County gets a look at updated road maintenance policy

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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The McKinley County Board of Commissioners heard a presentation about the new road maintenance and improvement policy during their Sept. 17 regular meeting.

County Manager Anthony Dimas Jr. said the new policy is largely the same as their previous policy, just updated for the future.

McKinley County Roads Superintendent Jeff Irving, said the new policy is based on what was presented to the Board of Commissioners last November.

“The commission entertained a resolution to cease maintenance on roads we did not have express right-of-way for,” Irving said.

The resolution was not adopted, but the county has continued to work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Navajo Nation on maintenance, Irving said.

Irving then discussed what is included in the updated policy, such as keeping up the roads on their maintenance list to the extent that they can, as well as procedures for applying for right-of-way with the county.

“People will know what they’re getting,” Irving said.

Evan Williams, deputy director for the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, said the new policy strikes a good balance in presenting what county staff can execute. He said it is important information.

“It puts the policies into a formal document with clear direction on how to go forward with people from the county,” he said.

Williams said while a lot of what happens within the county is out of the commissioners’ hands, the new policy speaks to the county’s commitment to its residents.

“The commission is stepping up for its citizens in maintaining its roads,” he said. “This is saying we’re going to help those residents get to work and school safely.”

The policy was presented to the Board of Commissioners just as a discussion item, but McKinley County Chairman Bill Lee said the board will bring the policy back for a vote down the road.

“Let’s do all we can to help everybody,” Lee said.

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