



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 29, 2016

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee receives report on public safety issues in Alamo and Tohajiilee

TOHAJIILEE, N.M. – On Friday during a special meeting, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Navajo Police Department along with Tohajiilee and Alamo chapter officials, regarding public safety issues and concerns within the two communities.

According to a Tohajiilee Chapter resolution passed in June 2016, the two chapters are requesting the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety and Navajo Nation Council to create a new police district with a recurring annual budget to serve the communities of Tohajiilee and Alamo. The two communities are currently under Crownpoint Police District, which is located approximately 148 miles from Alamo and 121 miles from Tohajiilee.

Currently there are seven police districts within the Navajo Nation located in Shiprock, Dilkon, Tó Nanees Dizi, Kayenta, Crownpoint, Chinle, and Window Rock.

“Crime rates, the quantity of emergency and service calls, and the amount of arrests would justify the need to create a new police district. Is this information available? Also, are the land withdrawals, land clearances, and other requirements completed at the proposed police district office?” asked LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood).

NNPD Chief of Police Phillip B. Francisco stated that there are no statistics or data regarding crime, service and emergency calls, injuries, accidents or arrests for the two communities due to the shortage of police officers.

Alamo Chapter president Stanley Herrera said Alamo should be the prime location for a police district because of its rural location. The chapter has completed a land survey, land withdrawal, environmental and archeological clearances, and infrastructural needs are completed for the proposed site, added Herrera.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) questioned how many police officers are working in the two communities and what the response time is for emergency calls.

According to NNDPS Sr. Police Officer Pamela Hurley-Vandever there are three police officers that take on the duty to protect and serve the two communities. The response time from Tohajiilee to

Alamo takes 1.5 hours one-way and it takes another 2.5 hours to transport an offender to a drop-off spot in Grants, New Mexico. All arrested individuals are taken to Crownpoint police station. The workload for three officers is unbearable and there is no time to record or analyze statistics, added Officer Hurley-Vandever.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) asked if NNPD can collaborate with county and federal police officers to address the two community's public safety issues.

"Is there a way we can utilize federal officers? Is that possible? Are there any cross-commissions between the county governments and the communities? How can we address this issues with other law enforcements agencies because illegal activities are on the rise," stated Delegate Smith.

LOC members recommended that the Chief of Police prepare an assessment on the effectiveness, duties, and cost of all seven police districts to determine if Tohajiilee and Alamo need their own police district and recommended a meeting with all surrounding county police districts to discuss partnerships.

The Law and Order Committee approved the report with a 2-0 vote. A follow up meeting will occur with all parties when recommendations are completed.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council