



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee approves budget modification for Dził Yijiin Judicial District to purchase a modular building

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0099-17, a budget modification of supplemental funds in the amount of \$340,725 within the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch to purchase a modular building for the Dził Yijiin Judicial District. The modular building would be located in Pinon, Ariz., approximately 45-miles west of Chinle.

In July 2016, the Navajo Nation Council approved supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$340,725 to remodel the current Dził Yijiin court building, located in Whippoorwill, approximately 11-miles east of Pinon.

On Jan. 9, the LOC received a report from Dził Yijiin Judicial District court staff and Pinon Chapter officials who recommended that the funds be used to purchase new modular court buildings due to the conditions of the existing court building.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) supported the recommendation and asked for his colleagues' support.

“As an oversight committee for the Judicial Branch, we need to support every district’s needs and concerns. The current court building is under the ownership of Whippoorwill Chapter and renovating the old building would cost more. Currently the court staff is moving from place to another. They need a better work environment,” stated Delegate Begay.

Pinon Chapter president Bessie Allen stated that the Pinon Chapter supports the district court and the chapter has withdrawn land to provide a location for the modular building.

RDC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) asked why the budget modification was needed when the original legislation that was passed by Council was intended for remodeling.

“I thought the supplemental funding was for remodeling the current building. What happened to the original intent of the legislation?” asked Delegate Smith.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) stated that the current district court building is closed due to additional water damages and the renovation would cost more than the funding request.

“The funding was already approved for the project. We need to help them so they begin helping the people again. We need to purchase the modular building as soon as possible,” stated LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi).

The Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0099-17 with a 4-0 vote.

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