teachers accountable as well and I will do classroom walk-throughs where I'll walk into a class unexpectedly to do observations.

"The electricity went off at 10:40am and chapter had a recess for about 5 minutes."

Lucinda Bitsoi – I mentioned what our contributing factors are and it's moved our students' growth up. We also have board scholars who are students who scored advanced in either ELA Math or ELA. We had 14 of our 6th and 7th graders and eight 8th graders who were there last year so all together there were 22 students who received plaques from Tohatchi Middle School. They do this every year for the middle and high school.

MESA (Measure of Student Success & Achievement) assessments are given at the beginning of the year, middle of year which was in December. We look at students who may need support and we have near target in which a student is near there, but may need a little more support. We have students who are on target which means they are there. Some students go from near target to on target at the end of the year which we like to see. So, looking at our MESA reading scores the 7th graders are at 40% who need support, 44% were near target, and 16% were on target. In the middle of the year, 26% need support which was a decrease from the beginning of the year. Near target was 48%, and we kind of even out on the students who were on target 26% which means went from 16% to 26% at the middle of the year making some improvements. With our 8th graders, there were no changes at 54% who needed support. Near target at 20% at beginning of the year and 25% at the middle of the year with a little increase there and 27% on target and that 21% went down. This is for reading and language usage, for 7th graders again needed support at the beginning of the year which was a decrease and a lot of them went to near target at the middle of the year which was an increase. With our 8th graders, we had 31% that were need support and 60% at near target but that changed in the middle of the year with 14% needs support and increase from 9% to 32% for on target. For Math, 7th graders 43% to 30% we had a little increase from 52-59% near target and 5% on target. It moved up a little, 11% for 7th graders, but we are hoping to see an increase at the end of the year. For 8th graders, we had 73% who needed support then it changed at the middle of the school year to 37%. Near target 21% went up to 42%, so some of the students moved up to near target and our 5% moved up to 20%. So, we are making some gains there which we like to see. Our testing is coming in the spring and that's all we will be concentrating on.

Attendance: On average our attendance is 94-97% for today which I check daily and of course it

fluctuates. One day we had all our student here except for one student and the next day we have 13 students absent. Even when the student is checked out, it counts as an absent and the student is only allowed and this is through the state and the district 18 absents for the whole year. So, if they go over the 18 absents that puts us in the chronic absenteeism. We always tried to emphasize to our students and parents that they need to be in school every day. From August to December, we've had 7 major near discipline incidents that resulted in suspensions and it varies. I can say two out of the seven were the same students. Our minor incidents will vary and since coming back from break we have not had an incident. The minor incident will have a verbal warning or maybe a parent contact or sometimes it's a suspension depending on the incident. It is important to have the parents or guardian discipline their child at home and at school. Every quarter we have family nights which has to tie in with what our students are learning, math, reading, science, social studies, and cultural night. We try to schedule these events when nothing else is going on in the community. These family nights include the teachers and they have to have some type of activity for the student and the parent. Our school sports are cross country, football, volleyball for fall, and boys' and girls' basketball are happening right now and baseball, softball, and track for springs. The clubs we provide are art club, bike club, student council, MESA for our science students, yearbook, and MJHS and TSA which are our native club. We have upcoming testing in February for our ELL students which test their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Our school was chosen along with one of the elementary, David Skeets. We are the only schools who will be taking this NAPE test and it is just random they choose schools through the government and they are only testing 50 8th graders and this is scheduled for March 10th. We also have our boot camp scheduled for March as well. We do a lot of activities with the students to prepare them for testing. In April, we will be having our 8th grade science testing and state testing. Then in May we will be having our end of the year MESA. We do offer after school tutoring on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. And just to add, our students are doing good things at Tohatchi Middle School. Thank you.

Laris Manuelito – You mentioned the smart kids get bored; do they have a gifted program that would challenge them? The learning style of a gifted child is very different.

Lucinda Bitsoi – We do have a gifted program and we have only one teacher from GMCS who comes out for this program. The gifted teacher goes to Navajo, Tohatchi, Chee Dodge, and Twin Lakes and just having one person to cover all these school makes it very difficult to get these students to be challenged a little bit more. Our 8th graders will attend the academy at UNM Gallup. A lot of these students like to be challenged.

Laris Manuelito – Are there challenges that face the gift program for them to be able to go into McKinley Academy and the other charter school? I don't know how Academy works.

Lucinda Bitsoi – the student will go through a process; they look at test scores and they do interviews.

Laris Manuelito – Is the school considering bringing back music classes? Is there anything from the chapter/community that would help advocate for those programs back?

Lucinda Bitsoi – that would be awesome and I even tried bringing in art classes because a lot of our students are very creative, but the 1st thing they look at is enrollment. As far as what the chapter/community can do is probably voice those with the District school board members.

Laberta Etsitty: Navajo Nation Pre-School Instructor – No show.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS –

Un-tabling the December 1st Planning Meeting minutes.

The date of the minutes in question was actually from December 1st 2025 not November 19, 2025 as mentioned during the meeting.

Motion 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Herman Dennison Vote: 13-2-4

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

DECEMBER 2025 Financial Reports –

DECEMBER FUND BALANCES		
1	Chapter Activities Gen Fund	\$31,116.45
3	Land Claims Trust	\$64,250.67
8	Supplemental Youth Fund	\$36,330.92
9	Housing Discretionary Fund	\$14,215.81
10	LGA Grant Fund	\$68,490.08
12	Chapter Stipends	\$45,370.96
13	Scholarship General Fund	\$9,592.00
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$7,851.48
15	PEP Fund	\$85,147.21
17	Emergency Fund	\$24,719.71
23	NN Sales Tax	\$125,632.00
25	NN CIP - \$180,000	\$13,362.52
16	Veterans Fund	\$14,491.50
27	NN CIP - \$200.000	\$3,877.78
40	Unhealthy Food Tax	\$104,531.87
61	Senior Citizen Fund	\$2,162.99
51	NAPI	\$2,237.56
26	Red Willow Farm	\$590.37
80	General Fixed Assets	
34	Agriculture & Infrastructure	\$3.68
	Total Fund Balance	\$653,975.56

Vice President Rodgers – I’m looking at the checks that have been voided and re-issued and they are now at a higher amount. I would like an explanation of these amounts?

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I was going to ask our accountant Ms. Muskett to answer why checks are voided and reissued. CSC is not here today, but we’ll answer that question at our next meeting.

Motion to accept the December 2025 Financial Report

Motion: 1st Geneva Begay 2nd Virginia Harvey Vote: 15-0-3

IX. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **012-01-2026:** Resolution to approve the FY’ 2026 Chapter’s activities General fund account revenue budget (Fund 01) in the amount of \$19,443.66 for the 1st quarter, October, November, December 2025.
Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Rosie Deschiney Vote: 16-0-1
2. **013-01-2026:** Resolution to recommend and approving to extend the employment of the Public Employment Program (PEP) workers through May 1, 2026.

Vice President Rodgers – There is a discrepancy in the dates here. On the agenda it has April 1st but, on the resolution, it has May 1st.

Maria, CSC – it should read April 1st.

Motion: 1st Laris Manuelito 2nd Priscilla Duncan Vote: 14-0-3

Julia Thompson – I would like to ask if the PEP position is being advertise because it seems like the same

individuals are working. I just feel other people may need jobs and also, we have elders in the community who need assistance. I made 3-4 calls to the chapter requesting for help and I was told it has to be a written in black and white. What if the person can't make it to the chapter to fill out a request form? I think there should be new workers who are willing to help the elders.

President Bitsilly – These positions should be advertised and we have gone through this topic with the staff. I understand what you are saying, PEP workers are only hire for a certain duration of time to get some training. On that particular day in question, I understand the PEP workers were already working on another project that day and they could not drop what they were working on to assist. The reason a request for assistance has to be completed on a form (Work Order) that the chapter provides is to cover the Chapter for any liability and insurance.

Laris Manuelito – I don't know if there is a re-evaluation of the high risk and disable individuals that need to be visited. Perhaps she can be put on there or a regular visit to them to make sure they are ok.

Also, I recommend the word April be strike and changed to May to match the resolution.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Maria, CSC states it should read April 2026.

President Bitsilly – The Chapter does have the names of individuals in our community who are considered high risk. We currently do not have a CHR but are sharing a CHR with Mexican Springs and Twin Lakes.

3. **014-01-2026:** Resolution to approve and accept funds in the amount of \$15,800.00 within Fund 01, the General fund account from the Navajo Transitional Energy Company, LLC to be used for upgrades to the kitchen appliances.

Motion: 1st Rosie Deschiney 2nd Virginia Harvey **Vote: 17-0-1**

4. **015-01-2026:** Resolution to approve a budget transfer within Fund 23, the Navajo Nation Sales Tax funds in the amount of \$3,000.00 to replenish repair maintenance construction equipment.

Motion: 1st Herman Dennison 2nd Priscilla Duncan **Vote: 17-0-1**

5. **016-01-2026:** Resolution to approve to a budget transfer and add two additional GL code within Fund 16, the Navajo Nation Veterans' Funds in the amount of \$14,360.62.

Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Lucinda Frank **Vote: 16-0-2**

Point of Order by Laris Manuelito: Rosie Deschiney cannot motion, she is the secretary for Veterans committee.

Laris Manuelito – just to clarify it is the two items for catering and operating. The other ones were already there.

Vice President Rodgers – on the resolution it just states catering, it should read catering and operating supplies is separate.

6. **017-01-2026:** Resolution to approve the Capital Improvement Projects (ICIP) plan for year 2027-2031. The 3 projects include: Tohatchi Public Safety Complex, Warehouse, and Highway 491 Lighting Project.

Vice President Rodgers – regarding the Safety Complex, we should be done with the design and I've pushing it to make it 100% because we need to prove we are done with this phase. We are ready for construction. The warehouse design is also completed, just need the fund for construction. The highway lighting has several parts to that and most of the work is being done by NN Department of Transportation. We are ready for the plans and design for this project.

Laris Manuelito – For the Public Safety Building, is there a possibility to reinstate sheriff and NM State Police Departments along with the Navajo Nation because you can get funding from them as well. This is my 3rd recommendation.

President Bitsilly – We are working to re-initiate that possibility with sheriff, county, and state. I hear Navajo Nation is not to thrill about that because they will be owning the building. We received \$4 million from TIF (Tribal Infrastructure Fund). We are dealing with NM funds but we are not allowing NM safety

entities to be involved here at the local level. The original name for the building was Public Safety Complex but has since been changed to First Responder Substation because the Navajo Nation has it listed as such. So, we need \$12 million for this project. We did apply for fund through Capital Outlay and we may request for more funding from TIF. We are allowed to apply for multiple projects and its my understanding we are not allowed to apply for TIF if we have already received funding from them and we will look into this. We are also asking Delegate Notah to help lobby for funds from the NN from Sihasin funds and the governor's portal as well.

Motion: 1st Laris Manuelito 2nd Priscilla Duncan Vote: 18-0-1

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

President Bitsilly – We have here with us today from the Navajo Nation Health Education Program, Nicolette George who is a health educator. Please stop and visit with her.

Beatrice Dennison – On January 14th I was elected as the new president for the Senior Center Committee, Vice President is Julia Thompson, and Secretary/Treasurer is Herman Dennison. The senior re-opened last year and they serve hot meals between 11:30am-1pm. We a planning our 1st committee meeting luncheon on February 12th from 11: 30am to 1pm, so please come join us for roast beef, mash potatoes, corn and dinner roll and strawberry shortcake and ice cream for dessert. We are open to suggestion on how we can be beneficial to our community.

Nicolette George – I am the health educator from the Navajo Health Education Program in W/R and I brought some information on awareness on stroke and prevention. We all know there is a snow storm coming in and we advise if you can't clear your walkway throw some table salt on the ground which will help melt the ice and snow. Not a whole lot of people know about stroke and what to do when that happens. So, I do have information at my table and I advise to limit your physical activity. Especially when it's cold because it can bring dehydration and can get you sick. Please be cautious out there.

Grazing Officer Moore – District 14 Grazing Committee Meeting on February 4th at Twin Lakes Chapter at 9am. Also, 3 Annual Peacemaking Program, a 2-day program at the NN Museum 9am and to register you can call 928-871-6388.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: February 02, 2026 (Planning Meeting) at 10am.

XII. AJOURNMENT: 12:32pm

Submitted by



Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter **January 28, 2026**

cc: Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, President

Ms. Lee Rodgers, Vice-President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC