



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Speaker Damon meets with Navajo Board of Election Supervisors, provides \$22,000 to cover budget deficit

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Board of Elections Supervisors convened Feb. 27 for their regular meeting and took action on 10 legislation. Seven items were for extending the time of appointment for 45 days to fill school board vacancies for Cottonwood Day School, Jeehdeez’a Elementary School, Rocky Ridge Boarding School, Tse Nitsaa Dees Ahi Dine’ Bi Olta, Kinlani Bordertown Dormitory, Chilchinbeto Community School, and Kayenta Community School.

Speaker Seth Damon reported on the budget for NBOES and Navajo Election Administration. He provided a budget summary report for FY 2020 dated Feb. 25 and said the board was in deficit by \$1,243 for board meetings.

“The Speaker’s Office is going to provide you with \$22,000. If we can get a budget for that amount, we can transfer the funds as quickly as possible,” Speaker Damon said. He added that the Office of the Speaker is working with Office of the President and Vice President for a funding request from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to address the costs for the upcoming election. “The next Navajo Nation election request is \$444,166,” he said.

The NEA submitted a budget request for \$413,547 which reflected the budget for the year. Speaker Damon said the administration was already through about a quarter of the fiscal year and the full budget request could not be submitted until the next fiscal year. “Give me a budget that reflects from now to the end of the fiscal year,” Speaker Damon said. “We’re looking to assist with outreach. Be sure you include a plan, too. The outlook with time timelines for the next six months.”

NBOES Vice Chairman Raymond Maxx was appreciative for Speaker Damon’s attendance at the meeting. “We have been working with the office and board to remedy a lot of the issues that we want to correct. It’s odd that somebody from outside the office is



PHOTO: Shirlee Bedonie, Western Navajo Agency Representative for the NBOES, said the poll judges need to be trained uniformly across the board to provide the public with the same information instead of training them separately by agency. She said they needed to say the same thing across the Navajo Nation.



PHOTO: Council Delegate Edison Wauneka shakes hands with Jackie Burbank, Chinle Navajo Agency representative for the NBOES. Council Delegate Wauneka will be introducing legislation later today to address the budget for the NBOES and NEA for expenses related to the upcoming election.

telling us our budget and what to do with it,” he said. “This shows the disfunction that we have not having the right folks onboard.” For the past year, the board has been trying to fill the executive director position for the NEA, a position that is currently occupied by Murray Lee.

Maxx said the board and administration must begin drawing down funds from the surplus available in their accounts. “We need to move forward and correct this drama we have anytime there’s an election. During the last election, we came out with three or four lawsuits and a lot of criticism. We need to make our democratic process respected and honored again. That’s been neglected,” he said. Maxx called the lawsuits a nuisance and said whenever there’s a hearing, the board has to drop everything.

NBOES member Shirlee Bedonie asked about the funding for poll judges and the need to educate everybody uniformly throughout all five agencies. “We need to teach them not to spoil the ballot. One ballot is okay, but not 50. That should be our goal. The poll judges need to be educated in their areas to work together to say the same thing,” she said.

Chairman Harrison commended the Speaker’s Office for attending the NOBES regular meeting, including Council Delegate Edison Wauneka and Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown. “Speaker Damon, you’re the first person that has really stepped forward to help. All of these issues are from 2014 and I think we can get back on better footing. The issue with the executive director has been settled,” he said.

Speaker Damon said filling the vacancies for the executive director and recorder positions is under the authority of the NEA. “That’s an administrative process and I don’t want to step on any toes,” he said. “If we don’t see any progress in a month, then we’ll step in. If it’s a high priority, you can always submit a letter to the Speaker’s Office and we can sit down with Department of Personnel Management.”

Council Delegate Wauneka said he would submit the legislation by the end of the day. NEA provided the updated budget. The legislation required the signatures from the executive director and the board, which was going to be provided after the board meeting.

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