



February 02, 2026 10:00 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: 10:17am**
- II. **ROLL CALL:** President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, Grazing Officer Moore and CLUPC members: Priscilla Duncan and Fern Spencer
- III. **INVOCATION:** Vice President Rodgers
- IV. **REVIEW OF THE AGENDA**
- V. **COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**
  - Al Martinez** – Gallup McKinley County School: (Opportunity Career Center as the Community Liaison) That's the old Central High School on the westside by Shop N Save. We have 2 career tech programs: Culinary Arts which is state of the art with modern equipment and we have Chef Jamison from Nevada. She's been with the school for the past 4 years. Then second program is construction technology with Mr. Carl. I got hired on about a month ago and we have approximately 89 students and a strong portion of our students come from the Tohatchi area. We are planning to attend the Skills USA competition next month. A majority of the students are in construction and I would like to request to come to the chapter meeting to talk about some of the work these students do. For example; they build dog houses, outhouses, and they are in the process of building tiny houses now including large storage units. It would be nice to come into the community and publicize the program because we are looking to build the program and also to thank the community for sending these students our way.
  - Fern Spencer** – Way back Tohatchi High School had all the vocational classes but that got taken away. Now our students are bused into Gallup for vocational classes and they are doing well. When they opened up the new high school they did away with the automotive shop, the home economic and my classroom. We used to have welding and vocational programs, including band. The thing of it is, people don't speak up until something happens. The southern schools still have these programs and the Skills USA which is a great program and they go all over. And the program which I oversaw was called Business Professional of America which I will be judging at in the next 2 weeks. Programs like Skills USA and BPA and the other vocational clubs that are here in the state of NM out of eastern NM; they need to be put into those programs as well for competition. Now, Ms. Graza with UNM with the other programs for the college kids, they need to be part of that as well because there are great opportunities for them on Navajo. NCC and NTC also need to belong to it. It is sad they don't have these programs for our kids here and they have to be bused into Gallup. But these kids have to have their CORE classes done first then they can over into Gallup for the vocational classes. This of course is for the juniors and seniors.
  - Al Martinez** – it is a half day of classes, but we do have some kids who are there the whole day taking credits that they are missing. I agree, I think schools need to be locally empowered so they can run their own programs and serve the needs of the community. You know education has changed a lot and it's all about the money and funding. I know there are plans in the making for a new school that will cover construction by the RMCH area and it will be a school in itself. When I was coaching girls' basketball at Miyamura a large majority of the team don't go to school to at Miyamura, they go to Virtual Academy or Middle College or they are on-line students. To my understanding now, that STRIDE which is the on-line classes that says there are over 3000 students. I don't know how these students are going to learn.
  - Fern Spencer** – If you go back in history, Miyamura was suppose to be a vocational tech school but the people of Gallup said no and that's the reason why Gallup High is losing students.
  - Al Martinez** – Now, Miyamura has the career pathway classes and it's a pretty good setup as well.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – So, how many students from Tohatchi will you be taking to Skills USA?

**Al Martinez** – Right now, I have 7 students, but there is close to 20 students from this area that are bused in.

**Wilfred Yazzie** – I would like to request to get on the agenda for the Chapter meeting to present my resolution requesting for community support for a land withdrawal for an existing cemetery. I went to the Land Department in W/R to find out what I needed to do to get a supporting resolution from the chapter for a land withdrawal. I talked with the grazing office as well in W/R to ask if there is a compliant file and they said yes, but it's not related to my request for a land withdrawal for the existing family cemetery. So, the office said it is invalid and they would not show me the compliant. I spoke with Rodgerick Yazzie with Land Department regarding my situation. I asked him what if I can't get on the agenda to make my request for a family cemetery land withdrawal. He made the suggestion that he can come out to Tohatchi Chapter to explain the processes and procedures for a cemetery land withdrawal but the Chapter will have to make that request in an email.

**President Bitsilly** – He would need to have the land withdrawal application signed by the Land Department Manager before moving forward with the application.

**Wilfred Yazzie** – I believe they will sign the application when I bring in the supporting resolution along with the application.

**LDA Moore** – By law all the existing family plots across Navajo have to be withdrawn. I believe the Grazing Officer has already done the GPS of Mr. Yazzie's family cemetery and the chapter should be able to draft a supporting resolution per his request.

**Maria, CSC** – The chapter does need to invite Land Department to the chapter since there have been some changes to the family plots. I was informed by Land Department that they will be doing away with the paperwork (application) and will only be requesting for a resolution from the chapters. I don't believe they are requesting for GPS reading as well, but I'll have to meet with Land Department to get some clarification.

**Wilfred Yazzie** – Land Department went over the flowchart on how to obtain a land withdrawal with me and he omitted the Navajo Department of Justice review, NN Office of the President and Vice President Legal Review, NN Legislative Council Legal Review, and Resource Development Committee for legislative approval. The resolution would go directly to Land Department for approval.

## VI. REPORTS:

### \*Council Delegate's Report given by LDA Moore:

#### 1. NN Council Winter Session 2026

**Sonny Moore, LDA** – I don't currently have a summary of discussions held during the winter session, but I will be sending out the information to everyone at a later date. One of the discussions was on the "Enhanced tribal ID" where there will be representatives going to Washington DC to reiterate to the office of the President that we are a sovereign nation so our Navajo people are not detained. Also, the office of Vital Records was given instructions to begin with the process for the ETC (enhanced tribal card) distribution to our people. With the State of NM, the state issues "real ID's" which are a step above having a regular driver's license. You would have to work with Department of Motor Vehicle to provide additional information to get a 'real ID.' In the state of Arizona you can get a driver's license that says on the license "Native American." I have not heard any more about natives being detained other than the person who was pickup in Peoria, Arizona. Also, there is a memo from Candice Yazzie to say there is a legislation to extend the deadline for all the capital purchases for flatbed, backhoes, and trailers. We submitted for capital purchases as well, but they ran out of funding before they got to us. Apparently, they will be coming out to the chapters to talk about that particular project.

Shaandiin Parrish has started a legislation when the NN does their budget annually and I'm not sure what their budget is for 2026, but they'll only be spending 70% of what's budgeted. The 30% used to go back into the Shihasin funds. So, they will start what's called capital financing. I have not read the legislation but there are capital projects that are important to the NN but don't have the funding, but

there are resources available, for example; NTUA recently had new office build using Federal Funds. They know how to apply for Federal Funds using the tax credit dollars and the cost is not passed back down to the consumer and we know that because NTUA has not had a rate increase for 17 years. I believe that's what Shaandiin Parrish is working on doing with her legislation. I also want to mention is I'm disappointed in what is happening in W/R and it probably won't stop until the next election and how does this effect the chapters? On a personal level I believe the Council Delegates were being disrespectful while interviewing President Nygren. It does not show a good example for our young people. Also, because of limited funds for standing committees, they pass legislation to approve virtual meetings.

**Priscilla Duncan** – What happen to the money that was given to the chapters and the money was then taken back and put into the General Funds account so it can earn interest?

**LDA Moore** – That was part of the discussion with Shawn McCabe and we were reassured that money would stay in there and not be used for things like hardship. What we have to be aware of here at the chapter is that we have \$1.7 million for Tohatchi Chapter projects. Who will be responsible for coordinating and maintaining these projects. Who will fill in as a project manager, because Maria has other responsibilities. There is \$35 million in lapse funds annually which goes back into the pot as well because of all the vacant positions. We keep saying why can't we dip into that \$35 million to hire a planner or project coordinator for each district or agency.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Going back to DL in the state of NM, if you have a yellow star on your driver's license you have the enhanced ID. Like you mentioned, you would have to work with the MVD office to get the enhanced card. It does require you to provide more documents for identification purposes. Council Delegate Cherylin Yazzie introduced legislation to start back up the Navajo Nation ID cards with your picture and CIB number. I'm wondering if this project has funding?

**LDA Moore** – No, it has not been funded as of yet.

**Fern Spencer** – I just renewed my card and their new location is over by the old Navajo Times, in the back area. I paid \$15 for the card.

**LDA Moore** – Just another update: the emergency funding did not go through. I'm just really disappointed in the Council Delegates and how they think about chapters. We have \$24,000 and we could have a major snow storm in May. I see on your agenda you have emergency response plan listed which can be a part of it. I know some chapters are very inactive and have thousands of dollars in emergency funds but they can be excluded and just give to the chapters who need the funds. Window Rock has no idea what is needed at the chapter level so we really need to keep our Council Delegate educated and I'm setting up a time and place where he can give the district 14 report. I hope to have him give reports on a monthly basis.

**President Bitsilly** – Declaring an emergency has been on the President's and Council's desk. How they make a declaration for chapters and how we should make that declaration as a chapter ourselves. That law has to be amended and change which can only be done through the Council Delegate. That responsibility would lie on the chapters to make those declarations.

**Vice President Rodgers** – There is a big conflict in the way it's written in Title 26. It conflicts with the information we are getting from ASC which needs to be clarified. It's frustrating the most for the chapter administration because they have the knowledge and know how to get all these things in order for us, for the people. Yet they can't do anything because they are being told something different and we are also being told something different and that doesn't sound right and council needs to do something to clarify that.

**LDA Moore** – My thoughts on Title 26 and the changes to Title 26 itself will not help us here at the

chapter level and the communication which has to go from here to Window Rock. Do we need to change the entire structure of our government. There was a task force that was established about 3-4 years ago and they developed a plan. It was called Regionalization which gave more responsibility to this level. I can share this information with you.

**Priscilla Duncan** – What about the CHID program? The last time we met, we said we would do a resolution where the administration in W/R should not make any changes to what the chapter recommends. But I heard from Maria, there was a meeting regarding the people who were selected for the program and some changes were made which I don't agree with. These individuals worked to get their required documents.

## 2. Navajo Nation ARPA Projects 2026 -

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

#### 1. GMCS School bus accident with Semi-truck on highway 491 –

**Maria, CSC** – There was a bus accident here in Tohatchi with students from Twin Lakes. Apparently, the bus was reared in by a semi-truck. The EMS, fire department, police, and the highway department were on the scene and students were examined by EMT's. Parents came to pick up their children and took them to the clinic to get them examined and cleared. We need to bring back our emergency response plan because we really didn't know what to do when we got to the scene of the accident. We had an ASC staff meeting last Friday and this topic was brought up. We did receive a template of an emergency response plan from Rodgerick Begay with DOJ.

#### 2. Chapter Emergency Response Plan –

**President Bitsilly** – We need to meet on this plan soon so we can update ourselves. This relates to the bus accident that happen last week. I will bring this up at the CLUPC meeting next month.

#### 3. Chapter Audit update and progress –

**Maria, CSC** – I've been working with the auditor Leland and he has been requesting for a lot of documents. I thought we were just covered the past 6 months for review, from January to July but apparently, we are going back even further. He is requesting for documents which date back to 2017 before I became the CSC. There are things that were not in place until I came aboard, for example; there should be a signature card update every year with our bank, Well Fargo. When I contacted Well Fargo, the signature card did not start until I came on as the CSC. This means anyone at the Chapter could sign checks and now we are going back into our 5-management system. I remember when I worked for the Chapter back in 2006 and 2007 when Loretta was the Chapter Manager. We put a packet together and had a work session in Pine Hill and if I can recall, Edwin and Larson were here at the time and that was the last time the chapter looked at the FMS. After researching Janice and I found out the chapter did not adopt the FMS plan until 2010. We have been using the 2007 plan. It looks like Edwin Begay was the only person who reviewed the FMS plan and had a resolution in place. Now, I have to setup a work session to review the FMS with the staff and the officials, but I was advised not to hold the work session at the chapter. I hope to schedule a 2-3-day work session this summer. We will be revisiting the 2010 and make sure it applies to our chapter along with a resolution and once completed, it will be presented at the chapter meeting and we'll get an approval with a resolution. We do have to adopt the 2010 policy. Other things the auditors requested for were policies and bank statements. I have another teleconference schedule with them at 3pm today and they plan to come in for 2-3 days to look over our files. We hope the audit will be closed in April 2026.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Was there any questions on our policies?

**Maria, CSC** – So far, the policies that we submitted to them are good.

**LDA Moore** – I'm disappointed with the auditors and making our audit difficult by going back pass the 6-month review. I think the officials need to meet with the auditors and let them know they should only be reviewing everything within the pass 6-months. As far as the FMS, we already know what is in the FMS and we been practicing it all along. I don't believe there are any changes to it and it's just prolonging the audit.

**Maria, CSC** – There are changes from 2007-2010 and I'm glad the auditors are going back reviewing everything. We can make the corrections and know we are on the right track as far as the chapter is concerned. I'm learning what I should not be doing as we go along with the auditors and they have been explaining everything.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I agree with Maria, I'm glad the auditors are looking at everything because we can understand our mistakes and make those corrections. We want to start with a clean slate.

Bike Trail Project updates per DCD –

**Maria, CSC** – President Bitsilly, Vice President Rodgers, and myself had a teleconference call with Michele Peterson on the bike trail. President Nygren directed Michele Peterson to meet with us. Michele wanted the IMBA insurance policy updated, the W-9 which was updated and submitted to Michele, and the letter Secretary/Treasurer Crawford drafted to explain why this project is a sole source project. She asked to have DOJ; Rodgerick Begay concur that it will be a sole source project. I entered this document in the IQ system and waiting to hear from Mr. Begay. Michele also said she would then walk the paperwork through to get signatures. I hope we can finally get this project off the ground.

**Vice President Rodgers** – Did Michele allude to the land status again? I remember she had mentioned we still the letter from Land Department manager, Bryon Bitsoie? Let's get a meeting scheduled with Mr. Bitsoie.

**Maria, CSC** – She did ask if we had surveys or land withdrawn. I'm trying to get Mr. Bitsoie to write the letter stating surveys and land withdrawal is not required.

4. Heavy Equipment Sihasin Fund approval for chapter flatbed purchase –

**Maria, CSC** – For heavy equipment, there are requesting for an extension and I did receive a letter from Candice and she will be scheduling a meeting with us. She will be visiting the chapters regarding the Sihasin projects and our chapter is one of them. I'll be sending out her email with letter attached.

5. NM Capital Outlay Project requests 2026 –

**Maria, CSC** – I did submit for funds for our Safety Complex, Warehouse, and Highway lighting which were all entered into the State's portal. I also requested for funding from the governor for our Safety Complex. I went to Santa Fe on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and I met with NMDOT and we discussed the highway lighting and the lighting for all the schools here in Tohatchi. We also talked about the millings and speed signs. We met with Representative Johnson, Patty Lundstrom, and Senator George Munoz. I'm glad I attended this meeting and received information on this project. President Bitsilly, also traveled to Santa Fe to do some advocating on behalf of our chapter. He dropped off documents with our representatives and senators. He also dropped off our reauthorization of the leach field in the amount of \$100,000 which will be expiring at the end of June 2026. There is a balance of \$900,000 for the Safety Complex, but after talking with Dr. Greyeyes, she reassured me that the money will be expended before the expiration date.

6. TIF (Tribal Infrastructure Fund), 1<sup>st</sup> Responder \$4 million –

**Maria, CSC** – Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> is Indian Day at the Capitol in Santa Fe. I will be attending with President Bitsilly and Secretary/Treasurer Crawford. We will be advocating for more funding for our pending projects. I also attended the TIF training that was held in Prewitt and Jean attended the one in Albuquerque at the Culture Center. The TIF portal today and it will close on March 13<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. I was informed I can submit for 15% of the project amounts. The person who gave the presentation on the TIF portal will be working all the NM chapters. I believe her last name is Tully, but not sure. I spoke with Dr. Greyeyes on Friday and she said she be submitting into the portal for the Safety Complex. So, I will be submitting for either the warehouse or the highway lighting.

7. Navajo Nation Sihasin Fund allocation \$3.9 million – NGWSP –

9. EV (Electric Vehicle) Station – NMDOT Grant fund status –

**President Bitsilly** – TAOS had applied for the grant fund but unfortunately, they were not eligible because TAOS is a 501C3 business entity, but Crownpoint was awarded the EV grant.

10. Office of Environmental Health (Gallup Service Unit) – Operation and Services meeting –

**Maria, CSC** – I was just informed this morning by the Head Start teacher that they were shut down because of deficiencies pointed out by OEH. I did ask for a copy of the listing of deficiencies which include, HVAC which does not have documentation stating it's being serviced annually. Some of the minor deficiencies were a chip on the ceiling and some water damage in the corner which is unsafe to

have children in the building. I was hoping the teacher, Laberta would be here to explain how they plan to take care of all the deficiencies. We had a meeting with Geraldine Thompson with OEH from Gallup Service Unit. She brought in her staff and her boss to go over the roles of OEH in our community. She stated they oversee the Senior Centers, Head Start, schools, and gas station. They do not oversee the chapter, but I did bring up our kitchen. Apparently, it's been years since our kitchen was renovated. In 2024 we had the Navajo Nation Environmental Health come in to do an inspection of our kitchen and we were cited. We were told there should be a pump install under the sink called a vacuum breaker which should be installed by a plumber. We were told to go to the Senior Center and look at their sink and see how the drainage is setup. Apparently, a pipe has to be installed from the sink down below the flooring into the ground to connect to a sewage. So, in the meantime the chapter kitchen is closed. I had Carlene get quotes for the installation and LAROC said you can spend \$5000-\$10,000 for the installation? Now, I'm searching for funds to get this project completed. My next inspection is coming up in April. There was a funeral reception here on Saturday and I had to let the family know our kitchen is closed for repairs. So, what the family did was cook outside under tents and brought the food in for people. One thing I want to mention is when parties or funeral receptions are held on weekends, the renter do not clean after their event. All they do is put the chairs and tables away but do not mop the floor or clean up.

I also was informed by OEH that I need to have my front and back door replaced. They have to be ADA compliant which will be included with the kitchen renovation. The back door should not be chained up but we do it because we feel much safer. The broken window has to be replaced as well.

We had a meeting with the ASC last week and we went over the "guidance of the expenditure of Fund 16," the Veterans Fund in the amount of \$5000 which is allocated annually. This explains how the funds can be used by the veteran' committee which includes catering, food purchases, and gifts and awards for their fellow veteran and the other is operating supplies. This is supplies needed to run their meetings or events. This is the information that was shared with me in December and I shared with the Veterans in January, but apparently, operation supplies only include: pen, paper, flags, tablecloth, bowl, plates, utensils which they can use for their events. Just no office or furniture supplies, building materials or construction if they are asking for housing discretionary and also funds cannot be used to purchase gift cards or food vouchers for the Veterans. The Veteran Committee would have to make a request for funds by letter to the Chapter and providing 3 price quotes. I will send this information out to the Veterans and the officials.

I understand the new Unhealthy Food Tax amount is now in the Wind system, but I have not look at it to see how much the chapter received. I will be working on this budget until March's meeting.

Also, I have had college students called me regarding the "ice situation" and they want to know what the chapters have in place to keep them safe while they are off the reservation. One student who is attending school in Boulder, CO stated he is the president of the Native American Club with his school and wanted some information he can share with his club regarding who they should contact or how best to let ice agents know they are Native American and registered with the Navajo Nation. I was able to share some phone numbers with him thanks to our officials.

I received a phone call from Julie Thompson who stated her daughter has been missing since December 23<sup>rd</sup> and we printed flyers and put them up. Her daughter's name is Julianne Thompson Rodriguez and she is 37 years old and a mother of two. She was last seen at Safeway in Gallup, NM and it has since been reported to the police.

There is a CLUPC work session tomorrow at 9am and their regular meeting is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup> at 9am. There will be activities for the youth on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 3-5pm here at the chapter.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – When was the Head Start official shut down?

**Maria, CSC** – Today

**Fern Spencer** – There is a CLUPC work session on February 4<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday at 9am. Also, is the Boys and Girls Club still meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> in Gallup?

**President Bitsilly**- Yes, meeting will be held at 10am at the same location.

**Maria, CSC** – As far as an update on CHID program, myself and President Bitsilly met with Mr. Delgai in January and I provided him the list of the original names of the families that were selected for the CHID homes. It took the list and he said you will go by the list of the 4 families who were initial selected

and they will be receiving a letter in the mail notifying them that they have been selected for a CHID home. Mr. Dalgus shared they have found a contractor who have businesses in Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. They were selected to build this home which has a price tag of \$187,000 per home. The letters to the families will be out in March and Mr. Delgai reassured us that they will go with the list we initial provided with the top 4 names on the list. If by chance there is some money left over, the 5<sup>th</sup> name on the list could get a home as well. We did have a veteran on our list to get a home, but the Navajo Nation Veterans Organization will be provided him a home so he was taken off our list. So, hopefully by summer all of our 4 families will have moved into their new homes.

**President Bitsilly** – These homes are manufactured by Home Direct out of Phoenix, Arizona. After speaking with Mr. Dalgui, our chapter was not on W/R list to get homes even though we followed the guidelines and submitted the paperwork for these families. It took some persuasion and follow up with Mr. Delgai.

**Fern Spencer** – In the past month in January, we've 3 accidents here in Tohatchi including the bus accident. I was very upset to hear about the bus accident and my sister who is a former trucker said it is really unnecessary for semis to be going that fast through Tohatchi. The other thing that came up is the bus lighting by the high school which has been down for months now and everybody is pointing fingers at each other's. Nobody wants to take responsibility anymore and these accidents are occurring at the turn on to highway 491 near Speedway. People just don't know how to drive on a 4-lane highway; they think they can beat the oncoming traffic or they are just not paying attention by looking. That bus accident should not have happen, but yet it did. That needs to be address and I don't know if the bus driver was at fault or the semi driver. I know there was discussion about cutting into the bend at the Chooshgai School turnoff so people can see. Maybe we can put up signs to say slow down when approaching the community. I understand the NM Highway Department will be responsible for cleaning the cattleguards.

**Vice President Rodgers** – If there is a lot of money left over from the CHID housing, we can pickup a 5<sup>th</sup> house? If there is not enough money left over for another house, we suggested to Mr. Dalgui it be spent on waterline and septic tank to assist the families with the new homes.

We had a meeting with Mckinley County last year and gave them a listing a issues which needed to be address. Mckinley County manager told us they are not responsible for the bus lighting. President Bitsilly produced a letter in which an agreement was made and, in the agreement, it clearly states who is responsible for what. The manager than used a loop hole, he said that it only applies to highway 666 and when highway 666 became 491it no longer applied. So, we need a legal opinion and it has to be done. I think we should do a resolution to the State or whoever is responsible in the legal department to give us a legal opinion.

As far as vehicle speeding through Tohatchi, we had a meeting with Economy Development and LDA Moore opposed a question to us stating how can we generate more money for the chapter. My thought was to put up speed cameras and I know it won't be our money because it's the NM State highway's right-of-way. I did the math and I figure there are over 5000 vehicle that travel through our community. Let's say there are an average of 300 vehicles who are speeding through and speeding tickets range in the amount of \$100 a ticket so the State stands to make \$7 million a year which will reflect very well on the State. After they make their million maybe we can ask for some of that money. After I proposed this to the gentleman, Mr. Francisco and LDA Moore, they said do your resolution. I think this should be something the community can consider. Once they realize tickets are being issued for speeding, they may slow down, other than that we have no enforcement.

**Maria, CSC** – Speaking of the NM Transportation, Mr. Serna who is the manager of the Department of Transportation. At the meeting that was held in Santa Fe, he stated there is an MOU between the Highway Department and the Mckinley County Schools. He said he would email the MOU to Delegate Notah. Once we get a copy of this MOU, we should be setting up a meeting with Mckinley County School to get this resolved.

**LDA Moore** – I really like Tohatchi's interaction with one another. I encourage the official and community members to keep it up. As far as the cleaning of the cattleguards, that was given back to the chapter. The Director of Division of Natural Resources did mention to us that when the 4-lane road was

coming through there was an agreement and we should be requesting that document to see what kind of an agreement was made. Another point, there is not enough policemen and maybe we need to go back and talk about cross commission again. When the Safety Complex is built, we have to make sure we are fully staff with police officer which we may find difficult to do. What we should be look to do is partnering with UNM Police Academy to recruit our police officers from. We should also be looking into locating housing for them well in advance with NHA or Chooshgai Community School. And just to mention, there are \$347 million in ARPA funds just sitting there, but I'm sorry to say it's very hard for a non-certified chapter to tap into. I believe Naschitti received more money from ARPA. Lastly, I would like to mention to get a jump start on the CHID homes by bringing in NTUA and IHS and having the families apply for assistance.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I drive into Tohatchi all the time just like everyone else, but I have not seen a sign saying to 'slow down.' I think we need to look into getting some signs up to warn travels to slow down or a sign to say "school turnoff up head." I believe this would be less costly for our community. Another thing, why isn't the cost of waterline and septic tanks not included in the cost of these CHID homes. It should be all inclusive

**Maria, CSC** – It is included that is way the cost of the home went from \$140,000 to \$187,000 for waterline and leach line instillation.

**Priscilla Duncan** – A recommendation to sign up with NTUA today or as soon as possible because they have other projects that they are working on.

**Maria, CSC** – Just to let the community know we are experience issues with our checks. The issue is when we go to purchase supplies at Walmart, Home Depot, and other retailers are refusing to accept our chapter checks. We made purchases at Walmart and they are saying we never paid and we received a collection letter. I responded to the letter and submitted documents from our Wells Fargo bank website and waiting for that to clear. But come to find out we are not the only chapter dealing with collection letters when companies are not accepting our chapter checks Right now, T&R is the only retailer who will accept our checks, but if I go to Safeway or Walmart I get denied and I'm told I have insufficient funds. I believe this all goes back to the Navajo Nation not paying their bills and it's now effecting the chapters. So, I have not started on any of the housing discretionary projects that were approve because Home Depot is not accepting my checks. I am currently working with a collection office in Texas to clear the chapter's name. I don't know how to resolve this issue but I want the community to know.

At the recent ASC meeting, we were told to maybe request for a debit card and start using that to make purchases which I do not want to do.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I believe this has to go back to our Council Delegate because it all starts with W/R. The fact that the Navajo Nation don't pay their bills is old news and that is what we are known for unfortunately. Council Delegate Notah needs to bring this up at council and make everyone aware of what is occurring at the chapters. This disrupts the daily business of the chapter and how we provide services to our community. It just looks bad and we are the largest nation and we can't even pay our bills.

**President Bitsilly** – I believe OOC or NN Legal Council would be the people to contact and the chapter attorney is Rodgerick Begay with DOJ.

**LDA Moore** – There was a huge discussion on this topic during the council session and the bottle neck we all know is OOC. We have this resource planning software that's suppose to take care of everything but it was the wrong time to implement it at the end of the year. I'll discuss it with Council Delegate Notah. Eastern had introduced legislation that would separate the capital projects from DCD. The capital projects would have its own office.

**Vice President Rodgers** – I'm thinking these checks are written out in the name of the chapter and goes to Wells Fargo and it' Wells Fargo fault for not clearing these checks. I don't have a problem with my deposits.

**LDA Moore** – If you can do a memorandum with Patricia Begay and "cc" us maybe we can help you look into it.

**President Bitsilly** – This is like the issue with Speedway not accepting our checks. I spoke tand sent a memo to Mr. Francisco and he is going to contact the new owners of Speedway to have them start

working with the chapter again to accept our chapter checks for fuel. I know when the new Navajo Nation Petroleum Gas Station opens up, they will work and accept our chapter checks for fuel.

**Fern Spencer** – Is there a way we can communicate with NTUA when they turn off the electricity on and off? Because they will turn off the electricity for a couple of hours and then turn it back on, but some people need electricity on 24/7 for their oxygen. Can that request be made to them?

**President Bitsilly** – My trip to Santa Fe last week to follow up on the waste water. Our representative did not have a physical copy on hand. I had her secretary make a copy for her so she could sign the document to meet the deadline. Sometimes it better to show up in person to follow up on paperwork.

**\*Red Willow Farm Report:**

1. Red Willow Farm Projects –

**Geneva Begay** – I wanted to know if the teacher Anna Topple from Tohatchi High School has been awarded from the chapter? She was requesting to be awarded from the chapter for the Tohatchi signs. That request was made 2 months ago and nothing has been done.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – I'm sorry, but I'm not understanding you. Who is giving the award or who is receiving an award?

**Vice President Rodgers** – I believe she's referring to acknowledgement of the signs that were designed by the students and presented here at the chapter for the community to vote on. So, the chapter is vested in buying the materials to make the sign that received the most votes. The student and teacher would receive the acknowledgement from the chapter.

**Grazing Officer Moore** – I believe I was the black sheep of the design contest because to me the designs were more for the entrance to the high school. All the designs did not represent the whole community; it was more of an entrance to the high school sign. Maybe they would consider a design that depict more of our community. A design with horses, cows, and sheep. Maybe a hogan with grandma and grandpa and the mountains.

**Geneva Begay** – The point I'm trying to get across is the chapter should be working with Anna on the designs for signs. The chapter should also acknowledge Anna and her students for coming up with these designs for a community welcome sign.

As far as Red Willow is concerned, we have 3 farmers who have signed up and we toured their plot and setup T-post to identify their area. The problem now is the irrigation; there is no pressure inside of the irrigation line. So, we are working with Water Resources to put in a spout to where the farmers can haul water to their plot to water their plants. A memo was sent out today to Water Resource; they will be purchasing the materials for the farm board. We are also looking at doing the raised beds out front of the chapter. We were hoping to get the headstart kids involved but since they are closed, we will be working with the Senior Center. If the headstart opens back up the children will be welcome to assist with the planting of the raised beds.

We also have the USDA watershed program which is pending because the NN is not spending down their funds. \$3 million across Navajo has not been spent so all the funding went back to USDA. There is just the band aid project, the emergency fund that can assist the community with a 30-day deadline.

When a disaster happens you have up to 30 days to apply. There can be a workshop on how to use your gutters for rain water to water your plants.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** – Has anyone considered doing raised beds at Red Willow and incorporating manure into your soil?

**Geneva Begay** – Virginia Barney is out there doing a burn because they were able to get a burn permit for the month of February. Hazel James may have some grant money for farmers who actively want to farm and maybe do some raised beds, but they all say "there is no water."

**Priscilla Duncan** – I would like to know when they plan to clean up around Chooshgai Lake?

**Geneva Begay** – Ashley Curley heads the program for BIA and she will be here at the next meeting. Fish & Wildlife say September is a good time to clear the shrubs around the lake.

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

Current grazing updates -

**Grazing Office Moore** – As far as Ft. Defiance Agency Grazing Committee, we are still continuing to update and revise grazing codes and regulations CFR 167 series and also the 700 series so that is on-

going. The BIA Natural Resource people, there is only 3 in the building now. Calvert Curley left so there is only Dean Gamble overseeing Ft. Defiance Agency and also Northern Agency. Ashley, I know is with District 14, Nate Sam is the agricultural land use permit person and he is still there. In that same building I believe is Treva Henio has an office there.

Announcement: District 14 Grazing Committee meeting will be held at Twin Lakes chapter on February 4<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

**\*CLUPC Report:**

**1. Rural Address Mapping final phase -**

**Priscilla Duncan** – We have a work session scheduled this Wednesday to review our policy. It is almost completed but Delphine is having trouble putting the information on one page. She is suppose to be working with a printing shop to get everything printed. She is working with a print shop in Tse Bonito and the cost should be reasonable.

**Grazing Officer Moore** – If you are looking for company to print 8X10 or 5X7, the one book that we did the Navajo Plants. We were fortunate to have Carol Palmer on our team because she used to work at the printing company down in Phoenix. I had some printing done in Las Cruces at Office Printing Supply it cost me \$300. But if you need some printing done reach out to Carol Palmer, it would be less expensive to go through the company she was associated with in Phoenix.

**\* Veteran's Report:** No report given

**VII. RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Resolution to approve feral horse gathering for District 14.
2. Resolution to approve and support a land withdrawal for Mr. Wilfred Yazzie and family for an existing family cemetery in Buffalo Springs.

**VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Red Willow meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

**IX. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: February 18, 2026 @ 10:00am**

**X. ADJOURNMENT: 12:55 pm**

Submitted by;



Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter – February 12, 2026

cc: Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, President

Ms. Lee Rodgers, Vice President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC

Mr. Nathan Notah, Council Delegate