Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 12 May 2017 02:26



Kozeliski gives David Gallup painting to city

The Gallup City Council passed its fiscal 2018 preliminary budget May 9, getting the document ready for final state submission in about a month. The $92 million proposed budget is set to come back before council members at the June 13 regular city meeting for formal adoption and prior to submission to the state Department of Finance.

The entire council and department heads met over the past month in two informal workshops to fine tune the document. The budget includes $29,271,391 in the city's general fund and $7,529,749 in cash reserves.

"It's good to see a balanced budget," Gallup Councilor Yogash Kumar said. "Unlike the one at the state level."

Among other things the proposed budget includes:

* The elimination of a full-time position at the El Morro Theatre, which was overlooked when the city theatre manager job was moved to tourism and marketing. Some $41,000 was saved in salary and benefits cost regarding the move, City Manager Maryann Ustick said.

* About $15,000 to the animal control budget for overtime costs was approved. The city division of animal control is now housed under the planning and development department.

* An allocation of $25,000 to the Jim Harlin Community Pantry emergency food assistance program and $50,000 toward city special projects.

* An allocation of $115,000 to the capital budget of the electrical department. The amount came from the city's enterprise fund and was primarily done to accommodate the cost of new street lights along Church Rock Street between Indian Hills and Rehoboth.

* A few new personnel changes are within the budget: they are a part-time secretarial job at Red Rock Park, which was moved from part-time to full time and at a lodgers tax cost of $16,365.

* A part-time Cecil Garcia Fitness Center position was moved from part-time to full-time and at a cost of $13,000.

* A utility specialist job in customer service was unfrozen, and at an enterprise fund cost of $42,000.

* Five new police officer positions were added at a general fund cost of a little more than $233,000.

KOZELISKI'S OUTGOING ART DONATION

City Attorney and Gallup native George Kozeliski is set to retire at some point in July and he gathered council members during the comment portion of the meeting regarding a painting that he had commissioned by a Gallup artist.

The painting was done by Michael Schmaltz who grew up in Gallup. Kozeliski did not disclose the private fee paid to Schmaltz to do the 2/12-X-2 painting, but stressed that it's something that

he wanted to give back the city.

“I wanted to give the city something for keeping me around all these years,” Kozeliski said. “The reason I selected David Gallup is that there is only one known picture of the man and it can’t be enlarged. It has always bothered me that we did not have a portrait or a bust or something of our town’s namesake, so I took it upon myself to fix that situation.”

As far as where in City Hall the painting will hang, Kozeliski said, “That’s up to mayor and council. It was just a gift on my part.”

David Gallup was the railroad paymaster with the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad when the railroad first came to the city in the late 1870s.

Also at the meeting, council members accepted a public easement from ELR Enterprises for a power line between Grandview and Country Club Drive. Kozeliski said the power line has been at the location for close to 40 years, saying the city never had a formal easement on it.

By Bernie Dotson
Sun Correspondent