



September 08, 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: 10:15AM****II. ROLL CALL: President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, CLUPC Member: Priscilla Duncan and Delphine Bitsilly.****III. INVOCATION: Elvis Bitsilly****IV. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA****V. COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**

1. Phyllis Dawson: McKinley County Election Bureau representative – I'm requesting to be added to the regular chapter meeting on September 23rd. I'll be sharing some information on the upcoming election on November 3, 2026. The polling place will be at Tohatchi Elementary School from 7am-7pm and we will be voting on Federal Offices for US Senator, US Representative: District 1,2,3. Also the State, District & Metropolitan Offices: Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Commissioner of Public Lands, State Representative: Districts 5, 6, 9, 69, Court of Appeals, Public Education Commission District 5, 11th Judicial District Division 2. Also, McKinley County has Magistrate Judge Divisions 1, 2, 3, County Sheriff, County Assessor, County Commissioner District 1, 2, and Probate Judge. If you are unsure of your voting status, you can scan the QR code on the pamphlet to check your registration status. There will be early voting sites: Thoreau, Rio West Mall, Zuni, and Twin Lakes Chapter which starts on October 19th – October 30th from 8am – 5pm, Monday through Friday. Manuelito Chapter House and Crownpoint are also Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm. You can register to vote at the sites.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Is there any information on the Trump Administration blocking our voting sites or mail-in-ballots? It should be a concern for everybody voting.

Phyllis Dawson – No, I have not heard anything on that.

Delphine Dawson – Is the County hiring for poll workers. I would like to work here in our community.

Phyllis Dawson – Yes, you can apply at the county office in Gallup and get on their waiting list. You have to be 18 years old or older. If there is a vacancy, for example if someone does not show at the polls for work and they will send someone who is on the waiting list to work. You can always request to work in the Tohatchi community or call 505-722-4461.

VI. REPORTS:***Council Delegate Report/LDA:**

President Bitsilly – Budget & Finance is meeting for the next two days on the Comprehensive Budget for 2027. They met with NABI last week, and NABI approve the budget with some amends and now it's at Council. The deadline to complete the budget is September 11th. If the deadline is not met, they will have to do a CR (Continuing Resolution).

1. Sonny Moore – I would like to mention toward the end of my term as president, we did draft resolutions to address the earthen dams and right-of-way for 9653 which I can share with you. At the time, BIA said we are only responsible for the actual road and that's it. BIA has been claiming the 9653 road belongs to them and they are responsibility for just the road itself. I don't know which will be more difficult to do,

relinquishing the road back to the Navajo Nation or obtaining a right-of-way from BIA. Naschitti has questions on their roads as well so I'm trying to setup a meeting with Mike Halona to get some questions answered. We also include 9653 to see how we can get a right-of-way but we were informed it would be very costly. As far as the earthen dams, I can try to get maps from Najam H. Tariq with NTUA. The maps would list all the wells, windmills, and earthen dam's assessments. All the earthen dams being mentioned here, I believe is already on this map. BIA has been claiming the 9653 road belongs to them and they are responsibility for just the road itself. I don't know why Tohatchi Chapter did not take advantage of Tariq's services like the other chapters in District 14 did. I don't know if there is still funding available from the original allocation. Tariq is willing to work with our chapter; we just need to amend the resolutions that were drafted in the past. Other thing that was brought up was the 15-mile radius, now it's at 30 miles. I want to end my report my expressing my thoughts on Gallup's request for water for their proposed Data Centers. Do not give them access to our water for their Data Centers. The water is there for agricultural purposes and can be dedicated to the farms.

Priscilla Duncan – is requesting assistance from LDA Moore with the water and utility hookup for Tommy Badonie new home. He received his home back in February of 2026 but he is still waiting on water and utility. The meter has been put up and a trench was dug up to the house. Apparently, NTUA hired contractors to do some of the work so there are two groups, one NTUA and other is the contractors but they don't seem to be sharing information. One group will come out to do assessments while another group will come out to do another assessment when they could be sharing information to cut down on time and repetitive work by employees. I like to know when the families who received homes will get their water and utilities because winter is just right around the corner.

LDA Moore - You'll have to work with the CSC, Maria to get the people from NTUA together and setup a meeting to get these families utility and water hookup. That is how Naschitti handle their housing project.

Carol Tom – I agree with what was mention about NTUA, I myself had to go to their office several times and sit and wait to be heard. I know water and utility can be hooked up immediately, if it's considered priority, because I worked with management telling me to process this work order right away, so I know it can be done. I was informed by NTUA that the water portion was contractor out and it's going to take 2 months. But Mr. Moore is on the NTUA Board and he needs to tell Mr. Hass, General Manager that the families here who received homes need their utility and water hooked up. NTUA's customer service is really bad.

Carol Tom – Make sure we pulled those resolutions that Mr. Moore just mentioned and we amend/update them for our next meeting.

***Community Service Coordinator/Officials' Reports:**

1. Fuel Gas Card Policy –

Maria, CSC – Speedway has agreed to accept our Chapter checks again to purchase fuel. So, the only change I made to the fuel policy was the revision made by the attorney. While the auditors were here, they also suggested to use just the one card instead of two. I had a gas card to purchase fuel for the heavy equipment and another card to purchase fuel for the chapter vehicle. Now, we are using one card to purchase fuel for both the heavy equipment and the chapter vehicle which makes it so much easier to keep track of the fuel purchases. The chapter will be purchasing \$1000 of fuel per month and checks will be written directly to Speedway Store. This policy will be submitted to DOJ for their approval and if approved it will be on the regular chapter meeting again on September 23rd.

2. Housing Discretionary Policy –

Maria, CSC – The change that was made to the Housing Discretionary policy was adding in “septic cleaning” under type of assistance, category E. Septic cleaning is now covered under Housing Discretionary and it states: For Community Member who require a septic tank cleaning with a cost share

of \$100.00. Chapter will work with vendors in obtaining 3 price quotes and schedule a date with the community member as to when the service will be provided. The service will be available every (2) years after the last septic cleaning.

The septic cleaning was originally provided to 25 community members each year using Fund 23, but Navajo Nation said no more so the chapter has not provided septic cleaning services for the past 2 years. Now, Navajo Nation says the chapter can provide septic cleaning services again using the Housing Discretionary funds. The person requesting for the service can come in and complete an application and I would obtain the 3 price quotes. The lowest price quote from a vendor is the price we will be going with and the person requesting would have to pay the cost of \$100.

Second amendment was under “Eligibility #C” which now states: A copy of a legal Homesite Lease of applicant or a letter from Grazing Officer stating the applicant already has an existing home on site. The applicant shall be working on obtaining their homesite lease from Navajo Nation Land Department.

I’m aware a lot of our elders don’t have homesite leases and when they need assistance with their home it makes it difficult without a legal homesite lease because NTUA requires a homesite lease to do any work to the home. So, these were the only 2 amendments that was added to the Housing Discretionary policy. These amendments will be sent to DOJ to approve and it will be on the chapter meeting agenda later this month.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – With the ARPA funds, it was stated by Mr. Mike Halona if a house already exist on the homesite and the family is applying for a homesite lease, they are not required to have an archeological clearance done because the land has already been disturbed. Is this still the rule or policy?

Maria, CSC – The last update I received was if there is already an existing home on the homesite the applicant will not need a survey. Grazing Officer Moore will get the GPS coordinates and the approval from the person who owns the grazing permit and using the grazing area where the home is located.

3. **Cemetery Policy** – What was amended with the cemetery policy is under “#VI-Chapter Burial Plot Fees and Services” number 6 now states: Location of the burial site will be determined by the Chapter Administration. Tohatchi Chapter will be placing the decedent in order and kept documented. There will be no request to place their loved one in another area. So far, we have not encountered any issues with this practice. This policy will also be submitted to DOJ for review and approval.

Delphine Bitsilly – Does the policy say anything about the Tohatchi cemetery is only for our registered voters and other chapters would have to establish their own cemeteries to accommodate their community members?

Maria, CSC – Yes, our policy does state have this information in our policy.

Priscilla Duncan – Can a person who is a registered voter with Tohatchi chapter but lives outside of the community, let say Ft. Defiance. Can they still apply for Housing Discretionary funds?

Maria, CSC – We had this issue in the past where a registered voter with Tohatchi chapter wanted to apply for housing renovation assistance but the home was in Ft. Defiance where they lived. So, our policy now states the individual requesting for Housing Discretionary assistance has to be living within our community.

Vice President Rodgers – When I hear the word “community” I think of the immediate Tohatchi vicinity. I would like it to be clear with Tohatchi boundary area.

Maria, CSC – The applicant would be required to provide a homesite lease which would determine if they live within the community.

4. **Chapter Budget for Year 2027** –

Maria, CSC – On September 3rd, we received an email from Jaron Charley stating the 2027

Comprehensive Budget has not been finalized and we may be doing a Continuing Resolution (CR) which means we will only be receiving 50% of our funding just like last year. The recommendation was to start working with the 2026 budget as a template, but I can’t work with the budget because nothing is in the Wind System. We will be preparing the 2026 carryovers and the last time a check or any other business transaction will be honored will be on September 25th. September 25th is the absolute last day for business. We will be checking our office and janitorial supplies to make sure we have plenty in stock. Jeannie, AMS will be closing out all our financial records on the September 26th and will be working to balance all of our

accounts. She will be opening the financial records back up on October 5th and I'll be preparing the carryovers. Once this is completed, we will be presenting a resolution for the 2027 budget for Tohatchi chapter at the regular chapter meeting in September. We were asked to encourage our Council Delegates to say "no" to a CR (Continuing Resolution).

5. Emergency Funds Update –

Maria, CSC – On September 2nd we finally received our emergency funding in the amount of \$56,050.00 so that brings our total to \$77,126.21. As far as we know, this is all the emergency funding we will be receiving this fiscal year.

6. NNDOT road repairs in our community –

Maria, CSC – I submitted 11 requests for road repair to NNDOT (Lisa Jim) per their request. This includes the Halona Canyon Road, the Lowe residence, Edison Jones' road, Delaine and Lorraine Manuelito, Antelope Pass Road, Francisco and Yazzie residence next to the high school, Dennison and Holyan Road, Eastflats, and the Sandoval Road by the New Mexico highway Department. Now, Lisa asked me to go out to these areas and do an assessment of the road conditions.

Just for your information, Jeannie AMS, President Bitsilly, and myself attended a 2 and half day budget work session with the ASC office. There was a lot of information shared with us like carryovers, emergency funds, and how our budget is put together by the ASC and AMS. Then a date is set to review the budget with the officials and then with the community to have the budget approved by the chapter. We also covered what the BIM is and how it's used by administration staff.

TIF (Tribal Infrastructure Fund with State): The applications were due on September 1st at 5pm. I was under the impression that the TIF applications were due on October 4th. I was able to request for State funding for 491 Highway Lighting and the Chapter Warehouse with the help of our Secretary/Treasurer.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Normally, TIF portal is not open until February to apply for funding, but the State had some funding leftover and they asked us to apply for funding for our projects again. Council Delegate Notah, Dr. Greyeyes, and LDA Moore worked on the 1st Responders Facility and we are hope to get funded for the construction of the building which is estimated at \$16 million.

Maria, CSC – I received an email from Dr. Delores Greyeyes stating ground breaking for the new 1st Responders facility will be in November 2026.

Priscilla Duncan – What is the status of the bike trail?

Maria, CSC – CPMD is waiting on the Director of the bike company, International Mountain Bike Association to sign off on the contract so it can go to the President's office for him to sign.

7. Rural Addressing Signs & Install Training –

President Bitsilly – This project is on pause because of volunteer laborers were needed to install the signs and the weather was a concern; it has been extremely hot. I think starting with the installation of the house signs will be much easier than installing the road signs. The road signs will require a little more man power. The house signs with numbers are ready to be put up on the homes. You can get onto google maps to locate your home and it will have the street names. The chapter does have all the signs for the homes and road signs. We just need volunteers to put up the signs which we will start to organize again. We will make another announcement as to when we will start this project.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I sent some people over from my area to volunteer to assist with the signs for rural addressing, but I understand the chapter was not being very receptive to the volunteers. Is there another plan that the chapter has to put up these house number (signs)? Or did they finally hire laborers?

President Bitsilly – We were planning to hire temporary workers to do the installation of the signs but the chapter did not have the funds to pay these individuals.

Vice President Rodgers – I would suggest the volunteers put up the number signs on the homes but the road signs, I believe will require more intense labor and that's where the issue of liability came in. Maria is concern with the risk and liability should a volunteer get hurt. But as far as the home number signs, I think the volunteers can handle these installations.

President Bitsilly – We did have a gentleman come for training and he showed us the process of how these signs should be installed. He said he is willing to come back and he has the power tools that will be needed to do the installations. Also, once the installation is completed, the families will be receiving a letter in the mail which will indicate their new address and information on the E911 rural addressing project.

8. Update on Eastflats road 9653 –

President Bitsilly – The Barney family and the chapter is well aware of the situation with the road. We've been coordinating with Navajo Nation Department of Transportation (NNDOT). BIA has phased out and no longer taking on projects. So, they will not be assisting the chapter with the road 9653. I made a trip to the washout of the road and took some pictures and had a discussion with NNDOT. They said they will be doing surveys of the area and the other concern was the earthen dams. I did request for a safety barrier alongside of the road. The biggest issue now is the funding for this project. Council Delegate Notah is fully aware of the funding issue and there is small pots of funds in W/R set aside for District 14 roads by the NN Council.

Caroline Tom – I want to thank everyone who had a hand in getting the 9653 road back up. It is passable now but we had an issue with how the culvert was installed. The culvert was installed at a slant which made the road curve. We went back to NNDOT last week Monday to request that they correct the culvert to sit straight across which they did. The main thing I came for is to request for right-of-way funding for 9653. I'm asking for a resolution to request the State, County, and NNDOT to get funds for the right-of-way. We also asked during the last Planning meeting to add 2.5 miles to have the road repaired. Currently, the road is bladed to the Smith's family residence. Also, we have been requesting for culverts since last year. We have two areas on 9653 road which needs culverts and I would like to see a resolution for this as well. The mountain rain runoffs from Mexican Springs, Twin Lakes, and Coyote Canyon will flow down below Hot Springs and out to the eastflats (9653 road) and cause washouts of the road. I wrote a letter to Mr. Tariq with NTUA to request to look into the flooding of road 9653 from the mountain runoffs and he is requesting a resolution from the chapter.

I also want to mention we as a chapter should be preparing for the upcoming winter months. I hear that we will have a rash winter with lot of snow. We should be purchasing wood now for our community so we don't have to purchase wood from T&R this winter. The chapter can also work with NN forestry because they will have wood available for purchase. So, let's be prepared for winter using the emergency funding.

President Bitsilly – I believe some of what you are requesting is already in place in regards to right-of-way. There are several things that are involved and it's been in discussion for several years now. I'm glad to hear they repaired the 9653 road. Once that's done the rest should fall into place.

Vice President Rodgers – I believe we need to start at the bottom here and formally ask BIA to transfer 9653 back to the Navajo Nation. Then we can ask the Navajo Nation for the right-of-way and from there we'll ask for the dams to be fixed. We need GPS points for all the earthen dams so we have an idea as to where they are at. I know of two up the mountain that have breached.

President Bitsilly – We've been talking with Shaquille Yazzie, Sheila Clyde, and one point Priscilla Lee and the talks are continuing. This is not the only road that needs attention, there are several roads in Tohatchi that priority.

9. EMT Eviction Notice at Chooshgai School –

President Bitsilly – The EMS department from Crownpoint and Window Rock approached the chapter

on August 17th with an eviction notice they received from Chooshgai Community School when the EMS staff are currently housed. The chapter did do a resolution requesting the Chooshgai Community School not evict the EMS staff from their housing. The support resolution was presented at the Chooshgai Community School Board meeting last week on September 1st. We had the EMS supervisors from Window Rock and Crownpoint at the meeting to explain the hardship and the possibility of life-threatening situation this eviction would cause our community and surrounding areas. We asked that the EMS staff get an extension so they will have a place to work out of. In the meantime we have not received a response back from the School Board as of yet. We do have a couple of backup plans in place for the EMS staff, one is at the Catholic Church's boys and girls club building. The church also suggested a 3-bedroom hogan behind the church against the hill which is available as well. The EMS department volunteered to pay for the utilities and do the maintenance on the building but Father Dale would not hear of it. He said they would take care of the cost associated with the buildings at the church. The last thing we want as a community is to have EMS travel out from Crownpoint for emergency calls. As a side note: the chapter also offered their building as a place to work out of from 8am-5pm for the EMS staff.

Carol Tom – I was wondering if Facility Management was notified? The actual school and the Facility Management are two separate entities. The BIE oversees the school and staff, but the Facility Management has its own supervisor. I would recommend you write a letter to Facility Management to see if they can donate one of the houses to the EMS staff.

President Bitsilly – The director of housing management was at the School Board meeting when we made our request to have the EMS staff stay at their current location. So, they are well aware of the EMS situation. DODE is the oversight of the school and facility management and we made sure to include DODE and the Department of Public Safety to support our resolution.

***Red Willow Farm Report:**

Geneva Begay – I want to thank the CSC, the heavy equipment operator and Water Resources who did some work at Red Willow. It took a lot of planning and coordination. We are also working with Soil, Water & Conservation district and the watershed map and Water Resource. We are looking at the watershed for the San Juan. Treva Henio, with USDA submitted a proposal for us to bring everyone to the table. We will be looking at the watershed, farm, and the reservoir. We also want to address the flooding that occurs every time it rains over 4 inches which causes flooding in the area. There is no retention pools to slow the flowing water down. The reservoirs are filled with debris and the eradication project with BIA is still on going. We've heard from the community that when you start to cut down the trees, (Tamarack or Russian olive trees) you get them angry. So, we will take this into consideration. I believe there is a need for another reservoir and we will be looking into finding a location.

On August 18th, the Department of Natural Resources held a meeting at Firerock. They went over the excessive amount of feral horse on Navajo. They eliminated 10,000 horses but the number will soon increase again with all the new born colts. This feral horse entrapment project they anticipated will continue into 2030. We are looking for grants to apply for in September and also working with our youth in our community. We would like to build a hoop house in back of the chapter because of the free water resource. We've talked with NN Headstart and they are willing to assist with the garden project. The Elementary School is also wanting to put up a hoop house to get the kids involved with agriculture and planting. So, they are working on applying for a grant as well. The schools have mention there is absolutely no parent involvement when it comes to the students. We have been giving the students seeds to take home and with the assistance of their parents to plant the seeds and watch it grow. We are also working to plant trees along side of the upcoming Bike Trail. This is the time to plant trees in September and October. We want the kids to experience how to plant trees. There is a watershed meeting on September 10th that I hope the officials will attend.

***CLUPC Report:**

Delphine Bitsilly – I would like to talk about the Land Use Plan Manuel. I know Priscilla has been giving you updates on this project. The last Manuel was updated 2018 and we are currently working to update the

Manuel in 2026 so we can get recertified and approved by RDC. Our goal is to get it certified by December or early part of January 2027. Nastasha James, the Senior Planning with DCD has been assisting us with our Manuel. We had a work session in August and we made some changes and I've been editing, making changes, and updating all the information and to the revision to Natasha this morning. We went over the revision and she said it's good to move forward. So now, we have a scheduled our 1st public hearing on September 17th from 10am – 12pm. I will also have a radio announcement from KGAK inviting our Tohatchi community to the public hearing. I also learned we can have a 2nd public hearing within days of our 1st public hearing which means we don't have to wait another month. We can have 2 public hearings within a week and then it will go to a 60 days comment period which will take us all the way to November. I will be creating a form for people who attends the public hearing to complete and this all has to be added into our Land Use Plan. Natasha will submit the Manuel to DOJ and they will either notify us or Nastasha with a confirmation number. Then it moves on to RDC and we can request RDC to come here to the chapter to present our Land Use Plan Manuel to them. And then we will be recertified for another 5 years. Nastasha also recommended that we include Tohatchi's Emergency Management Plan in the Land Use Plan Manuel. I understand RDC has been asking chapters for their Emergency Management Plan be put into the Manuel along with a supporting resolution. I let her know we are working on a revised resolution but she said it doesn't matter; you can use one from a couple of years ago. So, please spread the word about the public hearing regarding the Land Use Plan Manuel. As a side note: we as CLUPC members decided to keep our "Plan of Operations" the same with no changes. The only thing that was change was the date from October 2026 to September 2027. We also need a supporting resolution for our Plan of Operations.

***Grazing Officer Moore:**

Grazing Officer Moore not available, he is attending another meeting in Ft. Defiance.

***Tohatchi Veteran's Report:**

No representation.

***Senior Center Report:**

No representation.

VII. RESOLUTIONS:

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Maria, CSC: September 16th and the 30th we have our fitness challenge from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. The chapter will be closed on September 26th, 27 and October 3rd because of the close out. The chapter will not be available to rent. CLUPC meeting on September 15th @ 9am, RWFB September 9th @ 10am.

Delphine Bitsilly – Made a request to the community to name the Tohatchi Senior Center after her mother, Dorothy Bitsilly. She states this discussion was held with Governor of NM; Michelle Lujan Grisham and she was supportive of the idea. Delphine is not sure about the process it would need to go through but she just wanted the community to be aware this is what the Bitsilly family will be working on. Of course there has to be support from the community along with a resolution.

IX. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: September 23, 2026 (Regular Chapter Meeting) at 10am.

X. ADJOURNMENT: 12:38pm