



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Alamo community shares public safety concerns with the Law and Order Committee



PHOTO: The Law and Order Committee met with Alamo Chapter officials, the Alamo Navajo Community School Board of Trustees, Socorro County, and community members in Alamo, N.M. on April 23, 2018.

ALAMO, N.M. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee met in Alamo and received reports from the Alamo Navajo Community School Board of Trustees officials, Alamo Chapter officials, Socorro County District 2 Commissioner Martha Salas, Socorro County Sheriff William Armijo, and community members regarding public safety issues and concerns in Alamo, a “satellite chapter” located approximately 85-miles southwest of Albuquerque.

The Board of Trustees and chapter officials emphasized that the community is 220-miles away from the Navajo Nation’s capital of Window Rock, adding that the remote location has drastically impacted education, socioeconomic, and public safety conditions for the community members.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) sympathized with the concerns from local leadership and community members regarding the lack of resources and services that are needed to adequately protect and improve the community.

“The public safety conditions need to be addressed immediately. The local leadership and Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety need to come together and begin a strategic plan to address public safety,” said Delegate Yazzie, “I also express my appreciation to Sheriff Armijo for responding to emergency calls in Alamo and working closely with the Navajo Nation.”

He added that the intergovernmental agreement between the Navajo Nation and Socorro County is still effective and allows the county to assist with public safety in Alamo.

Sheriff Armijo said response times to emergencies and incidents are lengthy at times due to the rural location of the community, and added that the county will continue to provide public safety support moving forward.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) recommended that the chapter withdraw land and complete land clearances to construct a police station and to work with the committee to secure proper funding.

“There needs to be continuous community leadership and advocacy to create a police district in Alamo. Many communities throughout the Nation encounter the same situation, however, many have taken the initiative to build sub stations, said Delegate Begay. “The community also needs to work closely with NNDPS to put the initiative on the next fiscal year budget priorities.”

At the end of the discussion, LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) also recommended that NNDPS begin reevaluating the recruitment and retention of police officers within the Nation.

“It was reported that we only have 150 officers on the Navajo Nation. Better incentives and benefits for police officers need to be created to attract officers,” said Delegate Smith.

The Law and Order Committee approved the reports with a 3-0 vote. The committee will schedule another meeting in Alamo to revisit the issue and receive updates from the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

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