25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Budget and Finance Committee reviews the Auditor General's plan of operation update and the chapter audit framework

The Budget and Finance Committee received a comprehensive presentation from the Office of the Auditor General on proposed updates to its plan of operation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) convened to receive a comprehensive presentation from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) on proposed updates to its Plan of Operation, the status of chapter audits, and a revised risk-based approach to strengthening financial accountability across the Navajo Nation.

During the meeting, Auditor General Jeanine Jones said the revised Plan of Operation is designed to eliminate long-standing delays in audit follow-ups while maintaining the Office of the Auditor General's independence under Navajo Nation law. The updated framework reduces the timeframe for corrective action plan follow-ups to help chapters resolve findings and return to compliance.

BFC Chair Shaandiin Parrish emphasized that updating the Plan of Operation is essential to improving both accountability and support for chapters. "By updating the Plan of Operation, we are giving the Office of the Auditor General the flexibility it needs to focus on follow-up, training, and real-time problem solving rather than getting stuck in delays," Chair Parrish said. "This approach allows chapters going through audits to receive clearer guidance and faster assistance so they can address findings, strengthen their systems, and return their focus to providing services to their communities."

BFC members were also briefed on the overall condition of chapter audits across the Navajo Nation, including certified and non-certified chapters and their placement within corrective action plans or follow-up cycles.

During the report, the OAG presented its annual risk assessment model, which categorizes chapters based on audit findings, internal controls, and compliance history. Chapters identified as high risk will receive priority attention, while those demonstrating progress will continue to receive monitoring and technical guidance to help them move toward compliance and certification. The model is intended to implement long-term improvements in financial management.

Jones explained that sanctions previously included in the Plan of Operation were removed because, in some cases, they created additional administrative challenges. Instead, the revised plan emphasizes education, continuous monitoring, collaboration with support service centers, and targeted referrals when fraud, waste, or abuse is suspected.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty questioned whether the current chapter funding and oversight framework is effective. She emphasized that transparency, public education, and coordination are key to rebuilding trust and strengthening chapters.

During the presentation, Delegate Crotty expressed the need for a system that protects independence, strengthens oversight, and directly involves the people. She requested that the OAG include communities to inform them what these audits mean, how risk is being assessed, and how often that information is updated.

The OAG reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining independence, objectivity, and adherence to Government Auditing Standards while working collaboratively with chapters, support centers, and other entities of the Navajo Nation. The OAG will begin meeting with ASC at DCD to draft public information and establish implementation timelines.

The Budget and Finance Committee voted four in favor and none opposed in accepting the report and calling for further work sessions to assess the proposed plan of operation updates.

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