



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Budget and Finance Committee receive report from the Diné Development Corporation

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee received a report from the Diné Development Corporation, a Navajo Nation business entity that specializes in federal contracting, business development support, information technology, data management and development, construction services, energy development, and software solutions.

The DDC was established in 2004 through Navajo Nation Council Resolution CJY-34-04, with 11 business locations throughout the United States. According to the report, the DDC must report to their shareholder representatives twice a year, which is comprised of Council members from each Standing Committee.

According to the report provided by DDC chief executive officer Austin Tsosie, the structure of the corporation has changed significantly to address past business practices that were not in line with the financial policies of the business and the Navajo Nation. Tsosie said the DDC is seeking to establish a more concrete relationship with the Navajo Nation and to appoint a BFC shareholder representative.

BFC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) said if there were any misuse of funds by the corporation, even if it occurred before the new management took office, names should be provided so an investigation could be initiated.

“You mentioned there was lavish spending in the past, but you didn’t give us their names. It looks like this corporation was led astray. You said you had a revenue of \$70 million, so I am real interested in finding out where that went. If the lavish spenders misused the funds, they should be held accountable,” said Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Tsosie added that DDC would also need to increase efforts to recruit additional Navajo members to be employed with the corporation and advertise the opportunities to recent college graduates.

Yazzie responded that the former mismanagement of the DDC is currently being litigated and names could not be provided at this time. In regards to recruitment, Yazzie stated that the DDC provides a portion of their revenue to scholarships for Navajo students studying computer engineering and any other subjects related to the field of information technology.

BFC vice chair Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinõn, Whippoorwill) said despite the report not being comprehensive, he expressed his appreciation for the corporation's work to increase revenues for the Navajo Nation.

"In terms of your revenue, I have to compliment you. You have generated \$463 million over a nine-year period. That's awesome to be able to be that engaged and get those contracts, and you should be commended in that respect," said Delegate Witherspoon.

Although Delegate Witherspoon commended the DDC, he reminded the corporation that they would need to return back to the BFC to provide a further in-depth report regarding their revenues, giveback program, dividends, and any other financial information regarding the current status of the DDC.

Delegate Witherspoon added that legislation would be introduced to appoint a member of the BFC to fulfill the shareholder representative vacancy, which requires a member of the committee.

BFC members voted 2-1 to accept the report. Yazzie informed BFC members that the corporation would have a thorough report provided to the committee on April 11.

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