



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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July 24, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Pictured on left is District Court Judge Louise Grant and pictured on right is District Judge Eleanor Shirley. Both women were given the Oath of Office by Judge Bedonie after both being appointed as probationary associate justices on the Navajo Supreme Court (*Photo by Bronson Peshlakai*)

Women confirmed to Supreme Court by Council

New Navajo Tribal Utility Authority general manager's employment contract approved

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 21st Navajo Nation Council knocked off 11 pieces of legislation – but only acted on five of them – on Day Four of the 2008 Summer Session Thursday.

The council confirmed the appointments of district court judges Louise Grant and Eleanor Shirley as probationary associate justices on the Navajo Supreme Court.

In consideration of Grant's appointment, Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Dennehotso) pointed out that a new precedent to ask questions of the appointees was established in a previous session when Arbin Mitchell was appointed.

"When we were appointing Arbin Mitchell we definitely posed lots of questions to him," Benally said. "We still acted in favor of him after we posed questions."

The Council didn't make a motion to ask Grant or Shirley any questions. Grant received a 65-10 vote in favor of her confirmation, and Shirley received a 66-10 approval from the Council for her appointment. Both appointees were given an oath of office by Judge Bedonie.

The morning started out by the Council amending the agenda by a 70-2 vote that deleted Legislation No. 0211-08 which was a bill that appropriated \$1 million to the Diné Power Authority, the Navajo Transmission Project, the Desert Rock Project and other energy development projects.

Legislation 0229-08, an act to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$2.5 million to the Navajo Election Administration was passed over because the sponsor, Peterson Yazzie (Naschitti/Tohatchi), was not available to present the bill.

Legislations 0876-07 and 0251-08 both were ruled Out of Order by the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan because of clerical discrepancies between the legislation and the supporting documents. Legislation 876-08 had different amounts of appropriations listed on the bill than on the budget exhibit documents. The bill would have given the Rehoboth Christian School \$500,000 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to assist funding of a new sports and fitness center, and the Rehoboth Navajo language and academic support program. Legislation 251-08, a \$200,000 appropriation to fund a lobbyist to lobby Washington D.C. delegates on behalf of the Public Safety Committee had discrepancies on the bill's performance measures supporting document.

Legislation 0442-07, which approved the Navajo Nation Sales Tax Fairness in Distribution Act was passed by a 51-28 vote. Council Delegate Johnny Naize (Tselani/Cottonwood/Nazlini) sponsored the legislation

In the Council's afternoon session, legislation 0716-07; Enacting the Board of Education Act of 2007, an amendment to Title 10 of the Navajo Nation Code was passed over because bill sponsor Willie Tracy was not available to present the bill to the Council.

Legislation 0288-08, which authorized the demolition and removal of the dilapidated and condemned Tuba City Detention Center, was ruled out of order by Speaker Morgan because the forms and assignment of legislation to the appropriate committees was not handled properly. Two amendments that stipulated that the reports should be both written and oral and a measure to add a directive stipulating this law would take affect for the fall session of the Navajo Nation Council, which is scheduled to happen Oct. 21 to 23, 2009, was also approved by the Council.

In its last consideration of the day, the Council voted 65-4 to suspend the floor rules to skip ahead to Legislation 0351-08; an act approving the employment contract of Walter W. Haase as the general manager of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. The legislation, sponsored by Mel R. Begay (Coyote Canyon/Mexican Springs), passed by a 69-2 vote. Haase told the Council that he held various general manager positions at utility companies in Chicago, Jamestown, N.Y., North Carolina and began working at NTUA about six months ago.

More information on the 2008 Summer Session of the 21st Navajo Nation Council can be found at www.navajonationcouncil.org.