



THE NAVAJO NATION TOHATCHI COMMUNITY CHAPTER

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Chapter President

Lee Rodgers
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Jean Crawford
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Gerald Moore
Grazing Official

Nathan Notah
Council Delegate

FEBRUARY 18, 2026 @ 10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER AGENDA

AUDIO TELECONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: (575) 567-3331 PIN: 290 206 733#

JOIN WITH GOOGLE MEET: <https://meet.google.com/vsc-zdtr-mbz?authuser=0&hs=122>

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. INVOCATION
- IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
- V. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 21, 2026 MEETING MINUTES
- VI. PRESENTATION:
 1. **Mr. Al Martinez:** GMCS (Opportunity Career Center as a Community Liaison) -
 - 2.
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
 1. None
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS
JANUARY 2026 Financial Report
- IX. RESOLUTIONS:
 1. **018-02-2026:** Resolution authorizing and supporting the Tohatchi Chapter and the Tohatchi grazing committee member to implement an indefinite feral horse, stray, and unclaimed livestock removal program in efforts to improve the Ecological Health and Productivity of the Navajo rangelands for present and future generations of the Navajo people.
 2. **019-02-2026:** Resolution approving the chapter's monthly financial report of combined statement revenue, expenditures, and fund balances from January 1, 2026 to January 31, 2026.
 3. **020-02-2026:** Resolution to support Wilfred Yazzie and family for a land withdrawal on an existing family cemetery in Buffalo Springs.
- X. ANNOUNCEMENTS:
- XI. NEXT MEETING DATE and TIME: 03-02-2026 @ 10:00am Planning Meeting
- XII. ADJOURNMENT:



February 18, 2026 10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 11:01am
- 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: Beatrice Dennison
- IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion: 1st Wilfred Yazzie 2nd Fern Spencer Vote: 17-0-1
- V. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 21, 2026 MEETING MINUTES:
Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Fern Spencer Vote: 18-0-1
- VI. PRESENTERS:
 - 1. Al Martinez: Was unable to attend.
- VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS –
 - 1. NONE
- VIII. NEW BUSINESS:
 - JANUARY 2026 Financial Reports –

JANUARY FUND BALANCES		
1	Chapter Activities Gen Fund	\$30,988.72
3	Chapter Claims Fund	\$59,119.11
8	Supplemental Youth Fund	\$26,216.13
9	Housing Discretionary Fund	\$14,215.81
10	LGA Grant Fund	\$67,279.45
12	Chapter Stipends	\$42,061.06
13	Scholarship General Fund	\$6,042.00;
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$7,851.48
15	PEP Fund	\$76,269.18
16	Veterans Fund	\$14,360.62
17	Emergency Fund	\$24,719.71
23	NN Sales Tax	\$123,517.03
25	NN CIP - \$180,000	\$13,362.52
26	Red Willow Farm	\$590.37
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

34	Agriculture & Infrastructure	\$3.68
	General Fixed Assets	
	Total Fund Balance	\$619,407.07

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – The monthly financial reports indicate we are in balance with our bank, Wells Fargo. Everything was reconciled and we are in balance for the month of February 2026.

Vice President Rodgers – Just to mention where it says “Spring Financial Assistance” which has a list of students. That is our scholarship fund which were given out to the students.

Fern Spencer – These students that received scholarship for their education, do they ever come back to say thank you? And since they are over 18 years of age; are they registered to vote? I think saying thank you in a letter or card is a lost art.

Maria, CSC – Very few come back to say thank you.

Motion to accept the January 2026 Financial Report

Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Rosie Deschiney Vote: 17-0-1

IX. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **018-02-2026:** Resolution authorizing and supporting the Tohatchi Chapter and the Tohatchi grazing IS member to implement an indefinite feral horses, stray, and unclaimed livestock removal program in efforts to improve the Ecological Health and Productivity of the Navajo rangelands for present and future generations of the Navajo people.

Motion: 1st Laris Manuelito 2nd Kevin Mitchell Vote: 17-0-1

Laris Manuelito – I’m wondering if this resolution can be amended to include stray cats and dogs. I have stray dogs coming to my house and they are very aggressive.

Grazing Moore – There is a resolution addressing the over population of stray dogs and cats which the NN Veterinary has put together. I can look into it again.

Laris Manuelito – Would it have to go through you or the Veterinary Program to work with 501C organization to come out to capture and T&R (Catch, Spay, and Neuter) and release them. I don’t think these animals can be rehomed.

Grazing Officer Moore – It is a big issue and there are programs out there like the one with Glenda Davis. There are other programs that come out during the summer months from universities that do spay and neuter. I don’t know if they actually pickup feral cats and dogs but I can talk with them again. I know the problem is local and in the NHA area, but they do have some type of ordinance or something in place to control, but there is no enforcement. This is an issue; we don’t have dog catchers in the area. If you see a dog chasing your animals like sheep, cattle, or horses you can put the dog down (shoot). You can purchase a permit from Walmart to put a feral dog down, but you should always have proof as well.

President Bitsilly – The pack of dogs Laris is referring did attack and killed my neighbor’s dog. My family have sheep which are penned up all the time because of these feral dogs running around. So, please be careful because they will attack.

2. **019-02-2026:** Resolution to approve the chapter’s monthly financial report of combine statement, revenue, expenditures, and fund balances from January 1, 2026 to January 31, 2026.

Priscilla Duncan – Ask to have the word “combined” to combine, correction.

Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan 2nd Laris Manuelito Vote: 17-0-1

3. **020-02-2026:** Resolution to support Wilfred Yazzie and family for a land withdrawal on an existing family cemetery in Buffalo Springs, NM.

Motion: 1st Fern Spencer 2nd Priscilla Duncan Vote: 16-0-2

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Shanell Franklin – I am from this area, I went to Tohatchi Boarding School, Chooshgai Boarding School, and Tohatchi Middle and Tohatchi High School. I am here to inform the community that I am running for Magistrate Court Judge with District One in Mckinley County. I am here to ask for your support, I am community member, I grew up here, I advocate for the people. My extensive background is I've been working since I was 16 years old and I'm now 49 years of age. I've worked at Coyote Rehab; I've with home care options in Gallup so I do have an idea of what people need out in the community regarding homecare. I also worked with people with disabilities for 10 years so learning how to advocate for people who can't speak for themselves so I have that experience. I started as a receptionist there and ended up as the assistant executive director and transitioned on to working with a nationwide financial institution and did that for 8 years providing help to a lot of native American people in Mckinley County. I did credit counseling and tax preparations. Then I started work with Head Start as a Program Project Specialist and up to Regional Partnership Coordinator and I was assigned to oversee their funding for a period of time. In that capacity, I was able to purchase brand new buses and do an evaluation of all the things that were needed in regards to environmental stuff. With that knowledge, I went on to work for the Department of Education under the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education to provide knowledge the State Officials on how the Navajo Nation School are run. So, during this whole time I was also going to school. I am in my Doctoral program in Organizational Leadership/Organizational Development. I appreciate your help, I think I came to the chapter one time to ask for scholarship assistance, so thank you for investing in me. I believe I have 1 academic class left and then I'll be focusing on my dissertation and study. My study will be on Navajo Women in Leadership and how we can develop some type of way to look at what that looks like, especially if it's culturally relevant. I currently work with the Adult Detention Center and I also work at Sage Memorial Hospital as a license clinical therapist there. I am also trying to work on starting a 30-day treatment program within the jail setting so we can address the substance abuse that's happening. I know I have a lot on my plate right now. I am asking for your support to nominate me to be on the ballot on June 4th for Mckinley County Magistrate Judge and I'm here requesting for signatures. If you are able to support me, I would really appreciate it. I never take it lightly to have people believe in me and you have the ambition advocate for the people and to love them.

Laris Manuelito – Where will you be receiving your doctorate?

Shanell Franklin – Grand Canyon University

Vice President Rodgers – Do you have any legal classes or legal experience to back you up?

Shanell Franklin – Yes, I was actually working with the treatment courts, working under Judge Virginia Yazzie. This is the reason why I decide to run for this position, as a regular employee you don't have much of a voice sometimes. Sometimes you have to have a leader that's going to say "this is something that we are going to do, please listen to her." Judge Yazzie was instrumental in helping me get that voice out there. I did work with the magistrate courts for 4 years and now I'm actually working with the detention center. So, a lot of those are court base and knowing the process on how that works is something I'm familiar with. I also had the opportunity to work with Representative Johnson and Senator Pinto during the whole process of getting the treatment work started.

Grazing Officer Moore – Once you become a judge, how will you be able to balance your work and completing your dissertation?

Shanell Franklin – It would actually be a break for me because I work a full 10 hour day at Sage Memorial and then I work at the jail from 6am to 10pm. Getting this position will mean working an 8-5 job and the rest of the time I will be focusing on my dissertation and my research.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Who are your parents, I didn't hear.

Shanell Franklin – My parents are Marcella and Norman Franklin who are here from this community. My grandmother is Mary Begay.

Laris Manuelito – As you all know I've been working on a grocery store at mile marker 19. It has now become where I don't have to focus on the grocery store aspect. I'm now going into the emergency management aspect. It's turned into a fully sustainable micro grid and telecom, so I'll have my own electricity solar and mine own telecom or wireless. It's required in order to keep everything up, the emergency management center and telecom don't go out of power so it can be used as an emergency management center as well as the resilience hub. So now it's a multimillion-dollar steel built emergency operations center, energy and telecom hub. It's going to bright through the grocery store, portable water and ice, health and basic urgent care and I've incorporated a pharmacy into the grocery store so when COVID happened, if you remember GIMC closed and medication was inaccessibility. Hopefully, the pharmacy will be able to have that where we are in communication with GIMC and our high risk and others at least will have accessibility to their medication and it can also be used as a regular pharmacy. A pilot a clinic for women, children, and veterans to be able to have accessibility to small health assessment. If that proofs to positive and works, we'll open another building for a regular clinic type setting. We will also have room for let's say a chef wanted to come in to give a class and it's also there for travelers who stop by and want a bit. I'm seriously concerning having the store 24 hours with a dog park. Truckers can park their truck there during inclement weather and it would be safe. So that was incorporated and the resilience energy, micro grid, broadband, telecom, and emergency communication. Right now we are in the funding process and it's a first time for everything which is being done by an individual, independent, Navajo owned business. I've been talking to big banks about permanent financing so this will be about a \$28-\$35 million project. It is a positive thing that we are going into the emergency management aspect now. I went to National Grocery Association Conference and I was able to find all the partners I need to be able to sustain and help build out the grocery store. So, now I can focus on the emergency management, the micro grid, and the telecom. I appreciate your support and I'm very excited we are moving forward.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Have you obtain any funding for the store so far?

Laris Manuelito – This is interesting that a lot of banks will not work with you if you are on trust land because it's "trust land. So, there are certain banks who know how to operate in those places and I found them. It took a lot of foot work, a lot of talking, and a lot of meetings to find a bank that was willing to work with you and Nosed Bank is one of them. There are also foundations like Kellogg and Wellesley, and Waverly and they are all supportive of the project. They like what is happening because it serves the community, and serves food security, medication, and emergency. The bigger permanent funding is collateral. I've heard NN asking entrepreneurs to liquidate their retirement and their assets to provide the equity for collateral to put a business forward. I don't think that should be asked of an entrepreneur. The building is modular as oppose to stick build meaning it's not built with wood; it's built with steel so it's sustainable but it's cheaper. A stick build would have cost around \$72 million. The steel built is built in a warehouse and brought up and put together. I have also found solar energy partners who will be working on the micro grid. It will be the first of its kind on Navajo and in New Mexico. Hopefully, we can build something that you can cookie cut and build somewhere else. It's about building sustainability, food security, food sovereign, and local economy. The cultural center in the store is met to work with vendors to sell their herbs and ceremonial supplies. I like to get the plan and design and get the schematics from the energy side that will be the collateral which has asset and equity in it. So that will be used as my collateral to go to BIA energy and get the bigger BIA loans and the bigger SBA since I'm a single veteran. BIA, SBA, and USDA for loans and they will use those deliverables as my collateral to get permanent funding.

Kevin Mitchell – I would like to give a brief update on the contract of the new school. I know we have been trying to get a walk-through of the new school. Right now, the gymnasium bleachers will be installed on February 27th and it usually takes a week to install. Currently, the contractors are working on the interior mechanical systems, final electrical safety systems, and finishing up with paint. I believe the contractor said

they do have a window of the week of March 23rd. Please check your calendars to see what day will work for you during that week and let me know and that will be the day we can schedule a walk through. The contract for the furniture has been held up, PSFA State approval since January 26. When approved, the installation will take about 8 weeks. So, move in into the new school will begin at the end of June and the students will be moved in by August of the new fall school year. Tonight we have a girls basketball game with Navajo Prep and the boys had a very good game last night. I'm wishing them well and they are very capable of doing well in the district playoffs next week. Currently, we are holding a heritage fair at the Red Rock State Park with all our district schools which will go on today, tomorrow, and Friday. It starts in the morning and usually runs to about 1pm. They will be showing off their language and cultural skills. I also want to mention the legislative session will be wrapping up tomorrow and there will be some big changes coming down in our McKinley County School district. At one point they were trying to take \$49 million for this school year from us which would practical close down our school district. They did come back with another offer and we'll have to see what they put in House bill 253. I'm also waiting to see the House bill which is the main budget to see what they can do to offset that.

Maria, CSC – I have a complaint, this year our official and our administration wanted to do something special for our community by supporting our local teams. What we did was put together some gift bags to give out to the players during the games. I noticed everybody is doing it, the parents and students. Last week, I called the high school out of courtesy and respect. I talked to Donna Jones and let her know the chapter will be there at the game to give out the gift bags to our community members, especially the elders who have been supporting our school. Donna Jones said “no, it's parent night and the evening is only for the parents.” “We are not letting anyone else give anything out on that night, but you are more than welcome to come to the girls game to give out your gift bags because they don't have any activities scheduled.” I then asked her who is the athletic director? Are you the athletic director? Donna then tells me “As a coach we don't do things like that.” I told her I'm not a coach, I'm requesting as an administrator for Tohatchi Chapter. As a chapter we want to express our support for our team and our community. Can you let the school know what our intentions are.

Kevin Mitchell – We have a principal at the school who you should be addressing these issues to. He should be the one to say yes or no. As far as your complaint there is a process by putting your complaint in writing. I believe the school principal is also the Athletic Director.

Fern Spencer – The principal who is suppose to be the AD (Athletic Director), but she is also his secretary. So, does he delegate her to be the person in charge at the gym because last week we had a former student there and she would not allow the class of 74 to introduce him to the people there in the gym. The former student, Mr. Tommy Bonner who was one of our athletes and his mother was our booster club president for many years. As a former AD, you have to have an administrator there when there is a function going on, but Mr. Moore is never there. What he does is delegates other people to be there. So, what if something happens? Just like the night when an unruly fan had to be asked to leave the gym because she was saying things to the referees. There are processes in place even at the New Mexico Athletic Directors Association as well and it's not being complied. When I heard this had happen, I told her to talk to the AD at Central Office who never goes anywhere and he's the former principal at Thoreau. He should know this. Mr. Moore needs to be at these events, that's just protocol. I believe the chapter should be able to give out their gift bags to both teams, girls and boys to be fair.

Kevin Mitchell – I believe it's a little late to go through the complaint process, but if you could email Mr. Moore and bring this to his attention. If you can do that today then I'll let the AD, Mr. Sinna know about the situation. I believe it's ok to give out gift bags and it should not be an issue, but please let Mr. Moore know of your plans to distribute gift bags to our players and community elders who have supported our teams. As far as former students or alumni, they should be shown the same courteous and respect from our

school administrators. I understand Mr. Tommy Bonner travel some distance to come back to the school he attended many years ago. He and his family were community members and contributed to the athletic program.

Rosie Deschiney – I did meet with the AD yesterday about this situation. He stated the AD is Mr. Moore and I also questioned what Donna Jones's position is? I was told she is the assistant. I'm from the class of 74 and we have been giving out gifts to the boys and girls last year and this year. I noticed people don't even ask if they can give out things at the games. They just show up and start distributing.

Kevin Mitchell – I appreciate all that you are doing for our sports teams. I hope this does not discourage anyone. Please continue doing all that you do.

Council Delegate Nathan Notah – The main thing I want to mention is the rumor about \$27 million that is being reverted back to the State. I received the official paperwork from the State and it says it around \$13 million which may be reverted back. I just to be clear, I don't believe District 14 will be effective by this

It was 6 items which were identified as possible being reverted back to the State. Some of the funds that's being reverted back to State is funds that were given several years back. The governor gets an audit each year and she can see who received funds and did not use their money. So, she says, if you are not going to use the funds it will be reverted back to the State. The \$1million that Tohatchi received for the Safety Complex has been spend on plan and design. We do need more funding for the construction of the new Safety Complex. We did receive \$4 million in TIF funds to go toward the construction cost and now we are lacking about \$13 million to build and complete the Safety Complex. The issue with the one million dollars which has been showing up as not being spent is because of the receipts and invoices. There are still sitting with the controller's office. The controller should be taking these receipts and invoices and sending them to Santa Fe and they in return will send the money back as a refund to the NN and it then comes off their books. You can take one million out of the \$13 million I just quoted to you to construct the Safety Complex. Addition to that Naschitti has 3 different project and received \$100,000, \$200,000, and \$300,000 on 3 different years. There project is completed and they do have some money leftover but again their receipts and invoices are still at the controller's office. The leftover amount is around \$200,000 and we are asking Santa Fe for an extension to use the funds. We did make the request to use the leftover funds toward a warehouse. The legislators will make the finally decisions on this request. Those are 4 items that can be taken out of the 13 million. I think other chapters are in the same boat and the deadline to have projects completed is June 30, 2026. Coyote Canyon had \$90,000 to buy a heavy equipment and they are still in the process of doing that. They have assured me that they will get the money spend before the deadline.

Number 6 is our wastewater treatment project here in Tohatchi which has fallen behind. The \$100,000 was received for this project and looks like it will get reverted back to State, but there is a form you can complete to ask for an extension which Tohatchi has completed. The legislators are probably voting on these requests right now as we speak. What I'm saying is the 6 different projects listed to be reverted back, I expect none of the funding received will be reverted back. I think in district 14 we are fine. You have to understand too that the chapters don't actually work on these projects themselves, it's the project managers from Window Rock. Unfortunately, NN only has 8 project managers across Navajo and currently they are managing over 1000 ARPA, State, and shihasin projects. The reason these funds are being reverted back is because of the Navajo Nation Community Development who are at fault. This department reports to the President and we did try to stress the importance of fixing Community Development but it hasn't been done. I just learned over the weekend, the Division Director for Community Development just resigned on Thursday. So, we are starting all over again with that department. We are trying to pushing this along but there is just a lot of barriers. Secondly, I would like to mention, myself, Maria, and Elvis met with the Department of Transportation and we asked them to continue to maintain highway 491. I believe we received a positive response. We also requested them to maintain the fencing as well and also the cattle guards. There are some

issues that need to be worked out so their lawyers are working with our Navajo Nation lawyers based on agreements that were made when the road was put in place. We also asked to have the beacon lights put back in place for our schools which includes Naschitti and Twin Lakes. In addition to that we are asking for the proper road signs to be put up. The Secretary of Transportation states he called the McKinley County Superintendent's office in Gallup and he has been in contact with the Kirtland Central Consolidated Schools Superintendent's office as well. He provided names and titles of individuals who we needed to contact. The other thing I want to mention is we do have money for the plan and design for our lighting and those run about \$23 million for Twin Lakes, Tohatchi, and Mexican Springs. So, again we are lacking construction funds. The Secretary of Transportation and his staff have agreed to help us write up for federal grants which they feel we might be eligible for. It has a deadline for the end of this month. We could get the whole \$23 million for the lighting project from this grant. He also said the State may have money for the lighting, but it would not be the whole \$23 million. I learned the Secretary of Transportation resigned on Thursday but he did share a lot of possibility and resources for funding. I don't believe the governor has appointed a new secretary as of yet.

As far as hardship is concerned, we will be getting hardship money, but we don't know how much. The controller back in December let us know how much money is available in ARPA. The controller is still trying to figure this about out because the President wants it to go into the hardship fund. The controller is responsible and he is the one who will be telling us how much money we'll be receiving in hardship checks. What I'm hearing is we have \$50 million to \$300 million that we will be able to savage to give out as hardship. If it's only \$50 million, we would be receiving only \$13-\$25 per person and if it's that low the Council would have to make a decision on who will be receiving money for example; elders only, children, veterans or disabled individuals. If the money turns out to be higher than everybody would be eligible for about \$1000 each. Until we hear from the controller, we won't know what is available for hardship. The President did assure us the check will be going out in March 2026.

Laris Manuelito - I have a regional project; how do I get ARPA funds?

Council Delegate Notah – All the ARPA funds are accounted for and will be spent.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I've heard the NN is not paying their bills. I spoke with an architect and he said he has not been paid since last year April. Where is this stemming from and how is this happening? I believe this is coming down to the chapter level because every time we write a check to a vendor or grocery store, our checks are being declined.

Council Delegate Notah – NN not paying their bills is a long-time process and all the new Council Delegates came aboard they knew this has to be priority. This occurs when money is being shuffled around and the regulations that were developed way back when. The regulation put in place has a list and all these individuals had to sign off on it and this created a bottle neck and over time all the backlog occurred. We came into office the courts were behind over 24,000 cases and again it's the same process. It's just the inefficiency of the Nation and it's really difficult to get people to do their jobs and be accountable. I'm going to say something you might not like hearing, but I've learned as Navajos we are not accountable for our jobs meaning staff.

Laris Manuelito – The US Treasury sent down money to economic development. They split it up in 3 and they haven't even spent the 1st and now they are in the 2nd one. SCBI, I applied with Change Labs and NM Finance Authority and none of the banks want to work with them because of how NN is. They want to do sovereign immunity and the bank trust but the banks are saying no. They want to know when it's going to be paid back from me. And those SCBI are suppose to be 49%-89% guaranteed from Change Labs or NM Finance Authority. Secondly, number 2 of the 5-year plan and when I asked about that, they told me to complain to Brenda Jesuse. It took me 4 years to get the land withdrawn but with a private sector I could have already had it done in less than a year.

Council Delegate Notah – I know we worked hard to get you on the number 2 list of the 5-year plan. I've been requesting information from Mr. Francisco about your project but I never received a response from him. Maybe I can talk with the 2 Council Delegates from NM, like Mr. Simpson and Mr. Ricky Nez who are on the RDC committee. You can also write up a complaint and it would be easier for me to carry it into that committee. Sent a copy to LDA Moore as well.

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

XII. AJOURNMENT: 1:00pm

Submitted by



Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter **February 27, 2026**

cc: Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, President

Ms. Lee Rodgers, Vice-President

Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer

Ms. Maria Allison, CSC