TEMPORARY AUTHORIZE QUORUM REDUCTION MEETING

April 22, 2022   10:00am

TOHATCHI CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

AUDIO TELECONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: (575) 567-3331 PIN: 290 206 733#
JOIN WITH GOOGLE MEET: https://meet.google.com/vsc-zdtr-mbz?authuser=0&hs=122

I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER: 10:14AM

II. ROLL CALL: President Sonny Moore, Vice President Mike Halona, Secretary/Treasurer Jean
Crawford, Grazing Officer Moore, and Council Delegate Halona

III. INVOCATION: Effie Barney

IV. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:
Motion: 1st Geneva Begay 2nd Alan Burbank  Vote: 5-0-1

V. APPROVAL OF MARCH 23, 2022 QUORUM REDUCTION MEETING MINUTES:
Motion to read on your own:
1st Doris Benallie 2nd Council Delegate Halona  Vote: 9-0-3

VI. PRESENTATION:

1. **First Presenter: Helene Crosby** - Works with Bureau of Election as the Native American election liaison.
   I would like to share information on the 2022 Primary Election. The filing deadline was on March 08th and to
   register to vote will be closing on May 10th. You can register with your county clerk’s office (Mckinley Co) or
   you can go on line to sos.elections@state.nm.us. You will need to provide documents like your DL, Social
   Security number, and Physical Address, you can also provide your phone number but it’s not required. The
   United States Postal Service also has registration cards you can pick up and complete. “Same day registration”
   is also available which will start during early voting and there are Convenience Centers as well where you can
   go to register to vote. There is also Absentee Voting applications available on line or you can pick up at the
   County Clerk’s office to request, but remember Tuesday, June 7th is election day.
   Just to mention Julia Badanie was a member of our Native American Task Force which consists of 8-9 tribal
   members from tribes across NM. She was representing chapters under the Ft. Defiance Agency but has since
   resigned and currently the position is vacant which we would like to fill. The eastern agency is also needing to
   fill their vacant position as well.
   **President Moore** - Can you explain what the position as a Native American Task Force entail and what they
   plan to accomplish.
   **Helene Crosby** - The task force is responsible for educating and to provide information on election
   registration and dates of all the elections happening within your agency. Opening dates and deadlines for
   registrations and election awareness in the communities. I can send to the chapter some of the plans and
   objectives of the Native American Task Force. We recently had an election school.

2. **Second Presenter: Kevin Mitchell** - Candidate for State Representative, District 5. I’ve been on the
   GMCS Board for the past 11 years and also serving on the New Mexico School Board Association. Within my
   11 years as School Board member, I have been a fighter along all my colleagues giving back $10 million back
   to GMCS. I also was in the fight for teacher pay raises which was a big win as well from $50,000-$70,000 for
   teachers depending on their level. Another big fight was Native American Teacher increase which was a deal
   brought on by Legislator Darrick Lente. As GMCS board, we fought alongside all these bills which in turn
   helped GMCS. We were the major plaintiff in the Yazzie/Martinez lawsuit which was another big win for
   GMCS showing our native American students were not being treated equal and the quantity of education was
not there. With this, I believe continuous improvements are needed and so as a pro-active leader, I believe in involvement, communication, and collaboration which is very important in order to make everyone on the same page to work together. With this I would say, I know that funding was allotted to Tohatchi Chapter and now in turn it is in jeopardy of being reverted back. As a leader with Gallup McKinley County, any funding that is allotted or projects, we do follow ups, we make sure that money is being spent, we make sure everything is in line, if there is extra help that needs to be done, we provide that help just to ensure the money is being spent. That way we do not get into trouble when money is being reverted. That is very important, and if money is not going to be spent on time, as a leader we make sure that things are done, maybe legislation are done to get extensions and that is what I believe should have been done in the case of Tohatchi Chapter. We are now looking at building a new Tohatchi High School which was a major push and fight as well. I believe that as a leader I am a fighter, I will get out there and I want to extent my services out to the community of District 5 now. I have helped our children in bringing back money which I want to do for our communities now. I want get out there and fight for that extra money and not just settle for what’s given. This last legislation, there was billions of dollars out there that we could have received, but no legislation was drafted for it. We only accepted what was given by the governor and that is unacceptable. So, at this time, I would like to ask for your full support and trust in me and vote; Kevin Mitchell on June 7th. I also have a proven track record of leadership. Thank you.

**Vice President Halona** - I want to encourage you in your campaign to remain strong and resilient. I think the people will hear your passion that you have for education, most importantly the children. I can feel your energy and your passion already and I support you 100% in what you are trying to do and we need someone like you to be the voice, to be the advocate for our children and their education which is the most important aspect.

**President Moore** - Are you going to be able to serve on the School Board as well as being the State Representative?

**Kevin Mitchell** - Yes, I will be able to keep my position as Gallup McKinley County School Board. I have quite a few projects out there and the building of the new high school is one of the biggest one I’m pushing at this time. We did have our 1st meeting this past week with the design phase and from here on we will be meeting weekly to ensure the process starts moving quickly. I do want to continue to be a board member for as long as I can to ensure everything keeps rolling. We also need to get out into our community and encourage everybody to vote. We need to show the people in Santa Fe we are a power force if we can get our community to get out and vote in the state elections. This will force Santa Fe to pay attention to our community. This is very important.

**Alvin Barton** - I’ve always supported my chapter officials and it was the community who voted for you and put our trust in you to do good for our community. I believe we should all exercise our right to vote and support all our native candidates who are running for positions in our community. We tend to have a low voting out come and I noticed the nation counted the Native American votes as “other.” I believe we as natives do have the power to make a difference in our communities and country just by voting. I do support Mr. Kevin Mitchell and I’ve followed him through his career, and I know his track record. He is doing a tremendous job for Native American children here on Navajo and especially here in Tohatchi.

**Council Delegate Halona** - The Chapter has submitted a resolution in support and is requesting to tap into the San Juan Water Project. This legislation 209-21 has passed and is now waiting on President Nez to sign into law. The cost of this project is $69 million to run water from San Juan into Gallup along high 491 and also up toward Crownpoint as well.

The update on the hardship checks is the controller’s office has run into some issues getting the checks out to the people. The biggest problem is there has been over 16,000 checks that have been returned. The issue is incorrect mailing addresses and other issue is the Post Offices across Navajo will only accept mail for the
person who is renting the box. So, if they are sharing a box with other family members, they will not accept checks for these individuals and check will be mailed back to W/R. Now, they are trying to organize and set it up to where OOC will separate the checks and bring it out to the agencies and then to the chapters as well. They are also taking names in W/R, I understand OOC has a spot over at the NN fairgrounds so if your check was sent back, you can go there to get assistance. You will need your ID and CIB certificate to ask about your returned check. The initial allocation for the Hardship Program was $567 million and with all the new people registering, it has increased to 411,000 individuals who have requested for a CIB. Right now, there is an estimated shortfall of $120,000,000. So, with the new legislation we are trying to get started for the Hardship Program to cover the shortfall. There are 2 legislations submitted for the hardship and we will probably be calling a special Naa‘bik’i yáti’ meeting and then have a special council meeting again to get this allocation approved for the Hardship Program to make up for the shortfall.

The next legislation is to try to combat the over population of stray dogs and cats and this legislation has passed. The legislation is a 2-part legislation and 1” are creating new laws and abiding by these laws, 2nd is allocation of $200,000 to assist the animal control to put together an animal spayed and neutering program. Another legislation that passed was the Water Litigation Rights, they have been litigating water rights issues for the NN for 3 states, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. $4 million was allocated to continue with the Water Litigation Rights, some of the litigations have been completed and others have not been signed as of yet. The next legislation we worked on is the Veteran’s nursing home which will be built in Chinle and was presented to council for $29 million which will be coming out of Shihasin Funds. This legislation was passed by council and will go to President Nez for his signature to become law. All these legislations which were passed and have moved on to the President’s office and he has 10 days to sign it and if he doesn’t sign, it automatically becomes law.

I was also working on a legislation for Rehoboth Christian School. There were a lot of controversy within the council about funding a Christian School. The council voted to send the legislation back to Naa‘bik’i yáti’ for further refinement and should be coming up within the next 2 weeks and they can decide how we will approach that.

Next legislation which is an important one and which was approved is the “Veteran Women Warriors” and this legislation is to honor the Navajo Women Warriors” on the 1” day of spring every year. This will become law as soon as the President signs the legislation and a declaration will be sent out across Navajo.

**President Moore** - On the spayed and neutering program, they are asking for $266,000. Do you know what happen with this legislation?

**Council Delegate Halona** - That legislation passed and is at the President’s office for his signature.

**President Moore** - We would like our Grazing Officer to be aware of the available funding and to bring this program to our chapter so our community members can get their animals spayed or neutered. This is a problem reservation wide. Also, what was the dollar amount on the San Juan Lateral? We do need $10-11 million for our lateral which will be coming to Mexican Springs and Tohatchi. We have a meeting scheduled with Souder & Miller and we are hoping President Nez will sign this legislation.

**Council Delegate Halona** - legislation 209-21, which was introduced by Honorable Crotty called the San Juan Lateral was approved by council for $69 million. I know Tohatchi chapter has submitted a supporting resolution.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** - I have a question on the Hardship checks, I understand there were issues with individuals sharing CIB numbers within families or CIB numbers being issued twice. And how are they resolving this issue?

**Council Delegate Halona** - Yes, that correct. There were individuals having the same CIB numbers and they are trying to investigate how and why this is happening. I’m not sure how many people but there were several. As far as how to resolve the issue with duplicate CIB numbers, they need to go to the CIB office and get a
determination to get a new number and register, they are already registered in a sense, but they just need to register with the new number.

**Vice President Halona** - Was there in guidance or directions given to OOC to correct all the discrepancies that they are having with the Hardship checks? I know there are a lot of people frustrated even though they have sent required documents, required change of addresses and it seems like they are not being reviewed. Checks are being sent to their old addresses and now lost. When they go to inquire, they are being told it’s been sent and these individuals are trying to explain to them that they reside at a new place and have a new address. So, this becomes problematic in the future because there will be checks returned and that might have been the issue with a lot of the old checks with Cares Act that weren’t checks because they weren’t getting to the right people. We have people who live off Navajo who can’t stand in line at the Fairgrounds to get checks. I believe there should be some guidance and recommendations provided to them to assist them. Obviously, there is a big breakdown in the system, I don’t know if council will be revisiting that aspect.

**Council Delegate Halona** - Yes, there are some programs the office of the Controller will begin, for example taking the checks to varies locations on Navajo. And yes, there are people who had a change of address since the Cares Act but they did not call in to update their information so they are doing that now. But for those who live in Albuquerque, Phoenix, Utah, and Colorado, the Controller will be arranging a date and time and will be going to the cities mention to give out checks. One of the biggest complaints was nobody is answering the phones at OOC. Of course, OOC is short staff with some employees taking early retirement and the process of hiring/training the new employees to try to get checks out to the people, but we do have until the end of December 2022 to get this all taken care of.

**Secretary/Treasurer Crawford** - I believe that is one of the biggest issues is when people are calling in to get information about their check, but nobody is answering the phones. These people just want information like has their check been mailed out or is it still there in W/R? Department of the Controller needs to consider hiring more people to answer the phones to provide answers to the callers. I know this was a discussion at council and there were some recommendations that were made, but nobody answering phone calls was the biggest issue.

**Council Delegate Halona** - Just to give you an example, in one day OOC received 14,000 calls and they had only 5-6 people manning the phone calls, there is no way they can answer 14,000 calls in one day. They are shorthanded and trying to hire people on, additional people as well.

**President Moore** - We are back to square one with the ARPA funding, we all read about the amendments which failed. Does that mean we are on a new spending plan, again? Another question, I heard Dr. Yellowman say the ARPA portal is still open, what is the status on this?

**Council Delegate Halona** - I have not seen that legislation and I have not been in any meetings on that issue. I’ve been involved with the President and his legislation says to continue funding the programs which are already got setup which are shovel ready and ready to go. Right now, the new legislation includes funding for all 110 chapters. The funding will be in the amount of $745,000 for each chapter which will be for electrical line, housing, bathroom additions, waterlines, and broadband. Some of the funding had to be moved over to the Hardship Program to meet the demand for the shortfall of $120 million.

Yes, the portal has to be re-opened once we decide which legislation we will be going with. Right now, there is a battle between the executive division, speaker’s office, and the President’s office. Basically, all the projects submitted by chapters and approved in the portal still have to go through DOJ for their approval to make sure they meet the federal requirements and guidelines. This is the biggest hold up but in order to prevent that we would have to approved 257. Under the 257 legislation all 1,400 projects went through the DOJ process and not all were approved and included into legislation. The ones that were not approved will go back into the system and will go through the DOJ process again, but it will move quicker. The other reason council came up with the amount $745,000 is anything above $750,000 will require an audit.
Doris Benallie - Post Office had a public hearing here at the chapter five years ago and the group from Denver from the United States Postal Service were here, we had a full house. They instructed us at the time our old PO is going to be shut down and we will be getting new box numbers. They promise us everything will stay the same, verbally. We have gone through 4 postmasters since, and each time they have changed policies on us. With the current postmaster now, I understand she will be a permanent postmaster and a lot of the policies which was in place previously are not being in forced. The policy regarding “free” boxes is you get a small box and it will only have one family member receiving mail there, other family member has to get their own box. But if you “pay” for your box you can have other family members using your box for mail.

Recently, when Hardship checks started coming out, the postmaster Amber has made and effort to not mail back any checks to W/R. She kept the checks and asked family members to verify with a DL when requesting their checks. Postmaster was holding the checks for at least 30 days to give the community members time to come in to ask about their check. She needs to be commended for this. I personally have been taking a picture of the names she posts at the front desk and I will post on FB.

Back in February President Nez posted on his webpage this allocation, approval for funding for each chapter, each district. Honorable Croatt had over 40 applicants submitted to request for ARPA funding, out of the 40 she had 20 or more approved. District 14 only had 14 and out of the 14, only 5 were approved. This makes me wonder what is going on with District 14, this needs to be improved.

Hardship checks, I was in W/R a couple of weeks ago at Controller’s office and I stood in line with everyone else and I was told they would get to me in 45 minutes. They had 3 employees from the Controller’s office who would come out to get your CIB number and some individuals were fortunate enough to have their check there and were able to pick it up there. I thought I would test these employees to see if they were able honest with us. I noticed one employee who was taking CIB numbers and quickly coming back out to the people in line and telling them your check will be processed within 2 weeks. I don’t believe it takes 30 seconds to lookup names and CIB numbers in the system and come back out with an answer. I was asked to complete some forms and they would update my mailing address. I let them know I emailed at least 3 copies to their email and I’ve called the numbers you have posted but nobody is there to answer those numbers. She advises I come back in 2 weeks to check again. As I was walking off, another person approaches me and said your check will be processed and you should receive in a couple of weeks. This is so confusing and disgusting.

Now, the NN President posted on-line this week and next week they will be carrying checks which were returned back to controller’s office, Shipoock agency, and Crowpoint and distribute the checks in those areas. They will not be printing new checks; these checks are checks that were returned to their office. For Fort Defiance Agency, we have to go to the Civic Center to pick up our checks. My personal opinion, when Council Delegate Halona give his report, it’s all iffy and when we see in the news media what’s going on, you need to catch up with us.

Council Delegate Halona - All this responsibility has been given back to the Executive Department. I’ve been receiving phones from community members and I’ve been forward their information to the controller’s office. I’ve been successful in getting information for these individuals except for 3 who I’m still working with to make sure they get their check. Like I mentioned before, they are short staff and dealing with 1,400 phone calls a day. As far as the salary for the employees, that’s not being shared with me. They are doing their best dealing with people who come aboard, get trained, and the employee decides to quit. But I will take your complaint as well to the controller’s office. For the Post Office, I will commend the Postmaster on the great work she is doing with the checks. We have not control over the Post Office, but I agree the Postmaster is going above and beyond for our community.

\section*{VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS}

None

\section*{VIII. NEW BUSINESS}
March 2022 Financial Report: Secretary/Treasurer Crawford - Let's start with the Balance Sheet, Beginning with March 2022, we had in our bank account $489,968.15 is what we started with. Throughout the month, we had outstanding checks and vouchers in the amount of $3,305.75. So, when you subtract that from our beginning balance it leaves us with $486,662.40. If you take the Fund Balance of $484,995.76 plus total Liabilities of $1,666.64 equals to our bank balance of $486,662.40.

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IX. RESOLUTIONS

1. 034-04-2022 - Resolution to approve the hiring of Julia Chavez from Farmington to do the Arch Clearance in the amount of $792.00 for the Cemetery Expansion.

   Motion: 1st Geneva Begay  2nd Effie Barney  Vote: 11-0-1

2. 035-04-2022 - Resolution to approve Budget for 2nd Quarter Revenues January-March 2022 in the amount of $5869.66. Budget: Office Supplies-$500, Operating Supplies-$500, Food Purchase-$869.66, Purchase Wood-$1000, Other Professional Fees-$3000 for a total of $5869.66.

   Motion: 1st Doris Benallie  2nd Alvin Barton  Vote: 10-0-1

   Question Doris Benallie - What is considered Professional Fees?

   Maria, CSC - Money we receive from community for rentals, septic tank cleanings, etc. The money will go into this fund.

Motion: 1st Priscilla Duncan    2nd Mae Fern Dennison    Vote: 10-0-1
4. 037-04-2022 - Resolution to approve Budget for NN Unhealthy Food Tax allocation in amount of $14,267.00. Budget: Other lease and Rentals-$2,767.00, Maintenance and Repair-$2,500, Other Professional Fees-$5000, Infrastructure Land Improvements-$4000 in total of $14,267.00
Motion: 1st Doris Benallie    2nd Franklin Thompson    Vote: 12-0-1
5. 038-04-2022 - Resolution to approve Housing Discretionary Funds for community member, Effie Barney in amount of $2000 for roofing repair.
Motion: 1st Mae Fern Dennison    2nd Alan Burbank    Vote: 12-0-2
6. 039-04-2022 - Resolution to approve Budget transfer for Funeral Expenses to Fund 01.
This was not a resolution but will be done administratively along with a policy. We will be renaming the line item.
7. 040-04-2022 - Resolution to support Maria Allison for housing assistance through the Southwest Indian Foundation.
Motion: 1st Franklin Thompson    2nd Effie Barney    Vote: 12-0-1
X. ANNOUNCEMENTS: Planning Meeting May 2nd @ 10am, Chapter Meeting May 18th @ 10am, District Grazing Committee Meeting May 4th Twin Lakes Chapter @ 9am, CLUPC Meeting May 6th @ 9am, Tohatchi Clinic will be giving boosters on Wednesday from 1:30pm for elderly 50 years and older.
XI. NEXT CHAPTER MEETING: May 18, 2022 @ 10am
XII. ADJOURNMENT: 12:34pm
Motion: 1st Effie Barney    2nd Franklin Thompson
Submitted by,

[Signature]

Secretary/Treasurer, Tohatchi Chapter April 29, 2022
cc: Mr. Sonny Moore, President
Mr. Mike Halona, Vice-President
Mr. Gerald Moore, Grazing Officer
Ms. Maria Allison, CSC
Mr. Pernell Halona, Council Delegate
Mr. Elvis Bitsilly, LDA