

WINDOW ROCK – On Sept. 2, the Naabik'iyátí' Committee approved Legislation No. 0217-16, which seeks to approve supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$3,745,312 for the construction of a new Tó Nanees Dizi senior citizens center.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi), sponsor of the legislation, stated that in 2012 the Navajo Office of Environmental Health closed the Tó Nanees Dizi senior citizens center. The center was built in 1979 and maintenance became impossible because of continuous deterioration, added Delegate Tso.

According to the legislation, the proposed new senior citizens center will consist of administrative offices, multi-purpose room, conference room, fitness/saunas room, lounge area, computer center, handicap accessible bathrooms, storage rooms, cafeteria area, and a commercial kitchen. The new center will allow direct attention to services to senior citizens in an environment that is age-appropriate and comfortable.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) stated that the UUFB has limited funding and questioned if Tó Nanees Dizi Chapter had the capability to contribute to the project cost.

"The UUFB is a balance of \$7 million and this proposed project would take half of the balance," Tsosie said. "Tó Nanees Dizi Chapter is a tax based and the chapter should be able to contribute to the cost of the new center from their tax revenues. Council approved the chapter to be tax based because the intent was to let chapters help the community with projects. How much money does Tó Nanees Dizi Chapter have from tax revenues? Most likely they have enough to contribute to the project."

"I took on this initiative to help my elders of Tó Nanees Dizi and surrounding communities. I agree that other parties such as Navajo Area Agency on Aging and Navajo Division of Community Development should be involved to make this project possible," Tso added.

Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock) said initiatives regarding senior citizens need to be

## **Naabik'iyáti' Committee considers funding for a new senior citizens center**

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taken serious and supported.

“I support initiatives and projects that involve our grandmothers and grandfathers,” Chee said. “Our elders gather at senior citizens centers to eat, socialize, participate in activities, and spend time with each other. We don’t know what they go through at their own homes but the center allows them to explore and share experiences. Life is too short and we need to take care of our elders.”

The Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved Legislation No. 0217-16 with a 14-0 vote. Council will serve as the final authority for the bill.