



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



From left to right: Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, President Ben Shelly, Speaker Pro-Tem Jonathan Nez

## Unity is the theme for meeting between 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, the Navajo Nation President, and Chief Justice

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council Speaker Pro-Tem Jonathan Nez, members of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Chief Justice Herb Yazzie met this morning to discuss unity during a meeting on Jan. 12.

Plans for Chapter issues, the Navajo Nation budget, and establishing effective and efficient communication between the three branches were discussed by tribal leaders.

Speaker Pro-Tem Nez emphasized that the Council wants to have a direct impact on drafting its own agenda for the upcoming work sessions. This will help the Council focus on issues case by case. Some major issues that are of concern are the Navajo Nation budget is continuing resolution which needs to be approved by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, the vacancy of the Chief Legislative Counsel position, possible staff for the 24 Council delegates, possible amendments to Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code.

Honorable Lorenzo Bates (T'iistoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tse'daa'kaan, Newcomb, San Juan) specified, "We need to live within the means of the budget of \$148 million and we would all like to see the deficit fixed."

Navajo Nation President, the Speaker Pro-Tem and Chief Justice deemed communication as a very important aspect to continue being effective leaders of the Navajo people and to effectively complete plans.

"A respectable communication is important because we are representatives of the Navajo Nation," said Speaker Pro-Tem Nez. "So when we are executing political issues at the state, federal and international levels, we must show that we are united, professional and well informed. This is accomplishable with great communication."

Navajo Nation President Shelly said, "I told them my plans as the president for the sake of unity. I asked them to restructure their organization in the area of standing committees. We are waiting for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Council to amend Title 2. I will keep abreast of the work session they will be hosting. I will be looking at the past condition of appropriation, to consolidate, and do whatever else we need to do. This is a good start and this is how it should be. We all talked and shared information out of good spirit so that we all know what we are planning for the Nation. All three branches were here and everyone put in their input. It was a friendly event."

In reference to the theme of unity, Chief Justice Herb Yazzie emphasized that the Judicial Branch is in support of the new beginning of collaboration between the three branches.

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Page 2/Tso/ Unity emphasized by the Navajo Nation President, Speaker Pro Tem of the Legislative Branch and Chief Justice

Immediately after the meeting, the Council met to begin the list of issues that need to be addressed within the Legislative Branch.

Some topics they listed as high priority were: Title 2 amendments and the budget, restructuring of the standing committees, Local Governance Title 26, committee oversight issues, Navajo Nation Code amendments, the Signature Authorization Sheet (SAS) Process, legislation process, and the Navajo Nation Council's Winter Session Agenda.

Discussions were intellectual, detailed, complex and ranged from the ongoing issues of the Navajo Nation, to new responsibilities of the Council. The work load will be large, so how do the Council delegates accomplish their goals, and the people's expectations of them were amongst other conversations.

Honorable Johnny Naize (Many Farms, Tachee/Blue Gap, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) mentioned two Chapters he is representing were having meetings, all the while the Council's meeting was in progress.

Honorable Nelson Begaye (Lukachukai, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tse Cheizhi/Rough Rock) mentioned that the people need to understand that many major issues need to be addressed and are of extreme importance for the Navajo Nation government to move forward.

Pro-Tem Speaker Nez therefore respectfully requests that all Chapter officials and the Navajo people be patient and understand that the Council is working hard and diligently to accomplish a workable structure for the Navajo Nation government.

The Diné Policy Institute (DPI) presented to Council, three options on how to restructure the Navajo Nation government, comparing and forecasting the workload of the Council delegates, implementing Sa'ah Naghai Bik'e Hozhoon, the results were three options:

- Traditional Leadership Model – Delegate incorporate as a framework to ensure their decision making process incorporates Nitstáhákees (thinking), Nahat'á (planning), liná (life), and Siihasin (resilience).
- Committee of the Whole - all delegates be involved with each standing committees
- Consolidate Committee – combine some standing committees

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