

COPPERMINE CHAPTER
Chapter Meeting Minutes
December 21, 2025 at 2:00pm

- I. Meeting Called to Order by:** 2:05 PM
- II. Invocation by:** Floyd Stevens
- III. Review/Adopt Meeting Agenda:** By Debora Saliego
 - 1. Floyd Stevens -request to be added to the agenda for assistance.
 - 2. Calvin Begay -request to be added to the agenda for Medical assistance.

Motion: Loren Thomas Second: Rose Johnson Vote: 28-00-01
- IV. Review & Approval of last meeting minutes:** Read Chapter Meeting minutes by Debbie E. Tsinigine for the month of November 2025 meeting.
Motion: Loren Thomas Second: Ella Tsinnijinnie Vote: 34-00-01
- V. Presentation/Reports (visitors):**
 - A. Navajo Hopi Land Commission -Sarah Slim, Executive Director;
 - 1. Sarah Slim -Introduced herself in Navajo, she works with Navajo Hopi Land Commission in Window Rock on Escrow Fund Projects.
 - a. Escrow Funds is used for Former Bennett Freeze Area existing home repairs like doors, windows, and roofing materials. Labor cost is not included.
 - b. If we can all work with Community Service Coordinator, Leadership, and develop our community prioritize projects. Maybe if you are advocating for why Former Bennett Freeze Area is not a priority. It should be a priority from here.
 - c. There are enough assessments that have been done. That needs to be populated, and it needs to be placed on your prioritize list. That's what she (Betty Slim) is asking about. I have never seen your prioritize list so I have no idea. You have every right to make a request at the next Planning Meeting and make that a priority, that way it's on paper.
 - 2. Betty Slim -There are a lot of us, children and grandchildren increasing by the year.
 - 3. Sarah Slim -Come to the next Planning Meeting, we are talking about Escrow Funds. I'm here to give you an update on Escrow Funds today and I do not want to confess to you with other information.
 - d. I am going to give the floor to Council Delegate, Otto Tso. Nine Council Delegate were selected to be on Committee, and they work as our oversite. Honorable Otto Tso is on Resource Committee and is our Commission Chair, if you see their organization chart, they oversite the 110 chapters.
 - e. It is very important that you prioritize your projects because the Navajo Nation is not entertaining the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) going forward from 2026 to 2030, which they started working on and it takes a lot of work.

f. I talked with and shared information with Coppermine Leadership (CSC, Officials and FBFA) on Friday. You will need to come together work on your projects. Once Coppermine includes their prioritize projects to be considered, to be a part of overall Navajo Nation five (5) year CIP, then you have a good chance of getting funded for those projects. So, what I'm hearing is you want Former Bennett Freeze to be a priority. Rightfully, you should be asking at the next Planning Meeting, that's how it works.

4. Betty Slim -This has been going on for years, with many officials and staff that came and went. No one said, this is a priority.

5. Sarah Slim -We work with our President Buu Nygren, he tells us to work with the Chapters and they are missing a very big point, you go in there and help them, that's why I'm here. I'm here to close the communication gap, to make sure you guys are not left behind.

5. Betty Slim -We were never been told by anybody like you.

6. Sarah Slim -It's a big moving part and you have to be very articulate, that's why when I'm at work I listen to Council proceeding and put a small note to my department, so that's how I monitor. I make sure my staff monitor each department especially Budget & Finance, that's important and that way you're not left behind.

7. Betty Slim -I hope that ends and does not happen again, I have been hearing from the Officials saying FBFA has separate money to use, and being push to the side for so many years.

8. Sarah Slim -One of the things I keep repeating, we are here for the best interest of everybody. We need to put our difference aside and work together. I came for Escrow so, everyone surrounding in here was in best interest and let's stay focus. I think its because of the lack of understanding. You took an oath for the entire population of Coppermine, you cannot discriminate sitting up here and isolate certain population. It's their business, the way they make it their business through Capital Improvement Project (CIP) started the process for projects, make sure you put all your projects in there. We are talking about millions of dollars you guys, It's not chump changes. The development and construction cost is very high these days. I will keep in contact with your Chapter Officials and I will work with your Community Service Coordinator. Our Council Delegate Otto Tso is here today to give update. Councils says, if these funds are not being used take them back from the Chapters. Agency Council said, we want to work together so we have to demonstrate to our oversite there is a need here and move to draw down the Escrow. I will give my report back to the Oversite Committee. As long as we demonstrate that we are working on it together, we will be ok.

B. Council Delegate -Honorable Otto Tso;

1. Otto Tso, Council Delegate of Tuba City -Introduced himself in Navajo, from Tuba City and lives in Cedar Ridge. I have attended your meetings for years, when Coppermine had no water and how many were at I.H.S asking for water, former Grazing Official Calvin Begay was told prove permits consent to give up some land for water line's right-away.

a. I have been a Delegate for twelve (12) years and now I serve on the Resource Development Committee (we work on water, land, air, leases, oil, grazing permits,

etc.). Grazing permit public hearing is coming up soon, get ready for that which has the Bi'laagona Law known as CFR. I serve as a Chair for Navajo Hopi Land Commission. We oversee all fourteen (14) impacted Chapters.

People that live in New Lands relocatee are tied to 1882 Executive Orders is also known as Joint Use Area (JUA). JUA has a history, it is actually called 1882 Executive Order signed by President Ulysses S. Grant. The Navajo Hopi Land Commission oversee these areas. The Former Bennett Freeze region is a big area Tolani Lake, Leupp, Cameron, Coalmine, Tuba City, Tonalea, Bodaway, Coppermine and Kaibeto. The dispute impacted about 1.6 million acres total within the nine chapters I mentioned.

- d. I'm here to talk about the Escrow Funds. In 1972, the United States Government knew that when the freeze was put in 1966 by Robert Bennett, that is why it's called "Bennett Freeze" an Indian Commissioner froze the land. There is no leasing, no infrastructure, no housing construction, no housing assistance was not available to the people in the freeze for 48 years, up to 2008. In 1972, the Federal Government deposited 1 million into the Escrow Account.
- e. First Bennett Freeze was lifted in 1992, two (2) weeks later it was refiled with the Court and was put back to freeze again, because Hopis were not satisfied. During that time, Escrow Account was release to the Navajo, the funds was collecting interest and now it's about 26 million. About in 1992, the Escrow Funds were disseminated. Washington DC says, this full amount of Escrow Funds does not belong to Navajo only, half of that belongs to the Hopis. The fund was divided into two of 13 million to the Hopi Tribe and 13 million to the Navajo Tribe.
- f. Navajo Hopi Land Commission developed the projects. Some were used for projects and some were loaned out on a thrive income, to receive interest. Some were loan out to build the Twin Arrows Casino, they pay back every year with interest. Our account is growing under Navajo Rehabilitation Trust Fund.
- g. Escrow Funds distributed to Chapters for Bennett Freeze area and base on how many are affected. Also, "Land Base Ratio" was used, Bodaway -8 hundred & 50 thousand, Tuba City -5 hundred & 4 thousand and Coppermine -2 hundred & 11 thousand, Kaibeto got small amount (these are rough numbers), only LeChee Chapter did not get ratio, so there are nine impacted chapters.
- h. Since, I became Council in 2015, we have been asking for the Escrow funds and asked why it's on hold and was told we have to do amendment. The nine chapter leadership said, just give us the money so we can spend it and we got the process started. We thought the Chapters knew what they were doing and knew the fine line. For example; when you purchase a car, you sign the contract that has written words (reading & trying to understand) and as we all know Navajo will say, hurry up & just give me a vehicle. Escrow Funds has documents, policy, strict rules that applies how to use the funds. Escrow Funds are ear-marked for repairs only, for example: replace doors, windows, floor tiles, sheet rock, electric wires, water pipe lines and has no labor money listed. They did not know there is no money for labor and wanted to use the money. I said ok so I change the policy to direct Controller to push the money out and to have the Auditor General to help the Controller push the money out. Within

four (4) months Tuba City, Tonalea, Leupp and Bodaway received their Escrow Funds and because they are certified Chapters.

- i. For non-certified Chapters they have to follow Navajo Nation Procurement and Title 12 process. You just recently approved 2026 Comprehensive Chapter Budget allocation, you have to follow the process. Your Council Delegate cannot tell Controller to release the funds because of the strict policy that applies, or someone will say we are stealing the funds. You have to follow the process to utilize and follow Escrow policy, the reason why I'm saying this is because one conversation spark at our meeting, I'm only one voice over eight commissioners. They are asking, do they really need it or want it, they are not using the funds. You have not spent the funds since year 2000 and leadership already released it, it's in Controllers account and is manage through Navajo Hopi Land Committee (they are the eye and ear) to make sure each and every dollar is spent according to policy. Now, they want to take the funds back because they are not using it, let's turn it around and help them spent it.
- j. At the recent Western Navajo Agency Council meeting, I spoke to nine Chapter leaderships and Navajo Hopi Land Committee. Other than the Escrow Funds, we have JUA and Executive Order. If the take back the money and use it however they want, I can't say anything or have control. Our 24th Council took another step, we amended the Navajo Rehabilitation Trust Fund to give you four (4) labors and ear-marked another 100 thousand dollar for labor too. Upcoming resolution for 100 thousand will reclaim the funds for Navajo Rehabilitation Trust Funds and have different rules.
- k. Remember, Navajo Rehabilitation Trust Fund is separate from Escrow Funds. The 1882 Executive Order, the 1978 Lawsuit with the Navajo & Hopi and the Judge said, the Treaty says "Navajo & other Indians" can utilize or claim the land. That is why the Hopi Tribe wanted some land because of the language used inside the 1882 Executive Order, the reservation expansion and the Ute land is another issue. More of land dispute and information was reported by Delegate Otto Tso.

2. Floyd Stevens -Thank you Otto Tso for review and updating. Please do whatever you can, to reclaim the funds, our people are in desperate need of help and to spent every dollar for our people.
3. Otto Tso -These needs to happen is talk with Sarah Slim to amend & insert purchase of modular homes, Labor money to help with repairs/use Rehabilitation Trust Funds, Change policy again for non-certified chapters.
4. Calvin Begay -We have land issue problems and grazing permit problems. We need date of Public Hearing on "Title 3 Amendment with Grazing Permit."
5. Otto Tso -Public Hearing is next month, Chapters should be notified or flyers will be posted. Enforcement under Title 17 by Department of Justice (DOJ) said, Ranger cannot write out complaints and cannot throw people in jail.

- C. Floyd Stevens -Just an update, as you all know our Grazing Official Stanford Fowler lost a granddaughter recently and the family are still mourning. At one point, he was talking care of Kaibeto and Inscription House because they did not have Grazing Official. He is always attending meetings. I wanted to request for donation for him, he has not been coming to

the meetings. Bodaway Chapter already had their Title 26 Hearing. Look out for these announcements and attend because these are important.

VII. New Business:

A. Financial Report -Debbie E. Tsinigine, Chapter Secretary/Treasurer; I read end of the month budget report for October 2025 and November 2025. November's budget report is also on the white bulletin board.

October 2025 Fund Balance:

Fund Code	Fund Balance	SEPTEMBER 2025 - Ending Balance	Expenses -	Deposit +	OCTOBER 2025 - Ending Balance
01	General Activity Fund	\$ 51,539.73		\$ 728.84	\$ 52,268.57
03	Trust Funds/Land Claims	\$ 18,754.02	\$ 29.17		\$ 18,724.85
08	Summer Youth Employment	\$ 62,264.57			\$ 62,264.57
09	Housing Discretionary	\$ 19,505.46			\$ 19,505.46
10	Local Governance Grant	\$ 28,779.47	\$ 1,963.30		\$ 26,816.17
12	Chapter Official Stipend	\$ 16,410.48	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 14,910.48
13	Scholarship/General Fund	\$ 18,578.00			\$ 18,578.00
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$ 10,826.00			\$ 10,826.00
15	Public Employment Project	\$ 82,973.85	\$ 2,411.36		\$ 80,562.49
16	Veterans	\$ 13,219.96			\$ 13,219.96
17	Emergency Fund	\$ 58,435.85			\$ 58,435.85
21	Chapter Repair/Maintenance	\$ 25,718.89			\$ 25,718.89
23	Navajo Nation Sales Tax	\$ 230,571.31			\$ 230,571.31
25	NN CIP Fund	\$ 13,993.00			\$ 13,993.00
28	Chapter Projects	\$ 272,697.28			\$ 272,697.28
40	Unhealthy Food Tax	\$ 169,430.69			\$ 169,430.69
34	Agriculture Infrastructure Fund	\$ 5.48			\$ 5.48
	Total	\$ 1,093,704.04	\$ 5,903.83	\$ 728.84	\$ 1,088,529.05

November 2025 Fund Balance:

Fund Code	Fund Balance	OCTOBER 2025 - Ending Balance	Expenses -	Deposit +	NOVEMBER 2025 - Ending Balance
01	General Activity Fund	\$ 52,268.57	\$ 231.37	\$ 560.66	\$ 52,597.86
03	Trust Funds/Land Claims	\$ 18,724.85	\$ 35.80	\$ 16,543.00	\$ 35,232.05
08	Summer Youth Employment	\$ 62,264.57			\$ 62,264.57
09	Housing Discretionary	\$ 19,505.46			\$ 19,505.46
10	Local Governance Grant	\$ 26,816.17	\$ 672.80		\$ 26,143.37
12	Chapter Official Stipend	\$ 14,910.48	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 37,925.00	\$ 50,185.48
13	Scholarship/General Fund	\$ 18,578.00			\$ 18,578.00
14	Scholarship Claims Fund	\$ 10,826.00		\$ 2,854.00	\$ 13,680.00
15	Public Employment Project	\$ 80,562.49	\$ 2,644.89	\$ 35,884.00	\$ 113,801.60
16	Veterans	\$ 13,219.96		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 18,219.96
17	Emergency Fund	\$ 58,435.85			\$ 58,435.85
21	Chapter Repair/Maintenance	\$ 25,718.89	\$ 1,691.47		\$ 24,027.42
23	Navajo Nation Sales Tax	\$ 230,571.31	\$ 4,482.42	\$ 72,983.00	\$ 299,071.89
25	NN CIP Fund	\$ 13,993.00			\$ 13,993.00
28	Chapter Projects	\$ 272,697.28			\$ 272,697.28
40	Unhealthy Food Tax	\$ 169,430.69			\$ 169,430.69
34	Agriculture Infrastructure Fund	\$ 5.48			\$ 5.48
	Total	\$ 1,088,529.05	\$ 12,408.75	\$ 171,749.66	\$ 1,247,869.96

Motion: Loren Thomas

Second: Lucinda Dejolie

Vote: 37-00-01

B. Resolution #CO-12-10-26: Western Navajo Agency Council Supporting the Research Study: Historicizing Contested Rangelands: Navajo Genealogies, Foodways, and Land Use on the Colorado Plateau.

1. Debora Saliego -Students are doing the research history of people who lived in the area, how or what food they eat, and how the land was used.
2. Floyd Stevens -Did this resolution go through the recent Western Agency Council meeting and was it passed.
3. Debora Saliego -Yes, it was passed and they also needed chapter support.

Motion: Natalie Tsinnijinnie

Second: Paulette Lewis

Vote: 25-00-01

C. Resolution # NONE: Support and Approve Financial Assistance for Calvin Begay's Medical Expense utilizing account #016721 in the amount of \$250.00.

1. Debora Saliego -We do not have a resolution number, it was just amended.
2. Calvin Begay -Good afternoon, everyone, I am requesting for financial assistance. Due to my health issue, I am schedule for one week (July 11th -16th) at Phoenix hospital soon. Thank you for your support.
3. Loren Thomas -Before we vote, from what account is going to be used and amount.
4. Debora Saliego -Connie, can you give us the information.
5. Connie Lano -From Medical Expense and it is \$250.00.
6. Debora Saliego -Connie, from which line item?
7. Connie Lano -from account #016721.

VIII. Reports:

- A. Council Delegate -Honorable Helena Nez-Begay; (absent)
- B. Chapter President -Debora Saliego;
 - 1. We attended Western Agency Council meeting this past Sunday, we get reports from Navajo Nation Departments. The very interesting report was the Escrow Funds that Sarah Slim and Delegate Otto Tso talked about. I was going to talk about that.
 - 2. We will start with the New Year Planning Meeting on January 11, 2026 at 2:00 PM.
- C. Chapter Vice President -Kee Black;
 - 1. Thank you to Council Delegate Otto Tso, Sarah Slim, and Floyd Stevens for updates.
 - 2. Trailer repair is needed at the Administration Building, need labors so please apply.
 - 3. I am always here helping my community. I have my own tractor, and I buy my own gas to help grade roads for new trailers homes that were being delivered, it is a lot of work.
- D. Chapter Grazing Official -Stanford Fowler; (absent)
- E. Community Land Use Planning Committee -Laverne Tsosie;
 - 1. Laverne Tsosie -Good afternoon, I am the President for Coppermine CLUPC. We are just working on the book, just a lot of questions and answers we are going thru now. There are information flowing around social media, I will more information in January. If you have questions, comments, concerns you are more than welcome to come to CLUPC meeting.
- F. Former Bennett Freeze Area Committee (FBFA) -Natalie Tsinnijinnie, President;
 - 1. Natalie Tsinnijinnie -I been reporting this for years, it is true this should be a priority. Thank you to Sarah Slim and Delegate Otto Tso for giving us the complete report on Escrow Funds. We need your support and I will work on the resolution for January. We need to move this and work together, I am so thankful that Connie Lano is here to help us and without her things will not get done. I want all of you to support her, lets get this going, I want everyone from our Bennett Freeze to come back together and I want the whole community to support us. Our people really need help and we have been living in this freeze for years.
- G. Community Service Coordinator -Constance Lano;
 - 1. On December 02 -Attend Water Project Safety in Window Rock, water project for the Chapters. We do monthly report, include the blue containers for families who do not have running water. Pick up at Admin building & one container per family also tabs for safe water.
 - 2. New waterline Project on KOKOA 1 and KOKOA 2 has funds allocated and will be start in January 2026.
 - 3. Waterpoint by the Chapter collection every month is report with monthly finance report.

4. We had 3 bizarre, got 19 vendors and collected \$152.00 total
5. Kee Black and I, will start the home assessments and complete chapter.

G. Page School IEC/JOM -April Endischee;

1. January 08, 2026 -Annual Pageant will be held at the CAP Pre-K -12 grade starting at 5:30 PM.
2. Follow the Unity Club, that is where the upcoming events are shared.
3. Unfortunately, to conclude my report, this will be my last report as an IEC representative for Coppermine Chapter due to personal reasons.
4. I want to encourage parents of Page Unified School District, if your interested reach out to AIEP at the District Office and ask how to become a Committee Member.
5. I greatly appreciated this opportunity, thank you and Happy Holidays.

IX. Announcement:

- A. Dec. 21, 25: Chapter Meeting & Christmas Dinner @ 2:00 PM
- B. Dec. 24, 25: Christmas Eve -Chapter Admin. Office is CLOSED
- C. Dec. 25, 25: Christmas Day -Chapter Admin. Office is CLOSED
- D. Dec. 30, 25: Coppermine Grazing Permittees Meeting @ 10:00 AM -Coppermine
- E. Dec. 31, 25: New Year's Eve -Chapter Admin. Office is OPEN
- F. Dec. 31, 25: Shoe Game at Sundown
- G. Jan. 01, 25: New Year's Day -Chapter Admin. Office is CLOSED
- H. Jan. 05, 25: CLUPC Meeting @ 9:00 AM
- I. Jan. 08, 25: TCRHCC Mobile Clinic-Health Screening @9:00AM-3:30PM -Coppermine Chap.
- J. Jan. 09, 25: Veterans Meeting @ 2:00 PM
- K. Jan. 09,25: Last Day for Spring Semester Scholarship -Please submit your application
- L. Jan. 11, 25: NEXT Planning Meeting @ 2:00 PM
- M. Jan. 14, 25: TCRHCC Mobile Clinic -Regular Clinic @8:30 AM -3:30 PM -Coppermine Chapter
- N. Jan. 15, 25: Western Agency Grazing Committee Mtg. @10:00 AM -LeChee Chapter
- O. Jan. 16, 25: District 1 Grazing Meeting @ 10:00 AM -Tonalea Chapter
- P. Jan. 18, 25: NEXT Chapter Meeting @ 2:00 PM
- Q. Jan. 19, 25: Martin Luther King Holiday -Chapter Admin. Office is CLOSED
- R. Jan. 20, 25: St. Mary's Food Bank @ 12:30 PM
- S. Jan. 30, 25: Korean Community Service @ 9:00 AM -4:00 PM
- T. ASAP: Vacancies for Two Peace Makers and one IEC/JOM representative with Page School

X. Benediction: None

XI. Adjournment: Debora Saliego adjourned the meeting at 5:20 PM. Meeting adjourn without motion, second and vote.

Prepared by Debbie E. Tsinigine, Chapter Sec/Treas.12-21-25RCM.MINS.