



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council confirms the appointment of Pearline Kirk to serve as the Navajo Nation's Controller

WINDOW ROCK – During a special session held on Thursday, the Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0063-17, confirming the appointment of Pearline Kirk to serve as the Controller of the Navajo Nation. Kirk was recently appointed by the President to serve as the Navajo Nation's top financial officer to oversee the Office of the Controller and the Nation's finances.

Council members voted to add the legislation to the agenda at the start of the special session.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) and Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell, highlighted Kirk's credentials and professional work experience while asking for the Council's support for the appointment.

Mitchell said that Kirk's past experience working with the Navajo Minerals Department, Department of Justice, and the Office of Navajo Tax Commission have provided her with knowledge of the Navajo Nation's complex government, legal system, and revenues.

Kirk, a member of the Navajo Nation originally from the community of Kin Dah Lichíí, is a licensed Certified Public Accountant whose professional experience includes serving as a partner with the Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLC law firm, assistant attorney general with the Navajo Nation, tax auditor for the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission, and several other occupations.

Her educational achievements include a Juris Doctorate from the Sandra Day O'Connor School of Law, a Master of Business Administration, and a Master of Taxation from Arizona State University. In addition, she is licensed to practice law in the state of Arizona and the Navajo Nation.

Kirk's maternal clan is Tódích'íí'nii (Bitter Water Clan) and born for Nakaii Dine'é (Mexican Clan). Her maternal grandfather's clan is Mą'ii Deeshgiizhinii (Coyote Pass People) and her paternal grandfather's clan is Tábaqhá (Water's Edge Clan).

In her comments to the Council, Kirk said that her parents have always stressed the importance of education. She also stated that she feels that her educational background and professional experience will help in her role as the Controller, and that she wanted to come home and give back to the Navajo Nation after years of working in other states and for other tribes.

Prior to going into executive session to discuss a personnel matter, several Council members expressed their support for the appointment.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) said he appreciates having a member of the Navajo Nation appointed to the position, and complimented Kirk for her ability to speak the Navajo language and asked for her support for ongoing economic development projects.

Delegate Tso said he is hopeful that Kirk will devote more time to the position than the previous Controller, who was removed due to concerns over his high salary while being required to work only three days a week, in accordance with the negotiated terms of his agreement with the President.

“We need someone who will work,” said Delegate Tso. “If I was aware of the terms of [the previous Controller’s] agreement, I wouldn’t have supported his confirmation.”

Following the discussion, Council members voted 11-1 to approve the confirmation of Kirk to serve as the Controller. In accordance with Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Controller will serve at the pleasure of the Navajo Nation Council.

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