



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee continues to support the construction of the regional police training academy in Chinle

CHINLE, Ariz. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received reports from Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle), Chinle Chapter officials, Navajo Nation Department of Corrections director Delores Greyeyes, and Arrigton Watkins Architects, regarding the proposed regional training academy facility in Chinle, Ariz.

According to Greyeyes, the regional training academy would include training for police officers, SWAT, criminal investigators, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and correction officers. The proposed training facility includes an EMS/fire station, food services, classrooms, dormitories, fitness center, driving training track, and more, added Greyeyes.

In his report, Delegate Pete, who represents the community of Chinle, highlighted that Chinle Chapter has taken the initiative to build the regional training academy within the community.

“The community has been working on this project for a long time because the Navajo Nation needs a police academy in middle of the Nation. The chapter has withdrawn approximately 82 acres for the facility. The site is construction ready, however we need the committee’s support to put the training academy as a priority,” said Delegate Pete.

In 2017, the committee approved the Judicial/Public Safety Facilities Fund priority listing for fiscal years 2017 and 2018, and the Chinle public safety training facility was listed number four on the priority listing.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) raised concerns that the chapter did not include recommendations and input from the Chief Justice and NNDPS director in attempting to amend the priority listing.

“It troubles me to support Chinle Chapter’s request to put the training academy as priority one without the NNDPS’s director and Chief Justice’s input. I highly advise the chapter to meet with the director and Chief Justice to discuss the possibility of amending the priority listing,” said Delegate Begay.

LOC member Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) questioned the cost of the facility and if the project was shovel-ready.

“What is the total cost of the facility and is it shovel-ready to be considered first on the priority listing? Additionally, has NNDPS identified the cost of operations and maintenance of the facility?” asked Delegate Daniels.

In response, NNDPS executive director Jesse Delmar said the training academy is shovel-ready, it is possible for the project to be number one on the priority listing because other projects are not construction ready.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) commended the chapter for working collaboratively with the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety to complete the design and planning phases of the regional training academy.

“The Navajo Nation is in need of a law enforcement academy that addresses the unique public safety concerns on the Nation. Having an academy on the Nation would increase the number of police officers, which is critically needed,” said Yazzie.

The Law and Order Committee approved the reports with a 2-0 vote with one directive for Chinle Chapter to meet with the NNDPS executive director and Chief Justice to discuss the Judicial/Public Safety Facilities Fund priority listing.

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