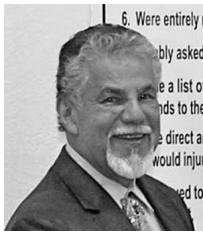


## Gallup Council approves LET funds

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 23 June 2017 00:40

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The Gallup City Council unanimously followed up on a joint resolution at its June 13 regular meeting that pertains to the fiscal 2018 distribution off liquor excise revenue. City Manager Maryann Ustick told council members that an estimated \$1.6 million rests in a liquor excise tax fund, setting the stage for the for the council to go about the business of deciding how the funds would be allocated.

Ustick said some \$800,000 is earmarked for the Gallup Detox Center. The city owns the Boyd Avenue building that houses the center and the company that administers services at Gallup Detox is called Na'Nihzhoozhi Center, Inc., commonly called NCI.

"It's greatly appreciated," Ustick said to the allocated amount for Gallup Detox. "When we combine that with the proposed Behavioral Health Investment Zone funds, we're almost at contract amount," she said.

The joint resolution was developed last year based on discussions with the McKinley County Board of Commissioners as to how the two entities plan to use the 2017 fiscal year's projected

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liquor excise tax funds. According to Tuesday's resolution, \$300,000 goes to the county, of which \$200,000 is earmarked for the Juvenile Substance Abuse Crisis Center with a separate amount of \$100,000 for McKinley County's DWI case management program.

And, regarding McKinley County, \$200,000 will go toward the in-house treatment program at the McKinley County Adult Detention Center. That program operates under the county's Jail Authority Board.

Ustick told council members that the JAB has recommended a new program whereby program members get to be in a separate pod from the rest of the jail occupants, a situation where intensive treatment will be the focus. Licensed counselors will be hired to provide the treatment, Ustick informed.

"We think this will be another enhancement to the jail overall," Ustick said.

David Conejo, the CEO at Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services, said that there are various successes and trouble areas at RMCH. He said for the past 18 months, the Behavioral Health Services Clinic operated by RMCH and near Indian Hills has grown to 40 patients and continues to grow.

More than 20 people have graduated from the clinic's extensive work rehab program, Conejo added, each of whom previously work at RMCH and were able to find jobs elsewhere, Conejo said.

Additionally, there has been a 10 percent cut across the board with respect to expenses at RMCH, including salaried staffers, he said.

"We've had to cut all expenses," Conejo said. "The fact the we're running a lot of these programs doesn't mean we're impervious to needing help," he said.

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Conejo told Mayor Jackie McKinney that he was a bit uncomfortable that RMCH did not have a say in where the liquor excise tax funds went this time around.

"When you consider (\$1.6) million being distributed throughout the community and one of the largest providers of social rehab not going to get a dime, I thought, 'I need to come to the city council and the county commission,'" Conejo said.

McKinney responded that the Navajo Nation committed \$300,000 to the clinic, but didn't live up to that commitment. McKinney welcomed Conejo at future (fiscal 2018) talks about liquor excise tax fund distribution.

McKinney said even with the current distribution matrix, the city is still not covered with respect to incurred costs.

***By Bernie Dotson***

***Sun Correspondent***