SALT LAKE CITY – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly assured Utah state leadership he wants to find a solution to administer the more than $40 million Utah Navajo Royalties Hold Fund.

“I am going to listen to the Navajo people of Utah,” he said to Gov. Gary Herbert in a private meeting. “We have to have a solution come from the people about the fund.”

The state of Utah legislature voted to forgo their responsibility to the trust fund in 2008 and since then Utah’s Department of Administrative Services has administered the fund until the U.S. Congress designates a new trustee. The name of the fund also changed its name from the Utah Navajo Trust Fund to the Utah Navajo Royalties Hold Fund.

The fund is used for scholarships and infrastructure for Navajo people in Utah.

The Utah Navajo Royalties Hold Fund is valued at about $42 million, most of which coming from a recent $33 million settlement. Throughout the past few years, the fund has generated nearly $4 million a year on average.

President Shelly announced to the Gov. Herbert a series of seven town hall style meetings that are scheduled to start on Thursday at Aneth Chapter. All of the meetings are scheduled to be held at chapter houses in Utah through the following 12 days.

“I want to see what our people say about the fund, then we can find a solution that will work,” President Shelly said.
The President also extended an invitation to Gov. Herbert and to Lt. Gov. Greg Bell to attend one of the town hall meetings.

“We will keep you informed of what the people say and what we plan to do,” President Shelly told Gov. Herbert.

The meeting was in conjunction with the state’s Annual American Indian Caucus Day, which brought together various tribal leaders who have a stake in Utah policy.

The following is the schedule of Town Hall meetings regarding the Navajo Utah Royalties Hold Fund. All meetings are scheduled at 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the respective chapter house.

- Feb. 16, 2012
  Aneth, Utah

- Feb. 17, 2012
  Red Mesa, Utah

- Feb. 21, 2012
  Tees Nos Pos, Ariz.

- Feb. 22, 2012
  Mexican Water, Ariz.

- Feb. 23, 2012
  Navajo Mountain, Utah

- Feb. 24, 2012
  Oljato, Utah

- Feb. 27, 2012
  Dennehosto, Ariz.

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