



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Safety Committee hears report from department heads on status of public safety, judicial facilities

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Public Safety Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council met today during a special meeting to discuss updates on public safety and judicial facility projects funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

The purpose of the special meeting was to resolve issues among key Navajo Nation personnel by identifying and clarifying corrective actions necessary to streamline the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) process for funding of projects in Crownpoint, N.M., Kayenta and Tuba City, Ariz.

Delores Greyeyes, director for Navajo Department of Corrections, said it is important to have financial reports and contracts submitted on time.

“Untimely reports and delay of contracts have brought us here,” Greyeyes explained. “I got the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) saying that financial reports were late. The U.S. DOJ is requesting to have a correction action plan to be approved for funding. The Navajo Nation Department of Finance has to submit financial reports to meet the U.S. DOJ’s request of a corrective action plan.”

The U.S. DOJ is the federal agency appropriating ARRA funds for the Navajo Nation’s public safety and judicial facility projects.

Mark Grant, Navajo Nation Controller, said ARRA funds for the projects were available to spend which eased concerns of the Navajo Nation officials who feared ARRA funds would possibly be in jeopardy if the Navajo Nation did not act expeditiously.

“My understanding is that the budget has been set up, finally. And once the budget is set up money can be spent to work on the project,” Grant said. “Once money is spent, we can start drawing down for reimbursement.”

A meeting is scheduled May 7 to determine whether the Navajo Department of Corrections or the Office of Engineering and Design Services will be the lead entity for the construction pact. Determining a focal point of contact is another issue delaying construction on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Department of Justice is facilitating legal advice in this effort.

Council Delegate Hope MacDonald Lone Tree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) recommended the Navajo Nation officials to decrease the amount of key players among other recommendations in order to help streamline the bureaucratic process.

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"The least amount of people in the process is the most efficient way to get this done," Lone Tree said. "I do not know why we have too many people involved; too many hands on the steering wheel will cause these projects to crash."

"People in the communities are leery of whether the Navajo Nation government can carry out the projects," Lone Tree added. "I would like to show the people that we can do this."

The committee directed the Navajo Nation officials to implement their recommendations and report these corrective action plans at the committee's next regular meeting, Monday, May 10.

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