



2023 Spring Council Session

Speaker's Report



Crystalyne Curley, *Speaker*
25th Navajo Nation Council



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25th Navajo Nation Council

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee:

- Chair Vince R. James – Fort Defiance Agency
- Vice Chair Germaine Simonson – Central Agency
- George Tolth – Eastern Agency
- Dr. Andy Nez – Fort Defiance Agency
- Helena Nez Begay – Western Agency
- Curtis Yanito – Northern Agency

Resources and Development Committee:

- Chair Brenda Jesus – Fort Defiance Agency
- Vice Chair Casey Allen Johnson – Western Agency
- Danny Simpson – Eastern Agency
- Shawna Ann Claw – Central Agency
- Otto Tso – Western Agency
- Rickie Nez – Northern Agency

Law and Order Committee:

- Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton – Northern Agency
- Vice Chair Cherilyn Yazzie – Fort Defiance Agency
- Steven R. Arviso – Eastern Agency
- Nathan Notah – Fort Defiance Agency
- Herman M. Daniels – Western Agency

Budget and Finance Committee:

- Chair Shaandiin Parrish – Western Agency
- Vice Chair Carl Roessel Slater – Central Agency
- Norman M. Begay – Eastern Agency
- Lomardo Aseret – Fort Defiance Agency
- Seth Damon – Eastern Agency
- Amber Kanazbah Crotty – Northern Agency



Speaker's Report

Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker

Manuel Rico, *Chief of Staff*

Jared Touchin, *Deputy Chief of Staff*

Mary Nez, *Executive Assistant*

Sonlatsa Jim, *Legislative Staff Assistant*

Clarissa Begay, *Legislative Staff Assistant*

Stacy Allison, *Legislative Staff Assistant*

Chris Burnside, *Public Information Officer*

Davina Begaye, *Accounts Maintenance Specialist*

Jacqueline Morgan, *Senior Office Specialist*

Emerson Notah, *Computer Operations Manager*

Eugene Jarvison, *Network Manager*

Ernie Silversmith, *Maintenance Technician*

Message from Speaker Crystalyne Curley

Yá'át'ééh and welcome my colleagues of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, President Dr. Buu Nygren, Madam Vice President Richelle Montoya, Madam Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, chapter officials, federal, state, and county officials, legislative staff, and most importantly, to our Diné People. Thank you for joining us as we welcome you to the 2023 Spring Council Session.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Navajo Nation Council as the legislative body of our peoples' government. While the development of our government remains a work in progress, we recognize that the will of our people to be a part of the government process has never dwindled. In fact, the call of our people to be involved and informed continues to grow. As leaders, the responsibility to make our government open to the people rests on our shoulders. On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, we extend our appreciation to our people who have contributed their efforts and prayers to reach the Council's centennial.

With that in mind, in the coming weeks and months the Office of the Speaker will begin to take our government out to the people in the form of holding Naabik'íyatí Committee meetings in various communities to provide more opportunity for our people to engage with our leaders. This process will also allow the opportunity to have our people begin to come back together to recover and heal from the COVID-19 Pandemic. We understand that public access to Standing Committee meetings is also a top priority and we will seek support to revamp and improve the legislative campus' IT infrastructure capacity to provide stable livestreaming of meetings.

As we begin the spring session, we should also take time to reflect on the teachings of our elders in relation to the recent change in the seasons. Spring is a time of planting

Speaker's Report

new seeds and embracing new growth that will provide us nourishment and see us through the coming seasons. The seeds that we plant during this session with the words we speak as we deliberate over legislative actions will have lasting impacts on our people. As our grandparents always taught us, Ni'hi'saad ayoo bi'dzil, our spoken words have power to create change that improves the livelihood of our people for many years to come, but we have to work together and move forward on a positive path during this session.

I also recognize and thank all of the victims, survivors, and advocates who participated in the Sexual Assault Awareness Walk to the Council Chamber this morning. As the Navajo Nation recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, we continue to pray for everyone who has been impacted by sexual assaults and violence. The 25th Navajo Nation Council is committed to supporting our people and helping to bring resolve to these issues. It is important to also note that each member of the Council has been provided the opportunity to receive sexual harassment prevention training, and we will continue to offer this support for the Council and Legislative Branch staff members annually.

As the 25th Navajo Nation Council convenes for the spring session, I am confident that we will continue to make progress and plan for the future of our Nation. On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I again thank our Diné Citizens for your guidance and support as we move forward.

The Office of the Speaker has coordinated several orientation and work sessions with programs, departments, enterprises, and other entities to provide information for the members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, which is comprised of a majority of new members. This is in addition to the orientation sessions that were coordinated under Speaker Otto Tso, prior to the 25th Navajo Nation Council members taking the oath of office in January. The more informed our Nation's lawmakers are, the more they will be empowered to weigh legislative proposals and elevate their decision making process for our people. Moreover, work sessions are resources to the public and local chapter and organizations.

Each of the Navajo Nation Council Standing Committees are working to establish their respective priorities, which will then guide the establishment of the overall priorities for the Council. The Office of the Speaker has offered assistance and support to each Standing Committee to provide additional support to facilitate and formalize priorities. In doing so, we also have to consider and be open to the priorities of the Nygren-Montoya Administration and the Judicial Branch. In addition, we have also begun meeting with each of the legislative programs to receive their priorities and identify how the Office of the Speaker can support their ongoing initiatives. Each of the legislative programs' quarterly report summaries are included in the report.



Speaker's Report

As we move forward, the Office of the Speaker has brought on staff to support several key initiatives including the implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding including the \$8.8 million per delegate region that was approved under the previous Council, protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act, advancing water rights in Arizona, continuing to implement the water rights secured in New Mexico and Utah, advocating for the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) extension and amendments, veterans priorities, the Diné Action Plan, the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force, state and federal priorities, the FY2024 Comprehensive Budget, scholarship funding, public safety, infrastructure development, Energy Transition Collaborative Team, and many others.

Internally, we also will seek the Council's support for a plan of operation for the Office of the Speaker to provide a foundation and guidance for the office and Legislative Branch. At the direction of Council members, legislative staff are also drafting policies and procedures to guide internal operations and clarify uncertainties in practices and procedures.

On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I thank New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the State Legislature for supporting our Navajo people, chapters, and leadership through the recent approval of over \$50 million in capital outlay funding. During the state's legislative session, members of the Navajo Nation Council met with various state legislators and the Governor to outline our priorities, which included capital outlay projects. We are very grateful that our voices were heard by the Governor and Legislators.

We also thank the Office of the President and Vice President and all of the Chapter officials for their advocacy. This historic amount of funding also includes over \$6 million to support the construction of a Navajo Code Talkers Museum to honor the service and sacrifices of our Diné warriors during World War II.

Under the 25th Navajo Nation Council, several work sessions and orientations were held to receive updates from the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and outside counsel regarding the ongoing efforts to revive water rights settlement discussions in Arizona, and the ongoing work to implement the water rights settlements that were previously finalized with the states of Utah and New Mexico.

We continue to be engaged to strategize on a path forward for water rights in Arizona and to support forthcoming fund management plans for the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act. In New Mexico, we continue to support the development and completion of the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project. With the recent approval by Congress for additional funding, we look forward to seeing more of our communities receive running water.

Speaker's Report

On April 24th, the Little Colorado River adjudication will begin in the Maricopa County Superior Court. Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council will be in attendance to offer our support for the Navajo Nation's case. It took many years to reach this point and many of our past and current leaders have offered depositions in support of the Navajo Nation's claims, including current members of the Council. From the Office of the Speaker, we continue to coordinate meetings and further discussions to strengthen communication and advocacy.

On March 20th, leaders of the Navajo Nation were in Washington, D.C. to attend a U.S. Supreme Court hearing in which attorneys presented oral arguments in the consolidated cases of the Department of the Interior v. Navajo Nation and State of Arizona v. Navajo Nation, which will have longstanding implications for the Navajo Nation's claims to water in the state of Arizona.

The two issues before the Supreme Court are whether the United States has a treaty-based duty to assess the Navajo Nation's water needs and develop a plan to meet them, and whether a lower federal court order requiring the United States to assess the Nation's water needs and develop a plan to meet them would conflict with the Court's decree in Arizona v. California, a ruling that limited the circumstances in which the federal government could divert water from the Lower Colorado River.

The Navajo Nation seeks a favorable ruling from the Supreme Court confirming that the Navajo Nation has a viable claim against the federal government and to permit the Navajo Nation to return to the District Court to present its claim that the United States has an enforceable duty to fulfill its treaty promises that the Navajo Nation will have access to the water it needs to support a flourishing permanent homeland. A decision from the Supreme Court is expected to be issued in June.

The Office of the Speaker has prioritized providing support for the implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which includes bringing on staff to assist with the \$8.8 million that was allocated for each delegate region for local priorities. Sonlatsa Jim, who was previously employed with the Division of Community Development, began working with the Office of the Speaker to offer support in this area. There may be a need for additional outside consultation services to fully implement the expenditure plans approved by the Council. The Office of the Speaker will provide additional support to help expedite the implementation of ARPA funding and regional expenditure plans.



Speaker's Report

On July 15, 2022, Resolution CJNI-29-22 was signed into law allocating the following amounts in ARPA funding:

- \$215 million for water/wastewater
- \$96.4 million for home electricity connections
- \$120 million for broadband
- \$80 million for housing
- \$50 million for housing for Navajo veterans
- \$120 million for new hardship assistance applicants
- \$150 million for bathroom additions
- \$210 million for local chapter priorities
- \$35 for E911 and public safety
- \$19.2 million for health care
- \$5 million for cyber security
- \$15.5 million for former Bennett Freeze area housing

At the direction of the Naabik'iyatí Committee, the Office of the Speaker also coordinated with the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) to provide a report to the Committee regarding the Executive Branch's Financial Process Improvement Team meetings and priorities. We issued a request to OPVP to invite Council members to their weekly meetings to ensure that the Legislative Branch has the opportunity to provide input in the process.

Under the previous Council, the Naabik'iyatí Committee approved Resolution NABIN-36-22, establishing the Naabik'iyatí Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force to “help combat the missing and murdered Diné relative crisis on and off the Navajo Nation.”

NABIN-36-22 tasks the MMDR Task Force with conducting a study to determine how to increase resources for reporting and identifying missing and murdered relatives, to collaborate with programs, departments, and entities within the Navajo Nation and federal and state agencies to identify barriers to address the crisis and create partnerships to improve the reporting of and the investigations and to improve MMDR's processes for information sharing and coordination of resources in regard to reporting and investigating cases of missing and murdered relatives, and to report the findings and recommendations to the Naabik'iyatí Committee and the Office of the President and Vice President.

The Office of the Speaker has assigned staff to provide technical, clerical, and administrative assistance, in accordance with the resolution. Staff is also engaged with the Diné Action Plan Work Group, which utilizes the traditional Navajo planning model of Nitsáhákees (thinking), Nahat'á (planning), Iiná (action), and Siihásin (reflection) to help address public safety,

Speaker's Report

violence, substance abuse, suicide, and missing and murdered Diné relatives on the Navajo Nation.

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) extension and amendments is one of the top priorities at the federal level. In discussions with federal officials and the Navajo Uranium Radiation Victims Committee, it is clear that now is the time to revisit RECA and begin to move forward on congressional legislation that will benefit our Navajo people who worked in uranium mines for the benefit of our country.

In June 2022, a two-year extension was approved by Congress and signed by President Biden. However, a long-term solution has yet to be finalized. We have identified challenges, including the financial costs that will make it challenging to address all of the needs including the requests of downwinders. The Office of the Speaker strongly supports the needs of all of our Navajo people who continue to be impacted by uranium exposure and we will continue to work with the Council to advocate and push for the RECA extension and amendments.

Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council successfully secured several key voting member and co-chair positions under the Tribal Interior Budget Council, during a recent meeting with the 12 Bureau of Indian Affairs regions in Washington D.C. The Tribal-Interior Budget Council provides a forum and process for tribal nations and federal officials to work together in developing annual budget requests for programs under the U.S. Department of the Interior.

For the Navajo Area Region, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and I will serve as the Navajo Nation's primary representatives on the Tribal Interior Budget Council. In 2019, Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton was selected to serve as the co-chair of TIBC's Public Safety and Justice Sub-Committee, a role that she will continue to serve.

By a vote of TIBC's primary representatives on April 14th, Council Delegate Nathan Notah was selected to serve on the Land, Water, and Natural Resources Sub-Committee, Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie will serve on the Public Safety and Justice Sub-Committee, and Council Delegate Otto Tso was selected to serve on the Transportation Sub-Committee. Shawna Becenti, who serves as the Head of School for Navajo Preparatory School, was nominated by President Nygren and selected to serve on the Education Sub-Committee.

I thank my Council colleagues, President Nygren, and Navajo Area BIA Director Greg Mehojah for presenting a strong and united voice before the Tribal Interior Budget Council. It is important that we continue to carefully coordinate to secure more resources that support our communities. I congratulate the Council Delegates and Ms. Shawna Becenti for their selections. These appointments are key to securing more resources for critical services related

Speaker's Report

to roads, educational opportunities, natural resources, and public safety. Through these key positions, the Navajo Nation will have greater influence in the federal budget process.



Navajo Nation Office of the Auditor General

The Office of the Auditor General underwent a peer review in 2023, which was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The peer review concluded with a PASS rating and suggestions for continuous improvement. The Office of the Auditor General staff should be commended for their hard work, professionalism, diligence, and commitment to providing assurance services for the Navajo Nation, despite facing challenges such as staff shortages.

The Office of the Auditor General has a budget for 15 employees, including two administrative staff members and 12 auditors. There will be five vacant positions by the end of the second quarter. The Office continues advertising these positions and is expanding recruitment efforts to fill the vacancies.

The Office conducts chapter audits. For non-certified chapters, this consists of a Community Services Coordinator and Accounts Maintenance Specialist; for certified chapters, it includes a Chapter Manager and Administrative Assistant. There are four non-certified chapters on our annual work plan that our Office has not audited in over 20 years due to staff vacancies. This has become an ongoing issue for these non-certified chapters.

The Budget and Finance Committee Resolution BFJA-05-12 directed all chapters to grant the Office of the Auditor General read-only or view-only access to their financial accounting systems and bank accounts, requiring them to submit backups by the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter. Despite repeated requests, it has become an ongoing practice for a handful of chapters to refrain from submitting their MIP backups. The Office continues working with Administrative Service Centers to identify solutions and improve the backup submission process to address this issue.

The Office needs help hiring suitable candidates for vacant auditor positions and retaining auditors after investing substantial resources in staff training. We are working with the Department of Personnel Management (DPM) to fill these vacancies and improve our applicant vetting process. Additionally, we offer performance evaluations to reward high achievement and consider employee bonuses or other incentives to recognize hard work and help with retention. As competition is fierce with other Navajo Nation programs/departments, we have lost potential applicants as well as good auditors to outside organizations for higher pay. The need for more audit staff impacts program performance and productivity.

The Office is still trying to fill five vacant positions, including the Auditor General position. Despite recruitment efforts, we have yet to be able to do so due to a lack of full staffing and having to compete with other Navajo Nation departments and programs as well as outside organizations. This shortage significantly impacts our ability to meet performance measures outlined in Form 2, resulting in us outsourcing audits which are also limited by our consulting budget.

We continue to address plan of operation amendments and revise our internal procedures manual.



Speaker's Report

We need to update the section that authorizes the Auditor General to recommend sanctions for non-compliance; support for sanctions has been declining, so we are considering other alternatives. As part of the fiscal year 2022 budget, an audit of the Office of the Speaker was requested. Although initially planned on being outsourced, no external firm submitted a proposal, and in-house auditors will now conduct it in May 2023.

Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission (NNHRC) received seven new complaints and had 60 cases open, of which 82 follow-ups were conducted, and 7 cases were closed. NNHRC referred the case concerning AAMCO of Flagstaff to the Arizona Attorney General's office; they also assisted Navajo consumers with Zoom meetings. The nation, along with the commission are suing the San Juan County, New Mexico, for voter disenfranchisement, with depositions scheduled for FY23 Q3.

San Juan County, Utah, is still subject to a 2018 settlement agreement, and the Commission is working with the Utah ACLU and County Clerk/Auditor to address election issues.

NNHRC partnered with Human Rights Watch to investigate healthcare funding on and off the Navajo Nation. They also held a work session with representatives from HRW to review long-term care facilities and the implementation of Navajo medicinal plants.

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission (NNHRC) held two public seminars in Kayenta and Mexican Water, Arizona, in Q2 of FY23. NNHRC identified excessive fees by funeral homes in Navajo families. NNHRC reported increased reports related to vehicle purchases and encouraged buyers to read contracts carefully before signing. Two permanent employees were hired for Administrative and Office Assistant positions.

Cora Maxx Phillips and Steven Begay represent the NNHRC in dealings with indigenous nations and the U.S. Government.

Madam Speaker Crystalyne Curley and representatives from the Buu Nygren Administration met with the NNHRC to discuss plans for 2023.

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission (NNHRC) supported New Mexico House of Representatives Joint Resolution 1 and House Bill 4, legislation that seeks to protect residents from voter suppression, create an early voting period, update voter registrations, and expand voter education.

NNHRC established the Navajoland Nursing Home as a Public Law 93-638 Contract Facility to provide accessible healthcare services in rural areas. NNHRC urged Santa Fe to oppose a resolution to restore the "Soldiers' Monument" or "Obelisk" at the Santa Fe Plaza out of respect for Native American culture.

NNHRC met all performance measures during the reporting cycle and has no conditions of appropriation. They will address complaints, improve their social media presence, and provide public information and service delivery for the upcoming quarter.

Navajo Utah Commission

Summary of Significant Accomplishments Second Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023: Accomplishments and activities for the Navajo Utah Commission during the period of January 1, 2023, through March 31, 2023, are enumerated as follows:

The Navajo Utah Commission achieved various accomplishments and activities during the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2023, from January 1st through March 31st: Developed 9 projects with state, local and tribal partners to improve economic development in the community. Hosted 14 workshops and hubs across the state to share information about available services and resources. Created a community collaborative leadership development program to increase civic engagement. Collaborated with other organizations for an emergency relief effort for area residents affected by natural disasters. Held public forums on a range of topics such as renewable energy, water rights, self-governance, housing, and infrastructure. Advanced 5 policy initiatives at the legislative level to support economic self-sufficiency and increased access to essential services like healthcare and education.

In January 2023, the Arizona Rural Development Office informed the Navajo Utah Commission and other entities of a funding opportunity from the Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG). A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued with a February 28th deadline. The Navajo Utah Commission invested considerable effort and resources in an application to receive \$80,000 via the RBDG to fund a market and site analysis for a shopping center in Montezuma Creek, Utah. The proposal was successfully submitted on time, though the lack of tribal match funding was the only concern.

The Navajo Utah Commission conducted three regular monthly meetings and one special meeting via telecommunications in the 2nd Quarter of Fiscal Year 2023, attended 18 hybrid meetings with various tribal, county, state, and federal entities to discuss matters of importance to seven Utah Chapters, identified and prioritized twelve legislative priorities for advocacy and lobbying during the 2023 Utah Legislature.

Staff attended the Utah Tribal Leaders Meeting and Caucus Day at the State Capitol, initiated discussions with San Juan County to work with the Navajo Division of Transportation, conducted a feasibility analysis regarding designating Red Mesa Road (N35) as a transport corridor in the State road system, held a meeting with Rural Development Office staff to discuss funding opportunities.

- Submitted an RFP seeking 80K from RBDG to conduct market/site analysis for a shopping center



Speaker's Report

in Montezuma Creek, Utah.

- Working with Dennehotso Chapter to construct a housing unit using funds from Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund and Utah Navajo Revitalization Fund.
- Discussed Connecting Utah Broadband Initiative with Rebecca Dilg; regional chapter consultation agreed upon.
- Held Regional tribal consultation session at Trust Fund Office in Blanding addressing rural digital connectivity planning & funding opportunities.
- Initiated construction process
- Regional tribal consultation session was held at the Trust Fund Office in Blanding, which addressed rural digital connectivity planning and funding opportunities.
- Construction process for Montezuma Creek Multipurpose Center Project, appropriated \$3.4 million in Sihasin Funds by the 24th Navajo Nation Council, initiated with meeting discussing expenditure process.
- A 2016 Utah Navajo Revitalization Fund grant of \$150,000 was repurposed for Aneth Chapter Solid Waste Drop-Off Station Project.
- Scope of work amended for Aneth Chapter 24 Acre Master Planning Project to include architectural planning for all facilities on-site.
- UDOT committed \$76 million towards rehabilitation of SR 162 and 163 and construction of a roundabout in Montezuma Creek; awaiting right-of-way approval from NN to proceed.
- The Naatsis'aan Development Association and the Naatsis'Aan Chapter held a virtual meeting on March 28 to update progress on the Oljato/Naatsis'aan transportation project.
- Participants included Navajo Utah Commission, Utah State Senator David Hinkins, San Juan County Commission, and the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition.
- The main topic of discussion was securing funding for an environmental impact study required by the proposed transportation route.
- Support from the Navajo Nation was appreciated and will need to be secured again during 2024's legislative session.

Navajo Nation Ethics and Rules Office

On October 15, 2021, Lewnell B. Harrison was appointed Interim Executive Director to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Ethics and Rules Office. The ERO contracts with Joe W. Washington, Attorney for all legal filings and hearings. On November 10, 2021, the ERO requested and was approved by the Motor Vehicle Review Board to replace their current high mileage vehicles with two newer vehicles. They have received one unmarked car and are working with fleet management to get the other vehicle replaced in this fiscal year.

2023 Spring Council Session



On January 11, 2023, the ERO conducted three (3) Orders to Show Cause Hearings for Respondents who still needed to pay their restitutions and one (1) hearing for a noncompliance Chapter Official. On March 9, 2023, four (4) new complaints against School Board Officials were heard, and two Respondents were found to have violated the Ethics Law, with the other two cases being continued. The office has been trying to locate and contact individuals who have outstanding restitution with the Navajo Nation, with some success in obtaining restitution from Respondents who had never made payments. Intakes are continually received and reviewed for possible investigation and prosecution, with each Investigator currently having several investigations they are working on. The office also continues to answer questions regarding the ERO process by phone or email.

- For FY 2023's 2nd quarter, plans included interview selections for the Presenting Officer position and collecting restitution owed to the Navajo Nation.
- Office procedures and fixed timelines were set for filing Orders to Show Cause and Garnishment proceedings.
- Consultations were provided for local governments, Chapters, School Boards, and other Navajo Nation Departments.
- Training was also provided on Ethics in Government Law/Standards of Conduct and monthly training sessions for new employees.
- Collaboration took place with the Public Integrity Task Force, FBI, Office of Inspector General, and Internal Revenue Service on task forces and work groups.
- Processed intakes on elected or appointed officials and Ethics Clearance applications.
- Filed Orders to Show Cause cases in Window Rock District Court according to 2 NNC Sec 3800 et seq.
- Work with Law & Order Committee to revise Ethics & Rules Law & Order, Standards of Conduct.

Eastern Navajo Land Commission

During the reported quarter, Commission meetings were not held due to the pending legislation to appoint commissioners. Upon confirmation of Commissioners, Executive Director will schedule regular meetings.

Navajo Nation Council passed legislation supporting the Eastern Navajo Land Exchange and Archaeological Protection Act of 2022. U.S. Congressional delegation drafting Congressional Bill in coordination with Office of Eastern Navajo Land Commission.

In a special meeting in January, the former commission resolved to keep Mr. Jeremy DeGroat as



Speaker's Report

Director for Office of ENLC; tasked with completing directives and handling day-to-day operations. Ms. Lena Calamity was promoted to Administrative Assistant, leaving the vacant position of Statistical Technician, being advertised through the Department of Personnel Management website for one more week.

In November, the Navajo Nation Council enacted the NELI Project to support the Eastern Navajo Agency Land Exchange and Archaeological Protection Act of 2022. Due to budget shortfalls, work has been completed for the Production of booklets for the ENLC that are to be sent to “Southwest Printing Company” in Cortez, Colorado. Three hundred copies have been ordered. The Executive Director and OENLC Staff are awaiting confirmation of new Commissioners so that new projects can be presented to the Commission.

Draft form of the NELI legislation prepared by legislative counsel for Senator Lujan’s office, with maps added and ready for introduction by the Senator. Executive Director to inform Commission of any movement. Statistical data and 42 interpretive thematic maps illustrating the degree of allotment ownership by the Navajo Nation in draft form, plus related data sheets. A booklet publication will report combined sales results from 2016 and 2019.

Work with Congressional Staff, Navajo Nation Washington Office Staff, and U.S. Congressional Staff to introduce a NELI bill. Distribute published booklets and information about the Navajo LBBP-II Report to interested parties. Continue collaboration with Navajo DNR and NLD regarding land purchases the Commission approves.

Office of Navajo Government Development

Ms. Arviso-Ciocco resigned as a Policy Analyst with the Office of Navajo Government Development and was appointed to Nygren-Montoya Administration. Mr. Black, a former Project & Legislative Aide at Diné College and recipient of the 2022 Champion for Change by The Center for Native American Youth, were welcomed as the new Policy Analyst. Administrative Assistant Mr. Tauve Begaye resigned to work with the Navajo Nation Washington Office on February 10, 2023. ONGD will retain the Research Assistant position and fill the opening once reviewed by Executive Director.

The Navajo Government Reform Project is continuing to develop the Diyin Nohookaa Dine’e Bi Beehaz a’anii Bitsí Siléí. A presentation on the history of the Navajo Nation Government, the history of CNGD & ONGD, and current governmental issues has been created.

- Leadership roles for government reforms were drafted.
- Ongoing discussion of the Local Governance Section between ONGD & CNGD.
- Essential Attributes of a Democracy presentation finalized for public engagement.

Speaker's Report

Herman Daniels agreed to sponsor Legislation to amend Title 11 of the 25th Navajo Nation Council's code, which governs Initiatives. The proposed amendments are intended to empower the Navajo people. Amendments aim to improve procedures related to Initiatives.

Office of Navajo Government Development presented Title 26 (Local Governance Act) information to Littlewater Chapter Officials Administrators on Wednesday, January 18. The same office also gave a presentation regarding Navajo Nation Government in Albuquerque on March 24 for Dine Bi Olta School Board Association.

Harvard University students taking "Native Americans in the 21st Century: Nation Building II" met with ONGD to discuss their class project for client Building Communities Inc., focused on digitizing Navajo Government.

Investigated the Local Governance Act to develop proposals for alternative central and chapter government forms. Drafted proposals for chapter governance and a presentation on the Key Attributes of a Democracy. Composed a proposal for Navajo Nation Elections.

The Women's Commission is inactive for FY 2022 and will possibly resume with the incoming First Lady Office. A phone call was placed to the Judicial Branch to advertise their representative position to the Commission on Navajo Government Development.

Commissioner Larry Rodgers has retired from the Legislative Branch and is stepping down from his commission, and a new commissioner will be nominated within the Branch.

ONGD is coordinating with Diné College and Associated Students of Diné College to seek a new Commissioner after Natasha Goldtooth's term expiration.

Shawnevan Dale, Fort Defiance Agency Nominee, resigned as Chair of CNGD on January 10, 2023. He was appointed by President Nygren as Director of General Services, pending approval by Navajo Nation Council.

The Commission suspended its reform initiatives on three-branch government and a proposed Navajo Nation Constitution in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission has instead developed a proposal for a comprehensive Navajo Government Reform Project to be voted upon by the Navajo people. This change was due to recent decisions of the Navajo Supreme Court about the project. The Commission is working on a comprehensive document for the reform project, which is currently in draft form and protected by the Navajo Privacy and Access to Information Act.

The ONGD and CNGD will continue to focus on Government reform measures in Fiscal Year 2023, exploring assistance to Navajo Chapters, developing a comprehensive system of government



Speaker's Report

recommendations, and forming new partnerships.

- Roderick Begay will present a history of the Local Governance Act, and the ONGD Executive Director will show on the Navajo Government Reform Project at an additional Local Governance Seminar.
- The ONGD will support the Commission on Navajo Government Development and work to fulfill full commission membership.
- The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission on Navajo Government Development is set for April 21, 2023, at 1:00 PM via teleconference and in-person.

Navajo Nation Labor Commission

NNLC efficiently used allocated funds, held 20 hearings, and processed one appealed case to the Navajo Nation Supreme Court in Q2 FY2023.

NNLC also timely processed 15 formally filed complaints, adjudicated/settlement conferences for 15 NPEA cases, closed and issued five continuance orders, and issued 650 subpoenas and notices of hearings.

Goals for Q3 FY2023 include Presidential and HEHS appointment of NNLC members as per CJV-42-16, efficient use of allocated funds and timely processing appealed cases, timely adjudication of NPEA cases by teleconference/Zoom/in-person hearings, timely processing of filed complaints & petitions, closure of current NNLC issues, amendment of Rules of Procedure, assistance in proposed amendments to Plan of Operation, and preservation of substantial rights according to Navajo Law.

NNLC lacks one (1) NNC Health, Education, and Human Services Committee duly appointment and (1) Navajo Nation Presidential appointment. A vacancy has been advertised.

- NNLC will continue to expedite office renovations & funding & per covid-19 guidance
- Continue the need for sanitation supplies regarding; covid-19 issues
- Need equipment for audio Zoom NNLC hearings
- NNLC & office updating NNLC Plan of operation
- Confirmation of compliance with the Federal American Disability Act during & the first quarter.

Office of Legislative Services

During the 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year 2023, the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) achieved several accomplishments. These include processing 48 legislations and closing out 25 resolutions, personnel participating in 60 council/standing meetings and work sessions, expending approximately 34% of the FY 2023 budget for the department and 34% for the Legislative District Assistant's program, assisting one workforce employee with temporary employment, providing LDA ARPA update and orientation meeting and P-Card packet orientation with 25th Navajo Nation Council.

For the 3rd quarter of Fiscal Year 2023, the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) has established several goals to be accomplished. These include increasing training opportunities for staff through professional development and budget process training, implementing Navajo translation certification, expanding OLS education to the general public and other Navajo Nation divisions/departments related to the Navajo Nation legislative process and budget process, updating the current strategic plan (last updated in 2017), continuing OLS Resolution Archive Project, implementing legislative tracking – DIBB backup storage for personnel and filling vacant positions: OLS Legislative Secretary I (2); Legislative Assistant (1); Legislative Advisor (2).

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) faces a need for more certified translators after staff retirement. OLS is researching Navajo translation certification programs and contacting local colleges and universities to address this issue. OLS is also making contact with individuals who are already certified, translators.

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) provides a full range of professional, technical, and administrative support services to the Navajo Nation Council, Standing Committees, unstaffed Commissions, Task Forces or Boards of the Navajo Nation Council, and Council Delegates. This includes assisting with legislative processes such as council/standing committee meetings, hearings, processing council/standing committee journals/transcripts, and engrossment of approved resolutions. OLS will also ensure individual staff participates in training and workshops as needed.

Navajo Election Administration

Navajo Election Administration (NEA) provided oaths of office and certificates of election to 111 incoming officials on January 10, 2023. 13 candidates have yet to file their campaign expense statements from the 2022 General Election. Vacancies were declared for 24 positions, including 12 Chapter Official positions, 0 Grazing Committee Member positions, two Farm Board positions, nine School Board positions, and one Navajo Board of Election Supervisor position; additionally, a special election was held for one unopposed candidate on March 27, 2023. Oaths of Office were administered to seven individuals who were appointed.



Speaker's Report

NEA conducted four nomination processes and elections at the request of affected chapters, as well as two recalls for chapter officials and one for a grazing committee member. Fourteen (14) total resignations/ or deceased of political officials occurred. NEA conducted an orientation on the duties & responsibilities of NBOES and a work session on a portion of the Navaho Nation Election Code (11 NNC). NEA removed two school board members due to not meeting qualifications.

- Ten resolutions approved

The Navajo Election Administration (NEA) provides election-related services to the Navajo Nation within and outside reservations, including running Primary and General Elections, Special Elections, and Referendum/Initiative elections.

- NEA conducts research on best election voting machines, fills remaining vacant positions, and maintains a voter registration database with more registration drives and training of registrars.
- Provides election information to the public through chapters, radio announcements, social media, and agency meetings.
- Updates NEA Election Code Rules and Regulations; Title 11 amendments.
- Works on obtaining new buildings for all agency election offices, including the central NEA building.
- Provides staff support to Navajo Board of Election Supervisors for policy recommendations regarding elections and voter education/assistance to other entities as requested.

The Navajo Board of Election Supervisors (NBOES) holds two (2) regular monthly meetings on the second and fourth Thursdays. Meetings are open to the public, with agendas available via email, NEA website, and Legislative Branch Website. Radio stations also advertise meetings via public service announcements.

From January 2023 to March 2023, NBOES held six (6) meetings: January 6th, 26th; February 9th, 23rd; March 9th and 24th.

The Navajo Board of Election Supervisors passed several resolutions during this reporting period, covering topics such as canvassing and certifying election results, confirming board member selections, amending the Navajo Nation Voter Registrar Manual, and extending the time for an appointment to various positions.

The Navajo Election Administration trains voter registrars and conducts voter registrations in person and via Zoom. Many voters in the Navajo Nation register to vote to seek assistance from the Nation. As of March 30, 2023, there are 127,888 registered voters on the reservation. The 24th Navajo Nation Council approved additional appropriations legislation to purchase new equipment for the NEA to serve their people better.





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