OCT 19 AM 8:55

October 05, 2026 10:00 A.M.

PLANNING MEETING MINUTES

TELECONFERENCE: 219-803-8769 PIN:160 108 500#
Video call link: https://meet.google.com/ahs-epsf-aep

I. **MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:30am**
II. **ROLL CALL:** President Elvis Bitsilly, Vice President Lee Rodgers, Secretary/Treasurer Jean Crawford, Geneva Begay with Red Willow Farm, and Priscilla Duncan and Delphine Bitsilly with CLUPC.
III. **INVOCATION: Cody Jansen Anaya**
IV. **REVIEW OF THE AGENDA**
V. **COMMUNITY REQUESTS AND PRESENTERS:**

1. **Delphine Bitsilly-** The Bitsilly family is requesting to have our mother's name (Dorothy Bitsilly) put on the Tohatchi Senior Center building. The family met in February 2026 with Governor Michelle Grisham who considered Dorothy a colleague and friend. They had much respect for one another. Governor Grisham recommended to name the Senior Center building after Dorothy Bitsilly in remembrance of her for her dedication to the elders in Ft. Defiance Agency, the Navajo Nation, and the State of New Mexico. Here are some highlights of Dorothy's work, her contribution, and leadership: Vice President of Ft. Defiance Agency Council on Aging, work on NM Agency Policy and Advisory committee for sixteen years. In 2004, Governor Bill Richardson appointed Dorothy to the State's Aging and Long-Term services policy advisory committee. She was also selected and advocated for the interest of native elders during Governor Richardson administration. Aging and Long-Term Services Department policy advisory committee was also the steering committee for NM Elder Economic Security Standard Index which included 9 members across New Mexico. The purpose of the NMEESSI steering committee was to focus on long term independence and dignity of those they served, to plan programs and services that keep people living independent in their homes and preserving the elder's quality of life as they age.
   Dorothy traveled many miles to different cities and towns to attend meetings and conferences on behalf of our Navajo elders. She would share the information about the things that she learned from the meetings that would benefit our community and the Navajo Nation. Dorothy met Governor Grisham while they both were servicing under the Richardson administration and Governor Grisham mentioned to my family that Dorothy was her mentor and she admired the leadership and work Dorothy did for the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico. In 2006-2007, Dorothy was selected as "shi masanii" and donated a traditional basket to the Senior Center to display. I've been reaching out to individuals to assist my family in the process of re-naming the Tohatchi Senior Center to Dorothy Bitsilly in remembrance of her work, leadership, and dedication to our community. As the children of Dorothy Bitsilly, we are taking the initiative and the recommendation made by Governor Grisham to request support from the Tohatchi community with a resolution. I also received a support letter drafted by Governor Grisham's Cabinet Secretary describing Dorothy's work ethics and personality.
   JoAnn Jayne – Dorothy not only worked with the Senior Citizens but she worked on a volunteer basis as well. She didn't get paid for a lot of the work she did but she work from her heart and it was something she in believed in. We may just be thinking about the leadership, dedication, and contributions, but it was also all the little things that she did that really adds up. For example; maybe having to pawn to fill up her tank so she can travel to meetings. She actually predates the Senior Center building and maybe the Chapter building as well. So, her work spans 60-70 years of being an advocate and spoke person for the elders. Dorothy made it a point to attend all the meeting that were occurring. Her lifetime dedication was not only for the citizens here, making sure they had their meals, but her trails of years leading up to that which is important as well. Dorothy was a trailblazer and I want to add the historic aspect of the work that she did and also to say she

worked alongside other people from our community. Dorothy also worked tirelessly with the Red Willow Farm and traveled many miles to advocate for the farm and farmers. She would go to Window Rock requesting for funds for Red Willow and the farmers. She really enjoyed her work and was dedicated to the farm as well.

Cody Jansen Anaya – I knew her as sister Bitsilly from the LDS Church. What I remember about her is she would come all dressed up in pastel colors with her visor or a straw hat. Everything about her was beautiful. I also remember reading in the paper about a senior title that she won and it talked about her family, children, grandchildren, and grandchildren. I just wanted to mention how I knew her was through church and I admire her endeavors and her leadership.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – There are only a few of us here from our community and this is an important topic that the whole community should be made aware of. I don't think we should pass a resolution without the input of the registered voters of Tohatchi Chapter. So how can we get the chapter membership's input on this discussion?

Delphine Bitsilly – I don't know how we can get people to come to the meetings, but we can come up with a plan.

Fern Spencer – Maybe going to our athletic events and talking with the principal, doing handouts, providing food because people will come if you have food. Maybe announcing on the radio is another source.

JoAnn Jayne – How to get the word out, so the audience is limited. I'm thinking about the "respect" on how we view an icon in this community, this chapter. It's not like a voting thing and a lot of you were never here and it is a different generation as well. I feel we need to approach this with respect and Tohatchi community would make this decision. How is it that the Navajo Nation, or community name an individual for a dedication? Also, how quick are we to name a gymnasium after a non-Navajo and they don't even live in the community? We should just put it before the people just like any other issue, put it before the people and they can decide.

President Bitsilly – being a family member I support this initiative and I think it's a great idea.

2. **Sonja Long** – with Mckinley County Early Childhood Coalition. My job is to improve family engagement, primarily working with caregivers, parents, or any community member who is caring for children between the ages of prenatal and age 5. I'm requesting the chapter to allow me to handout my questionnaire to caregivers, parents, or family members to complete and the responses from the questionnaire will help direct my task as to where my services are most needed in the community. A recommendation was made from a different chapter to change the wording of the 1st question to include grandchildren, nieces, and nephew so it encompasses everybody in the family unit. I am heading up the family engagement piece so this questionnaire would be very beneficial to help me identify areas of need. Like a liaison, I will be able to help people get the resources or programs quickly and efficiently. It can be in large groups, or it can be one-on-one. My purpose and the mission of the coalition is to provide parents, caregivers, and anyone who is taking care of a young child to have the knowledge and the experience to get the students the resources or programs needed before they enter school. I would like the opportunity to ask these questions to families at the next chapter meeting.

JoAnn Jayne – What will the data be used for?

Sonja Long – I won't be sharing any personal information with anyone. The questionnaire will help me identify the amount of time and resources; for example, if there is a high need here I can setup some workshops and classes so we can educate grandparents and elders to work on smart solutions. I will be spending more time here to provide assistance. If there is not a need for our program here, then I can move on to another community who may need our resources. We do have a digital newsletter which goes out monthly, its electronic and all I need is your email address.

Carol Tom – I think you would get better results if you were to visit Headstart programs and parent committees. I think focusing on reaching out to young parents because they are the ones who really need the help. Some parents aren't able to take care of their children but I would like to see more concentration on absent fathers.

Geneve Begay – I worked with the Headstart and I'm currently the "Parent Advisory" with the Tohatchi Elementary School. There are 195 students at the Elementary School and 40 students at the Headstart. We

did have a WIC office here in Tohatchi at one time which serviced 2000 children in District 14. Now these children are having to go to Gallup for their WIC services. Tohatchi is an essential place to have workshops for parents and grandparents. The parents have to work so the grandparents are home with the children and the parents need help with resources they can tap into. I believe this is a good opportunity for our community to setup workshops and to get parents and grandparents involved.

Sonja Long – I appreciate all the input, I was an educator for 30 years in Phoenix, AZ and recently retired. This is my passion working with families and I understand the different family units, for example; single parent, grandparents taking care of their grandchildren while parents go work in the city. There are different families and that's my approach to let me know what you need to make things better and easier for your children. I want to work together so that we can get our children into school impowered with what they need to be successful.

LDA Moore – I appreciate you work and I believe this will be a huge undertaking. I think we lost our family connections many years ago. We don't eat together as a family and what you are talking about is parental involvement. I believe this topic is very important not only to our chapter but across Navajo. How we raise our children makes a difference so I would recommend you get yourself familiar with the "Yazzie/Martinez" law suit. They report that the plan that was design for our students is not effective enough for our children. I don't believe they understand us because there a lot of people against the lawsuit. It is hard to work with a diverse population being native. I would recommend you talk and visit with Delegate Dr. Andy Nez with NN Health Education Department. I work with Council Delegate Nathan Notah with District 14 and if you have questions, please feel free to contact us.

Vice President Rodgers – I like your survey questions regarding parenting and I think having a workshop on this topic here at Tohatchi and inviting District 14 community members. What stands out to me is the tips and strategies for managing challenging behaviors, ideas for learning and playing with your child, understanding your child's needs. It seems at times we tend to dismissed our child when they are trying to get our attention. Someone to talk to without judgement, and helping find childcare or early child resources.

VI. REPORTS:

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

1. NN 2027 Comprehensive Budget –

LDA Moore – President Buu Nygren signed the comprehensive 2027 budget $585 million for all the branches and $39 million for all 110 chapters. I think the Council Delegates do not understand the dire needs of the chapters, for example; when the roads get flooded and need repair to get people home. The problems that we encounter with damage/flooded road I believe will become the chapter's next direct service and we will need to be able to help ourselves. We rely on NNDOT but they have to service all 110 chapters and are stretch thin. We were designated another 15 miles which makes it a 30 designation which each chapter needs to be aware of. The Council Delegates should be giving more funds to the chapter so they can provide the essential services needed by our community members. Things like a full-time heavy equipment operator or reliable heavy equipment so they can repair roads that have been damage. Chapter heavy equipment operators need training but NNDOT does not have the time or resources to provide training. The chapter/operator should have knowledge on preventative maintenance which is very important. I would like to have copies of the resolutions regarding the request for assistance from the different entities like the county, state, BIA roads, and the Navajo Nation. The chapter should know what their high-ticket items are and use that for justification, for example; diesel fuel. Repairing damage road and the number of hours spent out in the community should be justification for more fuel.

The state education has always been a pet peeve of mine because nationally we are at the lowest level. Example; out of 100 students only 75 will be graduating and what happens to the other 25 who will not have the skills needed to get a job so how do we make those improvements? The chapter should be requesting the Gallup Mckinley County Schools in our area to come to the chapter to give us data and proficient rates. The community should be made aware of this information as frequently as possible.

Hardship in the amount of $7-8 million that the Navajo Nation is struggle to spend will be given to elders

ages 75 and over in the amount of $250.00. There was also legislation that was introduced, $14 million was identified which could possibility go to the chapters. Just to let the chapter know, you can make changes to your RRR funds. Mexican Springs and Twin Lakes are using their RRR fund to purchase more mobile homes for their community members. As far as the Senior Centers in district 14 are concerned, Casey and I are working with some vendors to get quotations. It is difficult to work with DALTECS and DCD who have been blaming each other's for the closures of the Senior Centers in our area.

I hope the officials were involved in the budget process. It is important to have that collaboration to get the budget together.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – I like to know why the Chapter can't have the PEP working year-round. I understand it has to do with the budget but we fail at providing the crucial services that the community needs. Take for example the transfer station, we preach to our community not to be dumping their trash in ditches and arroyos yet we can't have the transfer station open for them to dump their trash because the chapter has run out of funding. This does not make sense; we can do better.

Vice President Rodgers – You mention the other chapters purchasing homes, are these the same modular units? I hope the cost of these homes will include the cost of setting up the homes and providing the utilities, water, and sewer so it's ready for the family to move in.

LDA Moore – Yes, I believe they are working with Clayton homes from Albuquerque to purchase another 3-4 homes. This will have to go through NABI and not Council.

Priscilla Duncun – My brother got his mobile home on February 28, 2026, but he is still waiting on utilities, water, and septic and leach line. Also, who is responsible for putting a padlock on the front door of the home. The key my brother was given does not open the door.

President Bitsilly – CHID Housing and CDC is responsible for the transfer and the CSC should have followed up with that. When they do the transfer, they transfer over the documents to the homeowner. The transfer of the mobile home is the homeowner's responsibility which includes the insurance and title. I don't understand why people are having a hard time getting their utilities and water. Also want to mention, these 4 homes were not part of the list before we came on board as officials. I would hope someone would say thank you for the mobile homes, but I haven't heard.

This is the process we have to deal with when working with the NN government. It starts here and we have to communicate and not just sit and wait and wonder what is going to happen next. We have to follow through and we are here to help. We can also volunteer our time to help one another. Also, we need more people to register to vote with the chapter. More people means more funding for our chapter from the Navajo Nation.

JoAnn Jayne – Communication is important and I understand the officials are not the day-to-day personnel like the chapter administration. They have a duty to give reports to the community as to what they are working on and how our funds are being spent. Also why aren't we spending the funds we receive from W/R? If we want more funds, we need to be spending our money or else it will go to another chapter.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – We have skilled journeymen in our community for example; licensed electricians. Why can't we hire them to complete the work for these new homeowners?

Carol Tom – I think we need to look at how we can change the policy on some of these restricted chapter fund accounts. We need to make our voices heard that we need more flexibility with these fund accounts. We have to be more aggressive in our request to the Navajo Nation Council regarding how we can expend these restricted accounts. And as far as the mobile homes that were given to community members, some of us are still waiting. My niece has no electricity in her home and we've made every effort to work with NTUA. She received her keys to her home but the hookups to the home are not complete

and because we received the key to the home, the home becomes our responsibility. It's like we are working backwards with these homes. I also want to mention the water that was drill for us at the eastflats is pumping water that we can't drink. It's going to require a filter so in the meantime we are still hauling water and purchasing bottled water. After the severe rains, it has caused holes around the septic tank and it will not close. I mentioned these issues at our last meeting and I have not received a follow up. I'm interested in the budget and the unhealthy food tax fund. I did look it up on the website but it was limited to trail rides and fixing up or installing a park. I also mentioned previously to have the land withdrawn properly for the area behind the Senior Center to build a multi-purpose building to include the Senior Center. I would like to get some feedback from the officials on some of these issues.

LDA Moore – The CLUPC from Naschitti invited Mr. Mike Halona (Director of Natural Resources) to do a presentation to discussed the 750 feet corridor of highway 491, rural addressing, and other topics. Mr. Halona did mention the deadline for the modification that were made to the homesite leases will expire on December 31, 2026. Tohatchi chapter can ask to have Mr. Halona come in to do a presentation. A question was asked if the chapter is responsible for all the land that surrounds the chapter, the answer is no. Chapter is only responsible for the chapter compound and it's CLUPC who is responsible for the land. On another note, with all the rains we received; how do we do flood control and how do we capture the rainwater so the community can benefit? I would like to request for the resolutions that were passed last month (September 2026) that address the flooding on Indian Road 9653 and the runoff from Chooshgai mountain. I can share and refer to it at the different meetings that I attend to make people aware of the issues from the rainfall.

Carol Tom – made a recommendation to draft a resolution to address the Chooshgai mountain runoff not only in Tohatchi but to include the surrounding communities. Maria, CSC did mention she met with Grazing Officer Moore to identify the dams and embankments. A list was made but no further action was taken. I like to recommend we draft a resolution for our next chapter meeting to address these items.

President Bitsilly – The 3 resolutions from the September meeting that were sent to Carol per Council Delegate Notah's recommendation will be accepted as is. The new language that was added during the recess of the meeting will be accepted as the final draft of the resolution because that is the language the community voted on. I would like to make a recommendation to amend the resolutions at a later date.

LDA Moore – asked to make a recommendation to do a separate resolution to address the runoff of Chooshgai mountain.

Carol Tom – I just want to make sure we are asking for "funding" for the right-of-way.

President Bitsilly – Navajo Nation Council passed a budget with NNDOT in the amount of $3.5 million and they added $1.5 for roads here in District 14. If you read the legislation, it mentions things like maintenance only and nothing major as far as road repairs. $500,000 was requested to purchase a dozer for our chapter. We may need the Council Delegate and LDA to assist us in getting these funds to our chapter.

LDA Moore – Just to clarify, NNDOT contacted the Council Delegate regarding the legislation language there is no mention of purchasing a dozer. I'm working on setting up a meeting with Mr. Tom Platero and Mr. Peterson with NNDOT. I think each chapter should be thinking about how they are going to spend that money, for instance; we all need culverts and it should be put in your inventory. Also have to look at who can haul the culverts back to the chapter when purchased. Looking at the Unhealthy Food Tax it states it can be used to improve landscapes. I like to use this funding to cut down some of the trees that are growing wild around our community, especially next to the Post Office.

JoAnn Jayne – Chapter should look into establishing committees to do these projects and have a project manager to oversee the committees. It is a two-way street; you have so much come from the NN government but it's also depended on the chapter to follow up and keep pushing the projects through. Also, there should be plans for the transition of the new Council Delegate, what will that be like? We should be thinking about that.

Priscilla Duncan – There was a list that was developed by the chapter staff for families who needed utilities,

water, and septic tank replacement which would be paid for by using ARPA funds. I would recommend using the remaining balance of the $80,000 toward the families who received homes without utility hookup. I sure hate to see that money be reverted back to the government.

Carol Tom – I really appreciate having the solid waste bins here in Tohatchi. The cost is fair and the PEP worker assigned to work there is very polite and very helpful. I also would like to know when NNDOT will be repair 9653 road at the washout?

Vice President Rodgers – No news yet, like Maria mention they are concentrating on the bigger road damages across the Navajo Nation. I also like to mention the advertisement of the PEP vacancies. Our audit findings states that we were not advertising these positions effectively. I recently checked the chapter website and I did not see any information on PEP employment opportunities. I hope the administration has proof that the chapter is aggressively advertising these vacancies so this will not be an issue when we meet with auditors again.

Discussion: Topic on when the chapter should schedule the groundbreaking for the new First Responders facility (Safety Complex). Suggestions were made by community members to have it soon even though chapter does not have the funds to cover the total cost of construction as of yet. We do have around $6 million currently and total cost is estimated at $16 million. Other suggested we wait until we get fully funded for the construction of the facility. It was also mentioned, if we were to have a groundbreaking within the next couple of months it would show the State and other funding resources that we are serious about having our 1st Responders facility constructed as soon as possible.

***Red Willow Farm Report**

1. Red Willow Farm Projects –

Geneva Begay – I want to thank President Bitsilly for volunteering his time to help put up the security fence at Red Willow. As a chapter, we need to be proactive and move all these projects. I've seen the same topics on the agenda every month. With all the recent rains we could have saved a lot of the rain water by setting out buckets. We need to be more prepared as a community in case of emergencies and do the chapter have an emergency team? I don't think anyone has thought about the emergency plan for Tohatchi. Also, all the erosions that are happening in the channel way, we need to start getting a plan together to put more rocks in the channel way to stop the erosions.

***Grazing Officer's Report:**

1. Current grazing updates – Grazing Officer not in attendance.

***CLUPC Report**:

Delphine Bitsilly – CLUPC for the pass 6-8 months, we have been working on completing the Land Use Plan and it's going to be finalized very soon. The Manuel will be available to the community to review and it will be in the front office next to the receptionist. This Manuel will be good for the next 5 years to year 2031. On September 17th, we had our public hearing to review the Land Use Plan with community. We had the public hearing announced on the radio and we also had flyers we gave out. Unfortunately, our community did not show up for the public hearing. We had the officers and the Vice President in attendance, but we plan to move forward to get our Manuel certified. So now, we are in our 60-day comment period which end November 16th. After November 16th, we will have draft a resolution to accept the Manuel as complete and the resolution will be added to the Manuel. A copy of the Manuel will be given to Latasha, Senior Planner who has been instrumental in helping the CLUPC complete this, Manuel. Latasha will be presenting the Manuel to Department of Justice and when the review by DOJ is completed, they will give it a assigned number. Once we received the number, we can call RDC to schedule a date with them to present our Manuel. It can be done in W/R or we can ask them to come to our chapter to review the Manuel and to ask questions. We are looking at late December or January to have this process completed for the Manuel.

Fern Spencer – We've been working on this Manuel for the pass 2 years and it has been a lot of work. This Manuel is full of information about the history of Tohatchi and everybody should take the time to look at the Manuel.

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

* **Senior Center Report:**

Evangeline Muskett – I have not heard anything from my supervisor on the re-opening of our Senior

Center. We did try serving and delivering food from Naschitti Senior Center, but OEH shut it down stating it is not safe to have food stored for over 2 hours in the van. It can easily become contaminated and unsafe to eat. Since the shutdown of the Center, we have had Twin Lakes and Naschitti come in to take food we had stored in the refrigerator and freezer. We don't want to waste the food by allowing it to go bad.

Secretary/Treasurer Crawford – Any news or update on the HVAC; are there quotes available now and is the HVAC the only issue we have with the Senior Center? Everything else is to date?

Evangeline Muskett – Yes, I have two quotes but I've been told I need three quotes. I'm still waiting to hear from the 3rd quote.

Vice President Rodgers – how often are you reaching out to the contractor that you are waiting a quote from? We might be able to justify our reasoning with just the 2 quotes, if we had information like when, where, how, and of course the times and date you have tried contacting them. The information would be very beneficial when we contact W/R for a request for a new HVAC.

Priscilla Duncan – with my experience in procurement, you can also try contractor on the Navajo Nation business list, but if they don't respond to you, that's your justification to go outside the business list.

JoAnn Jayne – This has to be a priority for Tohatchi and there is the importance to feed our elders. We need to get this done.

Geneva Begay – During the W/R fair, there were people advertising stating their company sells and repair HVAC systems. They were walking around giving out flyers and asking people to call them. I also want to mention with the recent rainfall, there was a lot of erosion that occurred down the channel ways which has no plan for a solution to the erosion problem. We could start my gathering rocks to throw into the channel way to stop the erosion. We need to look at planting trees along the new bike trail so the kids will have some shade to sit under. The chapter really needs to start being proactive and I say this because I see the same topics on the agenda from last year, 2025. With all the recent rainfall, nobody thought to capture some of that water. W/R has buckets you can request and use the buckets for the rain water that we can drink. We need to start looking at alternatives and solutions. Even with our emergency policy, we have not established an emergency committee to plan and direct the community when an emergency occurs. I also believe the Navajo Nation is still in the learning process for agriculture. I've reached out to the Elementary School to try to get the kids involved in growing crops and we need to get the parents involved as well. The kids are asking for a hoop house so they planting next spring. We also want to work on a watershed. We had to prepare a budget as well and turned it in to the Department of Agriculture. We are looking at portable building, planting trees and crops. The eradication with the BIA was been approved in the amount of $200,000. The resolution was submitted back in 2018.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS:

1.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Cody Jansen Anaya – I provided a draft resolution because LOC (Law & Order Committee) is going across Navajo requesting for input on Title 17 amendments. They have not received updates on financial crimes like definition for financial crimes and also consequences for financial crimes. We know that here in District 14, we've had officials and Council Delegates embezzle money. This resolution is in response to these issues which have been brought up during discussions at meetings. But in reality, prosecutors do not have the language in legal code currently to prosecutor for financial crimes. As a chapter within District 14, we do have the authority to ask for oversight. There are public hearings for this before it moves on to Council.

JoAnn Jayne – When will this resolution be discussed because it's a loaded document. I feel the community should be educated on it before it goes to the floor for a vote. The Navajo Nation does not have files for felon cases; it all goes to federal court. I see in the resolution too, there is amount for the different crimes and I think

the community needs to be train/educated on it before voting. Who will be doing the educating to tell people what this resolution is about?

Cody Janse Anaya – This is a recommendation through a resolution and I've presented Council Delegate Notah a copy since he is on the Law-and-Order Committee.

X. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING DATE: October 21, 2026 @ 10:00am

XI. ADJOURNMENT: 2:36 PM

Submitted by;



Jean Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter – October 17, 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