

City Council approves resolutions for improvements to golf course

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 March 2019 10:16



The Fox Run Golf Course took center stage during the Gallup City Council's regular meeting.

Three items that pertain to the course were listed on the meeting agenda, covering two areas of improvements to the course.

COURSE CONDITIONS

During the 2018 monsoon season, the golf course had issues with drainage around cart paths on certain holes. Water depth ranged from three to 10 inches on these holes, often rendering them unplayable for the customers.

The course also experienced major flooding on Sept. 6, with water depth around seven to nine feet on certain holes and compromising the integrity of the cart path near hole 18.

Matthew Alcala, director of the course, spoke for the course items Feb. 26.

Alcala said that Murphy Builders, Inc. has a plan to counter the flooding by raising and lining the cart paths to allow water to go underneath them. The course would be playable and protected

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from big seasonal storms, he said.

The estimate for this project called for an increase for \$224,000 from the General Fund reserve.

The plan is to have the course open in time for golf season, Alcalá added.

Dist. 2 Councilor Allan Landavazo asked what other areas on the course had been affected by the flooding. Alcalá said that they are able to handle other issues because less damage was caused.

However, Dist. 4 Councilor Fran Palochak was skeptical about the condition of the golf course.

“At the start of my term, we put around \$3.5 million into the course,” she said during the meeting. “Why are we being asked for more?”

City Manager Maryann Ustick answered her question.

“When we started, it was \$2.5 million to replace the irrigation system, which was around 40 years old,” she said. “The contractor said we had serious drainage issues.”

Ustick added that the original contractor’s plan allowed them to correct one specific area of the course, but the overall design was not meant to withstand an onslaught of water whereas the plan designated by Alcalá would.

“If we can tackle this issue, it’ll solve a lot of our problems,” Alcalá said.

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Mayor Jackie McKinney said when the course opened last August, it generated around \$80,000 in revenue in three months, and that it is a great investment that will pay for itself in the future.

Landavazo said that it is important to provide a quality product because it will attract quality employees and businesses, and that the council should put their best foot forward.

The mayor echoed his sentiments.

“We should be better than average because [the course] will be an asset,” McKinney said.

NEW CARTS

The lease on the fleet of 40 EZ-GO carts at Fox Run will expire in March. Alcala spoke for the approval of leasing 80 lithium-ion golf carts from Club Car for just over \$90 a month per cart.

The item called for an expense increase of \$30,000 from the General Fund reserves.

In addition to this amount, Alcala said that the remaining difference can be made by purchasing the current fleet of EZ-GO carts from lease, for a total of \$24,000 from the General Fund, and then trading them in at around \$1,132 per cart for a total of \$45,280 off the original asking price.

This decision was spurred by the bankruptcy of EZ-GO Textron, as well as by more efficient carts provided by Club Car. The cart's batteries come with a 10-year warranty and do not require water replacement, and have a 50 percent reduction in electrical use compared to the lead-acid batteries used in the current EZ-GO carts.

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Furthermore, Club Car golf carts have cart control capabilities, which allow the superintendent and pro-shop to determine boundaries and speeds for the cart along with tracking and visual displays.

Alcala sees potential with these displays, and said that they could provide an additional revenue stream to Gallup that advertises local businesses along with being more convenient for the players on the course.

He also added that Gallup could be one of the first courses in New Mexico to switch to lithium-ion carts, citing Sandia as a course that is getting ready to make the switch.

McKinney said that the potential of advertising will depend on the business manager placing the advertisement and that the council will need to see revenue figures before they can really get behind this form of advertising.

“The sky’s the limit,” he added.

Each item was approved with a 5-0-0 vote.

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