

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40



Repairs to the senior center among items GREENLIGHTED

The March 27 regular meeting of the Gallup City Council was conducted with three of the four city councilors. Councilor Yogash Kumar was excused from the proceedings.

The meeting began with the presentation of commendations and awards to winners of the 2018 Water and Energy Awareness Day T-shirt design contest.

Mayor Jackie McKinney greeted those present.

“Ladies and gentlemen, we have a great opportunity again tonight to start off our meeting on a really good note,” he said. “This is going to be a presentation on commendations and awards.”

The contest was for elementary students and promoted water and energy awareness for the youth. The council recognized three contest winners before rolling up their sleeves and getting to business.

The proceeding began in earnest with the first action item on the agenda, which was to approve and accept the local liquor excise tax accountability report for the fourth quarter of 2017.

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40

The liquor excise tax funds must be prepared in a report to the state on an annual basis and it funds admissions and transport to the detox center, the Substance Abuse Crisis Center, and DWI Intensive Out Patient Treatment Program.

Maura Schanefelt, McKinley County DWI director, thanked the city for funding that went toward public outreach and evidence-based activities.

“We’re excited, we’re happy, we’re grateful that we get this money,” she told councilors. “Thank you.”

Councilor Allan Landavazo asked if there was a single thing worth mentioning or celebrating in the report.

In 2017, the detox center admitted a total of 24,719 individuals. That figure was an increase of 378 from the previous year.

Transport statistics to the detox center were lower than the previous year. In 2017, those numbers amounted to 16,185. That figure was a decrease from 18,107 in 2016.

“We’re upgrading, updating and implementing evidence-based activities and we have a new prevention specialist,” Schanefelt said.

She said the new hire has only worked for three weeks, but has visited all the chapters in the county and is networking and providing awareness on the program.

The action passed by a vote of 4-0.

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40

Item two on the agenda was for a joint resolution with the county for the allocation of liquor excise tax funds.

In 2016, the city and county entered into a joint powers agreement for the allocation and distribution of funds for projects and programs. There is a remaining balance of \$21,859 from FY 2017 revenues.

The city and country agreed to disburse \$15,000 from the remaining liquor excise tax funds to hire another officer.

Councilor Fran Palochak said the agreement has netted positive results already.

“We’ve graduated seven people already and hopefully we will get them jobs working at Goodwill,” she said. “The GED program is also seeing much success.”

McKinney said the jail alcohol and drug substance abuse treatment program is in its infancy providing continuing education and life skills that will hopefully make a difference when they get out of jail.

The item passed by unanimous vote.

Item 3 was to request approval for award of work for the water distribution blending study.

Because Gallup has relied on ground water to provide drinking water to residents, the transition to a surface water source via the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project will have an impact on the pipes of the city’s water system.

Dennis Romero, director of the Gallup Water and Sanitation Department, reported before the

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40

council.

Romero said they were requesting to move forward \$150,000 to study the effects and protect the health of city residents.

“This is pre-emptive, proactive work,” he said. “We are taking samples from across the city and testing the water source so we can come up with a method to treat the water before it comes into the city.”

Romero said they are requesting \$75,000 from the Bureau of Reclamation to cut down on the cost by half.

Landavazo said he was trying to figure out why the study needed to be done.

“Isn’t that common sense thing?” he asked.

The item passed unanimously.

Item 4 on the agenda was a budget adjustment for the BNSF grant award amounting to \$7,000 for the purchase of personal protective equipment.

Fire Chief Eric Babcock reported to the council and said the money was for purchase of four complete sets of PPE.

Palochak was surprised by the request – items she deems essential to firefighters.

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40

“It’s almost comical that you would have to ask us for this money,” Palochak said.

Palochak motioned to approve, and the item passed 4-0.

Item 5 was for another budget adjustment, this time for expanded security services. According to Jon DeYoung, assistant city manager, the request was for \$30,000.

DeYoung reported to the council and said, “This item is for expanded security services by an additional 42 hours a week, covering city facilities, the walkway and other areas.”

Palochak said the action was much needed, especially in light of recent violent crimes that occurred in the city.

The council voted to pass the measure unanimously.

The final action item was for a construction contract award for the North Side Senior Center rehabilitation.

The work would include stucco repairs, construction of a ramp, room renovations and an electric snow melt system for the parking lot on the north side of the building.

Two state grants covered project costs up to \$125,000. The additional costs, amounting to \$16,000 was for the ice melt system (heated concrete).

The final item passed by a vote of 4-0, ending the regular meeting.

City councilors approve spending for studies, improvements

Written by By Rick Abasta For the Sun
Friday, 30 March 2018 05:40

By Rick Abasta
For the Sun