

Council approves almost \$1 million in UUFB funds for 2024 election

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 29 March 2024 00:00



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved emergency Legislation No. 0020-24 on March 26. The legislation would appropriate almost \$1 million from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for expenses in preparation of the 2024 Navajo Nation Elections, if signed into law by the Navajo Nation President.

Legislation sponsor Speaker Crystalyne Curley expressed concerns that the Navajo Election Administration currently does not have enough funds in its budget to adequately conduct all the upcoming Navajo Nation 2024 elections, including the hiring of temporary employees, renovation of facilities, and related operating expenses.

“These emergency funds will address critical needs such as keeping voting offices in safe, working order for voters and staff. Ideally, NEA needs 880 poll officials and this funding will go toward providing adequate staffing. Also, many voting offices need general office supplies, furniture, postage for absentee ballots, computers, and for polling places to be brought into ADA compliance,” Crystalyne explained.

NEA Interim Executive Director Veronica Curley detailed some of the needs, exemplifying the dire situation that some election offices are facing.

“Some of these buildings are condemned and we have no other choice but to keep using them. Facility maintenance will no longer service our building in Shiprock. Our Chinle office is really

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run down and in need of renovation,” Veronica said. “Every election, we mail out approximately 1,500 to 3,000 absentee ballots. Each ballot package costs approximately two dollars. We also need to purchase voting booths that are ADA compliant.”

Council Delegate Danny Simpson asked for clarification on the definition of ‘recurring’ expenses within the legislation.

Navajo Nation Controller Sean McCabe issued a revised memo to the Council stating that the funds are considered non-recurring, which ultimately changed the voted requirement to simple majority.

Council Delegate Vince James amended Legislation 0020-24, removing the term ‘recurring’, and deeming the expenses as ‘nonrecurring’ because the legislation specifically addresses the unmet needs that NEA faces in preparation of the 2024 Navajo Nation elections, which is not an annual recurring cost.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 12 in favor with two opposed to approve Legislation No. 0020-24. Once the resolution is certified by the Legislative Branch and delivered to the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, the President will have 10 calendar days to consider the resolution.

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