

President- Natalie Tsinnijinnie

Vice President- Brianna Black

Secretary- Laverne Tsosie

Coppermine Former Bennett Freeze Area Community Meeting

Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 6 pm DST

Coppermine Chapter House

MEETING Minutes

Call to Order: 6:10PM by Vice President- Brianna Black

Invocation: Stanley Saliego

1. Guests: Tom Franklin- LDA for Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay

Debora Saliego: Coppermine Chapter President

Kee Black: Coppermine Chapter Vice President

2. Approval of previous Meeting Minutes of 2025 November 20: Read by Laverne Tsosie

Motion: Debra Saliego/ Esther Yazzie **Votes:** 15-00-01

3. Approval of Agenda:

Motion: Jennifer Yazzie/ Lakota Lewis **Votes:** 13-00-01

4. Leadership Reports:

a. FBFA President (Natalie Tsinnijinnie) Not present.

b. FBFA Vice President (Brianna Black) Introduction: Vice President Black introduced herself to the committee. She holds a bachelor's degree from NAU in Sociology and Psychology. This is her first meeting in this role. She expressed her commitment to learning the position's responsibilities and looking forward to assisting the community.

c. FBFA Secretary/Treasurer (Laverne Tsosie)

*** Operational Review:** Emphasized the urgent need to review and revise the FBFA Plan of Operation.

*** Chapter President Update (Debora Saliego):** * Noted that the current Plan of Operation is based on a 2005 resolution.

- Highlighted that the current stipend for officials is set at \$40.00, which requires feedback for potential revision. What Fund code to utilize.

- Any revisions to the Plan of Operation must be presented to and approved by the Chapter meeting.

d. Guest Speaker Tom & President Saliego:

*** Stipends & Budgeting:** * A query was raised regarding which funds will cover FBFA official stipends. President Saliego suggested it may come from the same source as CLUPC, as it is a subcommittee, though this requires verification.

- Concern was expressed regarding whether using the same Fund code as CLUPC committee's existing budget. Budgeting for these items will be revisited in October.

*** FBFA & ARPA Fund Status:**

- **Urgency of Expenditures:** Tom reported that approximately **\$211,000.00** in funds are currently inactive. He warned that if these funds are not expended soon, they are at risk of being reclaimed by the federal government.

- **Project Comparison:** Noted that while Kaibeto Chapter is moving forward with projects (potentially via RFP or PEP), other neighboring chapters have much larger budgets (e.g., Cameron at \$649,000.00) sitting unused.

- **Housing Assessments:** President Saliego confirmed that assessments and photo documentation for FBFA homes are complete. The next step is to sit down and prioritize the list. Tom advised creating a specific materials list for each home immediately.

*** Eligibility Concerns (\$1.7 Million ARPA Funding):**

- There is a critical concern regarding "one-time" eligibility. If residents receive assistance through Escrow Funds, they may be disqualified from receiving a new home under the \$1.7 million ARPA allocation.
- The committee identified a need to provide residents with clear options so they can choose which funding source best fits their needs.
- **Administration:** Tom clarified that neither he nor the Delegate holds the list of recipients; the Chapter CSC is responsible for the paperwork and recipient selection.

Laverne: (READ Connie's email update).

Dear Coppermine Chapter Officials,

I am writing to provide an update regarding several ongoing projects and changes within the Coppermine Chapter. First, please note that Rena Dodson is no longer with OPVP. Regarding the restroom facilities, we are focusing solely on renovations, which are now approximately 95% complete with the first list; no new additions are planned. This initiative is also classified as a delegate region project.

The septic tank project remains at a standstill because the chapter did not allocate budget resources for PEP workers. Vendors require their assistance to perform the manual labor necessary before the septic tank can be cleaned out. As for the ARPA project, there have been no updates since the council approved the legislation.

Additionally, I will coordinate assistance to complete home assessments for the entire Coppermine community.

It is important that we meet soon (officials/staff) to discuss the emergency fund, which the president passed and is currently available in the amount of \$46,826.00 in the wind system. This fund could provide crucial support for our community by addressing needs such as propane, water, food, and grain. Because this is a sensitive topic, I believe careful consideration and planning are necessary so we can help our community with the available funds. Once we determine how the emergency money will be allocated, we can draft a resolution and begin expending these resources. Please note that this emergency fund is intended to benefit the entire Coppermine community, not just the Former Bennett Freeze area.

Kindly inform me of your availability for a meeting to discuss emergency funds. Regrettably, I will be unable to attend the FBFA meeting tomorrow due to prior commitments. Should you need further information, please feel free to contact me by email.

Sincerely,

Constance Lano

Coppermine CSC

*** Proposed Uses:** President Saliego suggested using the Emergency Fund for essential needs such as propane, drinking water, and food vouchers. This up to the community for discussion and input.

*** Regulatory Compliance:**

- Guest Speaker Tom noted that, according to **BIM Fund 17** guidelines, expenditures must typically follow a declared emergency by the Navajo Nation President.
- Any specific allocation of these funds must be formally approved by the Chapter via a **Resolution**.

* **Plan of Operation:** There is an immediate need to develop or update an **Emergency Plan of Operation** to clearly define how these funds can be accessed.

* **Community Input:**

- Colleen Mountain suggested including medical travel expenses and coverage.
- Other suggestions included funeral expenses and grain (though it was noted the ASC might deny grain under certain guidelines).

* **Action Item:** The Chapter will add the Emergency Fund discussion to the **April 26 Chapter Meeting** agenda to gather community ideas and move toward a resolution.

* **Resolution Review:** Reaffirmed that the 2005 Plan of Operation for the FBFA is outdated and requires complete review and revision to reflect current community needs.

* **FBF Funding Deadline (\$211,000.00):**

- **Critical Deadline:** Paperwork must be submitted to Sara Slim by **April 17th** to prevent the loss of these funds. Administrative Assistant Connie is tasked with completing this.
- **Prioritization:** The submission will indicate the number of community members requiring assistance.

* **Eligibility & Guidelines:**

- It was clarified during the Tuba City meeting that there are **no income guidelines** for FBFA assistance; residency within the area is the primary qualifier.
- The committee must now focus on prioritizing the most urgent needs among eligible residents.

* **Escrow Clarification:** Residents receiving help via Escrow funds will remain eligible for further assistance but will be placed "next in line" to ensure fair distribution of resources.

KOKO Waterline Projects: Laverne (displayed Ulaleya update email for KOKO):

Here are my updates:

For the Koko Phase 1, we went back last week to some of the homes that we installed septic tanks and drainfields for, and we uncovered the septic tanks and installed risers. This is something new that I wanted to try, so we started with the Coppermine homes. This extends the opening for the septic tanks, that way homeowners won't have to dig down so far when they need to open the lids to get their septic tanks pumped. I will attach a picture.

For Koko Phase 2, we still need to install the septic tanks and drainfields for those homes. I need to finalize the design package and send it for review by the end of May.

For Koko Phase 3, my technician is still recovering from an injury, but as soon as he is better then he will be going out to the project area and begin alignment staking.

For the waterlines, there is an outside engineering company helping with the hydraulic modeling. As soon as they are completed, then we can begin working on the design packages for Phase 1 and 2.

For Northwest 89, we are working with an outside engineering company to complete the design. They just submitted a 65% design package which we reviewed and provided comments back recently.

For West Coppermine, the hydraulic modeling is completed and I just need to prepare the design package for the homes that are surrounding Lee Clizzie.

The progress is slow, but all Coppermine projects are all moving forward. I will need assistance from the Grazing Manager in the next couple of weeks. It would be helpful to get the contact information so I can schedule a time to meet with them and get some documents completed for the right-of-way packages.

Thank you for reaching out. I will gladly answer any other questions you may have about the projects.

Ulaleya Blake-Keetso

LCDR, U.S. Public Health Service

e. Vice President Report (Kee Black): Community Cleanup: Scheduled for Saturday, the 18th.

- Safety meetings will be held prior to the start; participants are urged to wear bright clothing.
- Lunch will be served at the Chapter House.
- The first 100 participants returning their trash bags to the Chapter will receive a commemorative shirt.
- Community Support: The Vice President assisted administration staff and community members with butchering sheep earlier today.

5. Old Business:

a. Resolution: Review and reaffirm.

b. KOKO Projects:

- **KOKO1:** Covers the area from Harry Begay's residence to the first windmill.
- **Water Access:** A pilot program is currently installing cistern tanks to accelerate service delivery. All KOKO projects are reported to be on schedule.

c. Restroom and Septic Updates:

- Restroom additions for the designated renovation phase are now complete.

d. ARPA Housing Initiative (\$1.7 Million):

- **Funding Origin:** These funds were originally earmarked for various projects (cemetery, warehouse, etc.) but were combined into a new line item for housing via a Chapter resolution in October 2025.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Per the letter submitted on Sept. 25, 2025, applicants must:
 1. Be a registered voter of Coppermine Chapter.
 2. Possess a complete Home Site Lease.
 3. Currently live in unhoused, overcrowded, or multi-generational conditions.
- **Current Status:** Assessments for the FBFA area are complete, but other areas still require documentation. President Saliego noted that the Chapter must assist the CSC if they are overwhelmed to ensure funds are spent before they expire.
- **Scope:** The budget is estimated to cover approximately **16 to 17 mobile homes**. This covers the home units only; homeowners are responsible for gravel, electrical, and water line connections.
- **Multi-Purpose Building:**
 - Planned as a 3,000–5,000 sq. ft. facility located on the Chapter compound.
 - **Immediate Needs:** A sand compaction study must be completed, and a decision is pending regarding the demolition of the existing warehouse before the end of the year.
 - **Proposed Use:** Space for Police, CHR, and other community services.
- **Echo Cliffs Medical Center:**
 - The center is scheduled to open **October 4th**, with an Open House on **October 2nd**.
 - The facility features advanced steel engineering, solar power, and a rainwater cistern system. It is designed to serve 400 people. This building is unique.
- **Escrow & Loan Funds:** Discussion regarding a \$3.7 million loan and accumulated interest (now totaling approximately **\$12 million**) held by the Navajo Hopi Land Commission (NHLC).
- **Strategy:** To "tap into" these funds for scattered homes in the FBFA, the Chapter needs a strong advocate and a majority-vote resolution from the Delegate.

- **Requirement:** NTUA still requires a valid Home Site Lease for any utility connections in the FBFA.
- **FBFA President is not responding to any texts nor emails. Information needed to get put out to members.** We will update the members via text/email in the meantime.
- **Update FBFA officials of any changes or updates in homes so we can accurately track.**

6. New Business:

7. Adjournment: 7:45PM DST

Motion: Jerrilyn Yazzie/Wynette Hammond Votes: 14-00-01

Action Items:

- **Escrow List**
- **FBFA KOKO 1,2,3 List**
- **Send Plan of Operation to FBFA members.**