



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council members show support for the new Chief of Police



PHOTO: Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley administers the oath of office to Phillip B. Francisco during the swearing-in ceremony for the new Chief of Police for the Navajo Police Department at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Ariz. on August 22, 2016.

WINDOW ROCK – Members of the Law and Order Committee were in attendance on Monday, to support Phillip B. Francisco as he was sworn in as the new Chief of Police for the Navajo Police Department at a swearing-in ceremony held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, Speaker LoRenzo Bates, President Russell Begaye, and Vice President Jonathan Nez served as honorary speakers and thanked Francisco for accepting the position, which had been vacant since 2008.

Delegate Yazzie, who previously served as a police officer for 17 years, commended the Navajo Police officers who were also in attendance. He also thanked the many police officers that attended the swearing-in ceremony from surrounding counties including Navajo County, Apache County, San Juan County, Coconino County, and McKinley County.

“This has been a ‘we effort’ to hire a new Chief of Police,” said Delegate Yazzie, while also noting that the Law and Order Committee remains focused on increasing salaries during the current budget season for Navajo officers and reaffirmed his support for Francisco.

Prior to being selected for the position, Francisco served with the Farmington Police Department and currently serves with the New Mexico Army National Guard.

Moments after taking the oath of office administered by Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley, Francisco addressed the audience saying that among his goals, as the Chief of Police, is to provide guidance to the Navajo police force using the knowledge he has gained over his 18 years of law enforcement experience.

“One thing that I’ve learned is that one person cannot do it all. It takes a team working together to accomplish a mission,” said Francisco, referencing his past military and law enforcement experience.

LOC members Council Delegates Raymond Smith, Jr., Kee Allen Begay, Jr., and Otto Tso were also seated in the audience and commended Navajo Nation leadership for working together to fill the vacancy, which was a top priority for the LOC. The LOC in June issued a directive to Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety executive director to hire a Chief of Police within a 30-day timeframe.

During his remarks, Speaker Bates also commended the LOC for working aggressively to help law enforcement efforts including Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd who attended Monday’s ceremony and who previously served on the LOC with the 22nd Navajo Nation Council.

President Begaye, who served as a member of the LOC under the former Council, thanked the officers for their service and touched on areas in need of improvement including the need for more officers on the Navajo Nation and more housing for officers.

Vice President Nez also thanked Francisco for accepting the challenge of serving as the Chief of Police and said there is a need to re-instill respect for law enforcement while asking the public to pray for the safety of all officers.

Francisco will begin his duties as the Chief of Police for the Navajo Police Department immediately. The Law and Order Committee is scheduled to meet Monday afternoon to continue its efforts to increase salaries for Navajo Police officers.

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