

Gallup animal shelter back on the drawing board

Written by By Beth Blakeman Managing Editor
Friday, 19 March 2021 04:23



Library gets additional funding

A year ago, just before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, the City of Gallup was talking about how to build a new regional animal shelter. Now they're talking again.

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At the Feb. 25, 2020 City Council meeting, Jackie McKinney was the outgoing mayor. He said he had friends on both sides of the land issue and didn't want to encumber the incoming mayor over site selection. So the council voted to table the issue.

Gallup got its new mayor, Louis Bonaguidi, at the same time COVID was entering the picture.

The sites under consideration for the shelter included an expansion of its current location (Balok Street off U. S. Highway 491) with the Gallup-McKinley County Humane Society north of the animal medical center, and some potentially donated land near Hasler Valley Road.

On March 9, more than a year later, the City Council put it on the agenda again. This time it accepted a grant agreement of \$261,000 for the new regional animal shelter.

The *Gallup Sun* asked Director of Planning and Development for the City of Gallup Clyde Strain, what that amount would mean for a shelter that received a concept design plan that said construction would run between \$7.9 million and \$8 million, depending on the site selected.

"We get grants here and there. We're trying to accumulate enough money," Strain said. "But yeah, we got a ways to go still. We have probably close to a million [dollars] now with other appropriations."

Strain said there is now enough money for site acquisition and design, and the city will continue to apply and ask the state for money.

Strain said the Balok Street site was chosen, because it is big enough for the expansion and has the infrastructure needed already in place.

"Now that we have a definite site, we can go to formal design and get a shovel-ready project,"

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he said.

Strain said he is pretty sure Huitt Zollars construction engineering company will be used for the new shelter, since they are on contract and know all the particulars about the project.

He was unable to provide an educated guess on the estimated time frame for completion, but did say, "Realistically we're looking about two to five years out."

LIBRARY GETS BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

Octavia Fellin Public Library Director Tammi Moe told the Gallup City Council of the need for space, more meeting rooms, expanded services for youth, conference and group study rooms, more staff, and parking on Feb. 9.

On March 9, the council met to talk about budget adjustments to revenue and expenditures for the library in the amount of \$10, 240.

The State of New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs awarded the city more than \$8,000 to support library collections, staff salaries, staff training, library equipment and other operational expenses associated with the delivery of basic library services.

In addition, the city received a little over \$2,100 of CARES Act funding to defray certain costs incurred by the library related to the pandemic.

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