

County to hold public discussion for road resolution

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 05 October 2018 12:25



Topic a 'bureaucratic nightmare'

The McKinley County Board of Commissioners held a discussion about a proposed road resolution at their regular meeting Oct. 2.

The commission discussed ceasing road maintenance on certain roads, portions of roads, road segments and bridges on which the county does not have jurisdiction.

County Manager Anthony Dimas Jr. said that the proposal has been prepped for key staff members to review. He said the commission, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Navajo Nation have worked on the resolution for the past year.

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County Attorney Doug Decker said the resolution can be sent ahead quickly or held for a comment session.

County Chairperson Genevieve Jackson said the county should send a draft of the resolution to every chapter in New Mexico for discussion during their respective planning meetings.

“Let them bring their comments to us before we act on it,” she said.

With the county’s approval, the draft would be moved out to chapters for further discussion, Dimas said.

County Commissioner Bill Lee mentioned a recent letter that urged the county to consider the financial ramifications, safety and long-term consequences of road conditions.

“Should this move forward, the other folks who are involved to seeing roads maintained [like the Navajo Nation and BIA] will work more closely with the county,” Lee said.

County Commissioner Carol Bowman-Muskett said several local school-bus routes depend on the county. She also said elders who live along the roads in question require emergency services and would benefit from improved roads.

Jackson called the affair a “bureaucratic nightmare,” and said the county is pressed into a corner due to available resources.

“We have been trying for a long time to try and get these roads, [and right of ways] by the chapters, by the people, so we can put them on our maintenance list,” Jackson said.

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Meanwhile, Lee said each time the county has tried to set up meetings with BIA and the Navajo Nation regarding county roads, the county is ultimately “stood up.”

“Until we show them we’re serious and need their help, they’ll continue to rely on the county,” he said. “We can’t afford to do it ourselves.”

The county plans to distribute a draft of its proposal to Navajo chapter houses.

By Cody Begaye
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