



AUG 17 AM 7:59

August 03, 2026 10:00 AM

TOHATCHI PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

TELECONFERENCE: 1-219-803-8769 PIN# 160 108 500#

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

- I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:25AM
- II. ROLL CALL: President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, Grazing Officer Gerald Moore, CLUPC Member: Priscilla Duncan, Red Willow Farm Broad member: Geneva Begay and Sam Natonabah Jr.
- III. INVOCATION: Secretary/Treasurer Crawford
- IV. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA
- V. COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:
 1. Hilda Sneezy –
 2. Rudy Anaya – Made a request on behalf of Cody Jansen – Anaya to be added to the Chapter meeting agenda on August 19th to cover Cody's background and experience. I'll share what she brings to the table and what she can do to help with services and the community needs of Tohatchi.
 3. Catrina Alberts - has made a request to be added to the agenda to present her resolution to the community via email on her research.

REPORTS:

*Council Delegate Report/LDA:

1. Sonny Moore – Not in attendance

*Community Service Coordinator/Officials' Reports:

1. Auditor's Next Review – Maria states next review will be in February 2027.

President Bitsilly – We met with the auditors again in May and went over the 12 findings and our corrective action plan. We were told we will be under continued evaluation for another 6 months and we'll have another meeting with the auditors in February of 2027.
2. Chapter Budget for Year 2027 – Maria states the 2027 budget amount has not been received as of yet.

President Bitsilly – The Budget & Finance Committee are having public hearings and are now finalize their last reports after hearing from the different department's budgets. We have already heard from the Community Development which we fall under and I believe their report has been accepted. All these budget reports will be reviewed again during the fall council session. The ASC (Administrative Service Center) will be hosting a training for the administration including the officials which will cover our expenditure plans.
3. ARPA/RRR Chapter Expenditure Plan –

President Bitsilly – We've been meetings with the FRF office discussing our expenditure plan. As you remember, each chapter was allocated \$1.7 million which is still pending in reserve (RRR Fund). This funding is already assigned to pending projects here for the chapter, for example; bathroom addition, power line extension, house wiring, septic system, water line, and cemetery. These are the projects we requested for back in 2021. We have community members listed who have requested and applied for assistance within these categories. We are hoping these projects will get off the ground in 2027 so we can expend the allocated funds. Our Council Delegate Notah has been involved and should be involved through this expenditure. We'll finish these projects as best as we can and follow through with them.

Vice President Rodgers – Maria has received price quotes for the cemetery fencing. We plan to replace the

current fence with something sturdier and nicer than what is there now. We will continue with and work on the rest of the pending projects that President Bitsilly mentioned.

Lucinda Barney – A couple of months back there were questions on private cemeteries and I believe the CSC was collecting names to see if there could be a cost match on the land withdrawal and GPS. I had asked her to put us on the list along with my relatives who live in the area.

Grazing Officer Moore – that particular program is under the Historical Preservation Office. They are in charge of identifying family burial cost. You would need to get a packet from Land Department for a land withdrawal of the existing burial plots. I will then go out to the plots and get the coordinates using GPS; there is a checklist you can use for the land withdrawal which is a ½ acre to an acre.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – As far as cost-sharing, I don't believe we talked about doing a cost-sharing on the land withdrawal for private cemeteries. We do have a policy for cemetery burial and the staff would be more than happy to share with you.

Grazing Officer Moore – So far, we only have two families who have gone through the process of land withdrawal for private cemeteries in our community. They came before the community during a chapter meeting with a resolution requesting for the land withdrawal. Once the land withdrawal resolution is voted on, it goes back to Land Department along with the GPS coordinates and I believe a survey is completed afterwards to complete the land withdrawal process.

4. Kitchen Repair update –

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – As far as trying to get our kitchen repaired, the cost quoted was very expensive, I believe it's will cost the chapter \$15,000 to replace a grease pipe which is located underneath the cement floor of the kitchen. The chapter did bid this project out and we only received one response from a company in Chinle, AZ. They gave the quote of \$15,000 and we decided to sole source the project to them. I believe the project is going through the 164 process in Window Rock currently.

5. Speedway Gas Fuel Purchasing was Re-established –

President Bitsilly – Speedway had put a stop to the Chapter's checks for the purchases of fuel. It's been a while since we have been able to write checks to Speedway to purchase gas for our heavy equipment and vehicle. To my understanding it was due to ownership change overs. We've been working with the Economic Development regarding this matter because they oversee businesses on the Navajo Nation. As of last week the chapter received word that Speedway will be accepting the chapter checks once again for fuel purchases.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I was wondering about the Navajo Petroleum Gas station, what happen to their plans to re-open the gas station. The gentleman who came to our chapter said the gas station would be open in a few weeks. What happen to the plans to re-open?

President Bitsilly – I had made a trip to the Department of Economic

Development and I inquiry about the status of the gas station. Mr. Francisco inform me that their business site lease has expired and they are currently working on getting a business to fill the vacant gas station.

Rudy Anaya – If the lease has expired does that mean the chapter now has a seat at the table in terms of creating a new lease. If that's the case, is there potential for an opportunity for the chapter to somehow tap into the tax payer dollars that will be coming through either with a vendor agreement with Navajo Petroleum?

President Bitsilly – Yes and no, yes, we would have a seat at the table with Economic Development because they are the ones who are monitoring that process. They will be the ones who will be making that decision in regards to what they want to do with the building because it does belong to the Navajo Nation. We did make our recommendation as to what we wanted to see which is another gas station.

Rudy Anaya – So if you are LGA certified there is that opportunity to collect tax revenue but before LGA

certification there is potential to enter into a vendor agreement. We have a lot of community members are artisan who do silversmithing work and sell in Gallup. So, I'm wondering if Tohatchi chapter can enter into a vendor agreement with Speedway and have Speedway sell their jewelry and products.

Laris Manuelito – Where is the audit at and how close are we to closing out because the audit that was done that cause the chapter to go into a CAP that audit also could have been used to go into LGA certification. I was mentioned a couple of times why the audit not completed and then something about gift cards came up which I thought was resolved. There was \$9000 which had to be recouped and the people who were responsible being held accountable. Now, it sounds like you have to start all over again.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – The auditors who came in were a male and female. The male auditor asked for all sort of documentation they wanted to take back to Window Rock to review. Maria and her staff providing all the documentation that was requested. Remember, there were 12 findings and out of the 12 only 3 of the corrective action was approved. The majority of the findings were the lack of documentation or not following through on processes. So, Maria and her staff are aware of the result from the auditor's review. They will be working on making corrections to their processes and the operation of the chapter. The auditors stated they will be returning in another 6 months to see if corrections and processes have improved. The next review date with the auditors is in February 2027.

Vice President Rodgers – Yes, we did not do well on the auditor's review of our chapter operations. Of course the gift cards were brought up again and I made an issue about why the gift cards were still on the auditor's review. This thing with the gift cards happened many years ago before our time as chapter officials. Not only that, the people who were involved with assisting the chapter to reconcile the matter of the gift cards have move on. I guess what we can do is to see if the microfiche documents are still available and at that time Tohatchi chapter was under the Crownpoint ASC office not Ft. Defiance. If that office can't product documents regarding the gift cards, I asked the auditors just to close it. The other problem we are having is getting new people to work as PEP. The chapter is advertising the vacancies through the radio stations and newspaper, but we are still getting the same people coming to apply for the PEP positions. I'm asking the community now to assist us in getting our community members to apply for these positions. Come to the chapter and take a picture of the announcement for these positions and then post it on Facebook. We are giving you that authority to help us get the word out that we need new people for these positions. The chapter is doing their best to get the announcement of these vacant positions out there in the community.

Laris Manuelito – Called Point of Order. She asked that VP Rodgers finish her comment on the PEP job announcements.

Vice President Rodgers – So, the audit will require more documentation and using correct processes by the chapter staff. It seems like the main issue is the gift cards which we had no control over, but I do have faith in the administrative staff to get things in order by documenting and following processes.

Grazing Officer Moore – What I'm hearing is that they want to see some type of affirmative action. All efforts are being made to advertise the vacancies and that's all that is required. If we can have it on Facebook, I believe we've covered all aspects of announcing the PEP vacancies. We have proof right there.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I believe at one point we had discussed making the PEP positions permanent so we won't be having this issue. Again, we haven't really discussed this in detail.

Laris Manuelito – I listened to certain delegates, sitting delegates who have said it's up to the chapter when things get started. How can we recommend or start a "call to action," to get this moving? Maybe a resolution from the chapter stating we want to make these PEP positions permanent. I think the officials need to act on the recommendations being made because it's always stonewalled. We want to least have it moved to the forefront and maybe continue the discussion with the other chapters in District 14.

Responding to the audit, I was unfortunately there when all this came about on the gift cards. I saw 1st hand all the different hands that were dipping into the chapter funds. I do agree with the Vice President that it should be closed, the reconciliation has happened and again unfortunately the chapter lost over \$9,000 in housing assistance. I believe if we don't bring this to light, people will continue to think it's easy to steal money from the chapter. They are actually stealing from our elders and veterans and everybody in our community. These people who steal money are not being held accountable or they will only get a slap on the hand at the most. They are public hearing happening and people are asking Law & Order committee to start drafting legislation to hold people accountable. The people want more than "you can pay it back within 5 years or you can't run for office again."

Priscilla Duncan – I like to know why or is in the policy or regulations of the Navajo Nation that we wait 6 months; for instance; we are going to wait until February 2027 which is when the auditors will be coming back for another review. In the meantime, what are we doing? Are we working on those findings to make corrections or are we going to wait until the last month, February to try to make corrections. It sounds like different auditors are being sent out here to do the audit and of course they have their own individual opinion on how an audit should be conducted. This does not seem fair and here we are trying to get certified for the past 10 years.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Auditors will give you 6 months to implement the changes they reviewed with us. I believe the staff can implement these changes as soon as possible and make it a practice for daily usage. For instance; issues with timecards like clocking in and out, timesheets and calculating hours worked, and other simple things that we can improve on by February. I believe our policies would be an issue but we actually did a good job with our policies and come February, I hope we will have a better outcome.

6. Rural Addressing Signs & Installation training

President Bitsilly – The work of the subcontractor and SDR are just about completed and they have given us final approval to move forward with the rural addressing. We did get the materials needed to put up the signs and posts. We received two deliveries from them and CLUPC has been came in to the chapter volunteering their time to put the numbers on the placard that were provided. I believe we've completed about a third of the numbers that need to go up. So, we have started the initial process and now we have scheduled a meeting to discuss the installation of the post and numbers this Friday. Jasper with SDR is coming to the meeting. At last month's meeting we had asked for volunteers to assist with installation and we have a couple of videos that was provided to us on the installation process. I want to thank the summer students and students from workforce help assisted me with the rural addressing.

7. Monsoon Rains & Power Outages –

President Bitsilly – Just to mention the water outage which occurred in Twin Lakes, Mexican Springs, Coyote Canyon, and Tohatchi. The water outage and some areas with low water pressure was due to a water break in the community. A public announcement was made by NTUA dated August 3rd states NTUA is working on the breaks and it will take time to put water back into the storage tanks. According to NTUA, severe rain with lightning will cause the transformers, gridlines, and powerlines to go out. These transformers are outdated and need to be upgraded. This the reason why a lot of the outages are occurring.

Information on El Nino – El Nino is officially back with its irregular weather patterns. In the U.S. we can expect to see the strongest effects from El Nino in the late fall and winter, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).

Laris Manuelito – Monsoon is super El Nino season meaning a lot more monsoon rains and a heavy weather. If we know this preparation is key, not filling sand bags at the last minute. Also, some of our veterans' homes in District 14 need roof repairs from rain and wind damage. I've asked Delegate Notah to ask OPVP to declare a state of emergency. I know we like to be reactive but, in this case, we need to be

proactive. Maybe a resolution from our chapter requesting a declaration of emergency. With the water outages over the weekend, we could have purchase water for the families that needed water with the emergency funding and have some kind of backup plan instead of waiting for W/R to do something. The other concern is our water system, our fire suppression system needed to be created and or updated. With the new 1st Responders facility ready to be constructed we need all the fire hydrates in Tohatchi in working order and ready to be used in case of a fire in our community. We also need our water pipes upgraded to avoid breakage but it's not easy to have the pipes upgraded.

Natalie Aguilar – Why can't the chapter setup a Facebook account to post all their information? For instance; posting the job announcement for PEP workers. The Senior Center could use the Facebook account to their benefit as well. Getting information on all our elders who live in our community.

Vice President Rodgers – About 5 years ago, I found a Facebook account for Tohatchi Chapter, but I found out it wasn't run by Tohatchi Chapter instead by someone living out in Steamboat. Then a couple of years ago, I asked the same question, why doesn't Tohatchi Chapter have a Facebook account? The CSC, said the account would require a lot of time to manage which she could not afford. Title 26 specifically states we as Chapter officials cannot tell the chapter administration what to do. So with that in mind, the Chapter does have a website which they try to update fluently. I believe it's just a matter of finding someone who is willing to take it over. I'm willing to try to manage a Facebook account for the chapter.

Grazing Officer Moore – If Lee is willing take over, just know it takes time to maintain a Facebook account. I did try to post my stuff on Facebook previously and it does take time.

Carol Tom – I wanted to bring to your attention a new Emergency Management resolution which is dated July 24th and expires October 31st. The resolution identifies several areas under emergency management band the Chapter should have a list of problematic areas in our community, for example; earthen dams, waterline/flows, and where you see overflows on the roads. These should be discussed during Planning meetings and all I hear are updates. These topics should be discussed in depth with possible resolution and I don't see the CSC (Staff) here in our Planning meetings. I get the impression that maybe the officials and staff are not getting along. Also, we should be looking to be prepared for rain, flooding, and winter. We have Navajo vendors who sell wood from our mountain, but we rather purchase from T&R. I think the resolution I mentioned should be copied and given to everybody. I suggested before that we could do some letter writing to try to tap into funds for our community. Our representatives should be advocating on our behalf but it seems like we are making trips to W/R ourselves to request for assistance. We vote for these individuals during election but after they get voted in, we don't see them around. We need everybody to get involve to make the much-needed changes for our community.

As far as the PEP positions, it has always been a sensitive area. No matter who you select to work the community is not satisfied with the selection. They'll complain about the same individuals working as PEP, but they never stop by the chapter to apply for the position. It is usually a parent who will come in to complain that their son/daughter has not been selected to work.

Grazing Officer Moore – The other resolution is CEM26-004, resolution of the NN commission on emergency management. A declaration of emergency due to the severe monsoon storms, flash flooding, and road infrastructure damages across Navajo.

Laris Manuelito – With that said with a resolution in place, your ability to access the funds is there. Therefore developing a plan now to help community members who have road issues, water accessibility, sandbag filling. The veteran who needs a new roof in Twin Lakes can get his roof repaired. How can we as a chapter get assistance from this funding?

President Bitsilly – We've been trying to get all of District 14 together and go over the emergency response plan which has not been updated since 2008. Tohatchi Chapter does have an emergency response

plan and if we are going to declare an emergency, I think we need to work with the Office of Emergency Management to see what their guidelines are and how we can tap into the funding. The template we used to draft our emergency response plan was sent by DOJ, Mr. Roderick Begay. If you want a copy of the emergency plan you can ask the chapter staff for a copy.

Vice President Rodgers – The emergency response plan was drafted last year and it came before the community for them to approve. We plan to re-visit the policy including all our other policies to update them. This was an audit requirement and policies and also needed the Department of Justice's approval. You are welcome to ask for a copy of the emergency plan.

Rudy Anaya – How can a community member get a copy of the chapter's emergency response plan and how can community members propose provisions to the propose emergency response plan and is there a process for gather it and putting into the draft and approving it?

President Bitsilly – Amendments can be made to the emergency response plan.

Laris Manuelito – I believe the resolution for the emergency response plan was presented to the community but we did not have an input and I felt it was being transparent with the community. I think the emergency response plan needs to be put back on the agenda for review and community input as soon as possible. The NN would not allow us to use the District 14 emergency response plan, but I think that we should have that option as well. Also, should we have separate meeting to review the plan?

Grazing Officer Moore – During that time, there was another resolution that was brought up requesting that NN Council and the President to approve the allocation of \$5 million to establish an emergency preparedness and responds reserve under the commission on emergency management business unit. Their next meeting is on August 11th and location to be determined.

Carol Tom – Instead of waiting to find out what to do, read the resolution or give us copies of the resolution and we can all read it together and see what the chapter needs. We need to work on this as soon as we can and not put it off.

Vice President Rodgers – so when we broadcast that we will be working on our policies it's usually just the four of us sitting with administration staff. We do let the community know when a meeting is planned, but we end up doing it ourselves. Then we bring it to the table and the community will ask why we didn't get community input. But we will continue to invite the community to our meetings.

8. Beacon Light near High School update –

President Bitsilly – The beacon light has been an issue for quite some time now and I don't see the school or county doing anything about it.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I attended a meeting in Santa Fe at the New Mexico Department of Transportation with Council Delegate Notah. We met with several people including the Acting Cabinet Secretary of Transportation, Mr. David Quintana. We covered issues that were brought to their attention in our community. Some of the projects they are working on are cutting into the hill at the intersection by the Post Office. As we are all aware, when you come down Chooshgai road and you get to the intersection, it is difficult to see the on coming traffic. This is dangerous for all vehicles and school buses who utilize that road to school. I understand assessments were completed and the issue is the electrical lines and they asked that we reach out to NTUA and have them drop the lines while they dig into the hill.

The beacon light which has been down by the high school in the right-of-way will be repaired by the NM Transportation and they even talked about putting another beacon light on the opposite side of 491. Mr. Quintana was very receptive to our request. We also talked about the cattleguards, and who is really responsible for the maintenance of these. We had previously asked the Buffalo Springs Highway Department to clean out these cattleguards, but they refused. They said that responsibility lies with the people who live in the area and are using the cattleguards. Mr. Quintana said "no", it's our job to clean out

the cattleguards. As far as the highway lighting, Mr. Quintana said he and his staff will be looking for funding opportunities that they can apply for like grant money. We also discussed the turnouts and the issues with them. Mr. Quintana said those will be corrected as well. The State has been coming out to do assessment in the different areas and Lisa Vega who is a construction engineer is aware of all these projects. She would be the contact person for the State. I felt we had a very successful meaning with Mr. Quintana and his staff and I believe Council Delegate Notah was pleased as well.

Carol Tom – We met with the planner and supervisor of NN Transportation Department last Wednesday and they mentioned that the Chapter does not have a plan or design for the Highway lighting. According to NNDOT, the rights-of-way and clearances have not been obtained. Yet, we've been hearing that all we are needing is the funding to get the construction off the ground. Another question is who is going to pay for the light bill when it gets installed. NNDOT says they will not be paying for it because they don't have the funds. Does the chapter have the funds to pay for the light bill, I don't think so and who will be responsible for repairs to the lighting? Maybe if we start saving money now the chapter will have money for the light bill and maintenance. I learned that Naschitti chapter pays for their highway lighting light bill.

9. Eastflat road 9653 update

Carol Tom – I'm sure you are all tired of hearing about the eastflat road (9653), but we bring it up to keep reminding you of the repairs that is needed. We would like to ask the Chapter to request funding from the State for engineering, right-of-way, and planning to improve and prevent washout of the 9653 Eastflat Road. We don't expect it to be paved, but I am asking for a resolution from our chapter so community can vote on this project. I like to see a resolution by the next chapter meeting.

Vice President Rodgers – My understanding on the highway lighting is the assessments have been completed and now we are waiting on plan and design funding. Once we get funding for the plan and design the rights-of-way and all the required clearances will be taken care of. The cost of the plan and design is estimated at \$3 million.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – During our meeting with NM State Transportation, there were assessments done and the plans that they have will be provided to us upon request. Another thing I want to mention is the asphalt milling. Is the community still interested in the millings? If so, I can make a request to the State.

President Bitsilly – We did bring up a lot of these issues and concerns to Mr. Tom Platero including 9653 Eastflat road. Shelia Clyde and staff did an assessment of 9653 eastflat road including the culvert issue. They were discussing the funding, personnel, and equipment. They also mentioned doing an upstream survey to find where the water is coming from and how they can control or defer the flow of the water. The Navajo Nation is responsible for 9653 eastflat road, not the BIA. The chapter is waiting on Mr. Platero and staff's response. We will continue to follow up with them. As far as funding for the 491-highway lighting, we have \$3 million allocated to Tohatchi and Twin Lakes for this project. We asked for plan and design funding and we've applied to the State of NM. The RSA (Road Safety Audit) have been completed.

Carol Tom – I want to ask about the \$2.5 which was added to that by resolution and secondly, I want to ask Gerald how many earthen dams he has identified? And how and when do we expect some work to be done on them?

Grazing Officer Moore – We have not done a road trip but we are planning one soon. Now is a good time to do it since the water/ponds are there and we can identify which ones are damages and we can go from there. We'll get the coordinates and turn them into Water Resource Office.

Laris Manuelito – On the ICIP projects, what do we have listed as priority?

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – 1st Responders and highway lighting

Laris Manuelito – Is the Red Willow Farm solar project listed too? And what about the Senior Center?

Vice President Rodgers – Senior Center is totally separate project, not on ICIP. There is funding that has already been allocated to them from the State of NM in the amount of \$150,000. Then a new allocation was made from the Shihasin just last year. We've sent emails to the director for Senior Centers letting them know we need assistance with our HVAC as soon as possible.

10. Status of the Rehab of Earthen dams -

***Grazing Officer's Report:**

Report provided by Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Tohatchi Chapter hosted the Ft. Defiance Agency Grazing meeting last month on July 15th. Also, the new world screwworm has been isolated in Texas and has not moved north. There has been some cattle movement across the US and Mexican border at Douglas, Arizona. The next grazing committee meeting will be on August 5th at Mexican Springs chapter @ 9am.

Priscilla Duncan – Can we get an update on the bike trail?

Vice President Rodgers – The contract was signed last week and move ahead with the plan and design. We still have to worry about the construction of the bike trail. Hopefully, it will be much easier than trying to get the project off the ground.

***Red Willow Farm Report:**

Geneva Begay – I want to talk about the community garden beds right outside the chapter. It's a beautiful presentation as you walk into the chapter. The headstart students planted on April 8th after we gave them a seeding presentation. On May 12th, the elders planted in the 2nd garden bed. Some of our traditional teachings say if you were a burn victim, you could have received help from a person who is a fire dancer by having them spit on your burn. In that case, this person should not go into a garden because it will cause the plants not to grow. The headstart students were given seeds to take home to plant their garden. The garden beds showcase what you can do at home by starting a garden. I understand the chapter wants to have the garden beds removed so they can put another picnic table there. But we say "no", don't remove our vegetable beds. It is there for a purpose of agricultural education, demonstration, and encourage planting and farming. Each chapter in District 14 has their own garden beds and their chapter is responsible for watering the garden. I would like to get the community's input on the garden beds.

We also had a soil testing demonstration and we are understanding soil health, seeding, and planting. We did windbreaker demo as well down at Red Willow Farm. Ed Harvey also came out to do a presentation on conservation plan. We should be aware that a conservation plan is required now along with your tally count. Ed Harvey uses google map to identify areas and he could probably assist with pinpointing the water flow which flows out to 9653 road. This way we can capture the water at Red Willow Farm and prevent it from running out to 9653 road.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I would recommend putting up a greenhouse here at the chapter using our Unhealthy Food Tax funding. We could hookup a rain dripline or soaker hose with a timer to water the garden beds.

Geneva Begay – There is free water behind the chapter which we can tap into.

Laris Manuelito – I believe a resolution to request for funding from the Unhealthy Food Tax to cover the expenses for the mention items. Also, to teach and educate kids that not all insects are bad and they serve a propose. Part of our business plan to local source from farms, not just RWF but other farmers as well. We are putting together an organization to get the farmer started and if they want to commercial farm and get USDA to certified their produce as organic. We put that together and we put in a grant and if it goes through in September, we will start working with farmers across Navajo Nation. To get the farmers interested is the hard part, but it could be a source of income for the farmer.

Natalie Aguilar – I think the Senior Center could use a garden bed as well. It would be a good source of organic vegetables, education, and traditional demonstrations.

***CLUPC Report:**

Priscilla Duncan – I'm happy to inform you that the CLUPC Manuel I've been talking about is almost completed. Our secretary, Delphine has been busy setting up the Manuel with Natasha James' help. Delphine was concerned that the Manuel had increased in the number of pages, but Natasha said not to

worry about the number of pages. She has invited Natasha James back to our meeting which is scheduled for Monday, August 24th and that is when we will be finalizing the Manuel and copies will be made. The Manuel will then move forward to W/R for review. I'm happy and exciting to see the final draft of the Manuel.

***Tohatchi Veteran's Report:**

Laris Manuelito (Vice Commander) – Ft. Defiance Agency Council Veteran's meeting that was held here was successful. There were a couple of resolutions that were passed by the Council during the spring session. One was the no confidence in the Veterans Director, Mrs. Bobbie Baldwin which resulted in her last day being August 28th. So, we will not have a director until an interim is appointed. The reason why she was voted as "no confidence" was because of her lack of transparency. Secondly, we were successful in moving our trust fund percentages around to accommodate housing. Historically, we would get 2% hardship and 2% housing, now we moved it to 3% hardship and 1% housing, but the 1% has been put into its own individual trust fund. So, if we were to get allocated \$5 million every year, and we receive \$6 million, one million will be put back into the trust fund to improve the interest for the following year and \$5million will stay meaning \$5 million will not be going back at the end of the fiscal year because it will begin to build upon itself. The good thing about the 3% increases hardship, energy, and here at the chapter level we had a 1000 more veterans sign up which means we can assist more veterans. At the next veterans meeting which is Friday, August 7th I would like to introduce at the veteran's meeting a resolution about a topic which is already being discussed however it's become very apparent that's its important because recently the Department of Public Safety through the Budget & Finance hearing allocated \$33,000.00 OPVP thinking it's going to be for advertisement of the Public Safety but they turn around and used it for OPVP campaign funds. So, to keep this from happening we are working on a resolution and hopefully supported by Tohatchi chapter to Ft. Defiance Agency Council and upward where they cannot access Veteran funds by any means. If it's document in black and white with accountability attached to it would restrict them from accessing the funds.

Another subject is housing, that \$5 million for housing proves a very important factor which will provide not only housing, but emergency housing for veterans. If this was in place we could have helped the veterans and surviving spouses with their roofing issues. But the housing policy has not been updated since 2008. At the Navajo Nation Health, Education, and Human Service Committee (HEHSC) meeting they asked the Housing Director what is the difference between home improvement and renovation. His response was fixing or installing doors and if it's bigger than that it becomes a renovation but there is no actual policy that speaks to renovation. So updating the policies and making our recommendation from Tohatchi Veterans Organization and making sure the new policies are in line with what the veterans need today. We do have a clear vision of what we want for our veterans.

The District 14 2nd Annual Stand Down held at Coyote Canyon was a success. If you had filed a claim with the veteran's administration, no matter how far back, we have attorneys now and there are also resources out there who can assist you. They can help you with a letter of intent stating you are going to start working on your claim. Claims can now include chemical related diagnoses. Also, there is the Elizabeth Dole foundation for caregivers and they help with resources and funding. I'll more information at the veteran's meeting.

May Fern Dennison – For caregivers, does it have to be service connected before they can get services?

Laris Manuelito – If you are a caregiver for a veteran you qualify.

Priscilla Duncan – Are services provided in the state of Arizona as well?

Laris Manuelito – The Elizabeth Dole programs is a national foundation.

Natalie Aguilar – So does a surviving spouse get the same benefits?

Laris Manuelito – Yes

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I think it's awesome that the Veterans Organization is making housing a priority for our veterans. I think one of the drawbacks would be homesite leases for these individuals. Homesite leases have always been an issue for our Dine people.

Laris Manuelito – One of the things we are doing is drafting a resolution through the Ft. Defiance Veterans Council to make the infrastructure which is needed for a new home; for example, water and septic

system a priority. If a veteran wants a hogan design home that should be able to get a hogan and I believe that will be added to the policy, however; there was a time when the veteran's received \$55 million for housing which was handle very poorly all the way down to the contractors.

I invite everybody to our veteran meetings including spouses and surviving spouses. You can learn a lot at the meetings.

***Senior Center Report:**

Evangeline Muskett (Supervisor for Tohatchi Senior Center) – The HVAC which was service on May 3rd is slowly giving out. The heat has become unbearable and staff are going sick from the heat. I have reached out to my supervisor and have given her a report on the condition of the Senior Center. She asked me to get 3 quotes on HVAC which on did on the 28th and had them submitted to her. But to this day, I have not heard from her at all. I want to thank President Bitsilly and Vice President Rodgers for advocating on our behalf. In the month of July, I focused on re-enrolling our clients which took most of my time. We were serving breakfast and lunch but as of last Thursday, I had a conference call with my supervisor and she decided to cancel all breakfast and just to serve lunch to our clients until our allocation comes through. The center is open 8:00am – 5:00pm. The elders are welcome to stay but like I mentioned the heat has been unbearable. If I do have elders in the building, I'll try to provide activities for them.

After talking with my supervisor, I explained that the center is running short on food mainly the sides. We have plenty of meat, but no sides.

As far as field trips, four of our seniors took a trip to Durango and it was hosted by Shiprock and Ft. Defiance Agency. The next trip that we are planning is a trip to Chinle fair, but plans are still in the works.

Natalie Aguilar – I'm wondering what the center is doing to bring in elders to participate in the lunch program at the center. What kind of advertisement is the center doing?

Evangeline Muskett – Like I said we are still trying to figure out some stuff at the center, but we will be working on the recommendations that were made. I've been receiving assistance from Twin Lakes and I'm grateful. Our Senior Council with the Center are also doing a good job working with the elders.

Vice President Rodgers – Apparently when you get price quotes for anything, they expire in 30 days in order to meet procurement requirements.

Laris Manuelito – I would like to ask Evangeline to please advocate for a new Senior Center. The request has to come from you. We've been putting band-aides on the building long enough. DALTEC is so low on funding there are times when they are unable to pay stores like T&R and this effect the center. How do we get something like a straight budget to the Senior Centers. Maybe asking the Council Delegate for assistance to get this started.

VI. RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Laris Manuelito** – I would like to make a couple of recommendations for resolutions to address the mining of Bear Ears, Escalante Staircase, and Chaco Canyon. We are opposed to the plans from Washington D. C. to destroy our landmarks. We need to make our voices heard at the National level and it starts her at the local level. Our NN Speaker and Council are not doing anything to address this.
2. **Catrina Alberts'** resolution regarding the research on the different species of frogs in our area and the Chooshgai mountains.
3. **Red Willow Farm** – Requesting resolution to purchase a green house, hoses, and planting tools to setup at the Chapter house.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sam Natonabah – My family obtain a private burial plot down where I live and I want to know what the process is to get the land withdrawn?

President Bitsilly – You will need to work with Grazing Officer Moore who will get the GPS coordinates of the land being withdrawn. You will need to complete the application from the Land Department. I believe it is also on line, if not you can go to the Land Department. Once Gerald gets the coordinates, he will attach it to your application and then you will come to the Planning meeting to request for the land withdrawal and ask

for a resolution to have the community vote on it. When the resolution is voted on, you take that along with your application to the W/R Land Department office. They will have someone come out to survey the land.

Grazing Meeting: August 5th @ 9am, RWFB meeting: August 4th and 11th @ 1pm, Veterans meeting: August 6th @ 10am, and CLUPC meeting: August 18th @ 9am.

IX. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: August 19, 2026 (Regular Chapter Meeting) at 10am.

X. ADJOURNMENT: 1:35pm

Submitted by:



Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter – August 15, 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