



Division of Community Development Requests \$1.9 Million for Plan of Operations

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TWIN ARROWS, Ariz. — Earlier this week, the Resources and Development Committee (RDC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council hosted a two-day work session to hear the Division of Community Development's (DCD) proposed plan of operation.

James Adakai, DCD Deputy Director, stressed the responsibilities of Executive Branch's Capital Project Management Department (CPMD) to support the infrastructure, residential and commercial building facilities for the Navajo Nation chapters and entities.

Adakai, in collaboration with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Office of the Controller (OOC), is requesting proposed funding from the Sihasin funds for 17 positions to continue operations for the CPMD.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap, Cottonwood) questioned whether CPMD would need further assistance in policy changes to the compliance process to quickly approve, prioritize and complete projects. Indicating that projects get rerouted and documents become lost or incomplete.

"Can the chapters be able to take over some of the responsibilities?" asked Begay. "It would be efficient if the monies to the chapters was streamlined and prioritized in a timely manner."

On the Navajo Nation there are 45 certified chapters and each one can create their own internal policies and procedures for projects and personnel. All other chapters that are not certified have to follow Navajo Nation Personnel Policies and Procedures.

RDC members also questioned the need for CPMD to sign off on 164 review documents and proposed to modify the 164 processes by granting DCD's Division Director authority. Under new authority, chapters would not need to enter the legislative process to make changes or recommendations.

DCD is working with the archaeological and biological compliance process to move towards streamlining, however, there are issues with staffing and funding.

"We all know that the staff have been working since the last 18 months on the proposed amendments to the plan of operations," said Council Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tsé'ii'ahí, White Rock). "Perhaps DCD can include opportunities for expansion for the department like seeking new project managers. Staffing is a major issue and we need to make sure we are proactive with the ARPA funding allocated to the Navajo Nation."

Justification on the revision of DCD's Plan of Operations also included the need to accommodate the shortfall of the division's 638 contracts and the overall expenditures for federal funds. This included proposed positions for carpentry in DCD's veteran housing plans.

The DCD proposed at the RDC work session a projected timeline for the amendment approval of the Plan of Operations. It is expected to be completed with the necessary reviews, budgets and proposals by the end of August 2021.

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