



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee encourages communities to collaborate with the police to address crime

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Nahata Dziil Governance Commission and Sanders Unified School District regarding bomb threats and methamphetamine within the community.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), who represents the community of Nahata Dziil, stated that the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety and Navajo Nation Police Department are ineffective in addressing serious crimes in a timely manner.

“On Dec. 3 there was an emergency at the school. Bomb threats were made and the Nation’s and county police were called but they did not respond to the incident quickly. The safety of students and community members is at jeopardy when police officers can not address an emergency quickly,” said Delegate Smith.

According to the letter from Sanders Unified School District superintendent Kim J. Pearce, the NNPD were notified during the bomb threat, and one officer arrived at the school after the incident. The school’s crisis management plan cannot be effective if law enforcement fails to address emergencies in a timely manner, added Pearce.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) asked if the Nahata Dziil Governance Commission and Sanders Unified School District addressed their concerns formally with the NNPDPS director Jesse Delmar before coming to the committee.

“I understand the community and school’s frustration, however, there are proper procedures to be taken before coming before the committee. The community and school should have worked with the public safety division first, because this concern could be resolved internally,” said Delegate Yazzie.

Additionally, LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) stated that the NNPD is doing their best to address all public safety concerns with limited resources.

“The Nation’s police continue to struggle with the number of police officers. The importance of cross commissioning should come into play during an incident like this. The community, school, and the police department need to develop a public safety plan that works for all parties,” said Delegate Begay.

Nahata Dziil Governance Commission member Darryl Ahasteen agreed they would communicate with the police department and to assist in providing resources for the police officers within the community.

The Law and Order Committee accepted the report with a 3-0 vote.

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