

Navajo Council calls for finalized capital improvement plan for FY2025

Written by gallupsun
Monday, 08 April 2024 19:09

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council's Budget and Finance Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development regarding the Nation's Capital Improvement Plan on April 2.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty questioned DCD's proposed timeline to finalize the CIP, stating that the department is familiar with the process as they have undertaken it before.

"You need to identify the top priority projects from each chapter, as they've received funding, and move forward. I disagree that we should discuss or consider new projects. The Committee needs a breakdown of what's going to be submitted to the Controller, so we have it as a part of our budgeting process," Crotty said.

DCD, through the Capital Improvement Office, is responsible for the administration, coordination, and development of the CIP, which provides for the planning of capital renewal for existing Navajo Nation assets and planning for future infrastructure development needs.

Capital Projects Management Department Manager Dwayne Waseta provided an overview of the CIP process, emphasizing the areas of planning, budgeting, and financial analysis, and chapter input analysis.

In formulating a CIP budget forecast, Waseta said that chapters need to consider the operating and maintenance costs in their proposals for new facilities to avoid budget miscalculations. These costs are critical when considering the CIP, as DCD must balance bringing buildings up to code, repairing existing facilities, and the potential construction of new facilities.

"Chapters often fail to include these costs, which causes failure to maintain these buildings. This causes many problems. We don't have the financial resources to maintain everything across the board," Waseta said.

Council Delegate Carl R. Slater asked for standardized project listings that include deficiency

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ratings and funding sources for each building proposal.

"When you look at operational funding, DCD needs to evaluate proposals that include chapter budgets and other funding sources to help us understand at a macro level, what funding opportunities exist for these facilities," Slater said. He also requested that DCD include these budgets in future reports.

Crotty said that the obstacles that DCD mentioned are areas that fall under their oversight.

"This committee funded DCD to create this list. If you don't have the capacity, let us know and we'll get someone who can move this forward. To meet the threshold of the budget requirement, we need to focus on what we have already and not request for additional funding," Crotty said. "When we start waiving laws, it jeopardizes and burdens your budgets."

DCD agreed to providing an updated CIP list to BFC by May 7. BFC approved DCD's report with a vote of three in favor and zero opposed.

