

City council addresses budget adjustments for multiple city projects

Written by By Molly Adamson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 20 August 2021 04:23



Radar signs don't just cost speeders, they cost the city.

Radar signs that alert drivers to how fast they're going have been around Gallup since 2016 in an effort to stop speeding. During the Aug. 10 city council meeting, Gallup's Construction Superintendent Robert Hamblen told the council that the signs need some maintenance, and that the work would cost the city \$20,000.

Gallup has 27 radar signs, and Hamblen said they cost about \$4,000 apiece. He said that each sign has three batteries, and those cost about \$700 each and last about two years. The LED boards cost about \$700 each.

Hamblen explained that there has been a switch to red lithium batteries, which last longer.

"[The red lithium batteries] actually handle the winter better ... where the older batteries couldn't handle [the cold] as well," Hamblen said.

During his presentation Hamblen brought up the fact that the radar signs can actually store information about how fast a car was going. He said this can be very helpful in the case of a car accident.

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Councilor Yogash Kumar, Dist. 3, reminded the council about the speed bumps they had initially placed around the city before the radar signs were installed.

“[It was] really expensive to put those speed bumps in,” Kumar recalled. “I think they were running around \$15,000 for the concrete ones.”

Mayor Louis Bonaguidi and Hamblen confirmed that the concrete speed bumps cost about \$7,000 each and that the city usually put in two in one place.

Bonaguidi asked Hamblen and the council if the radar signs were slowing traffic, while also admitting with a laugh that he usually speeds up when he sees the sign flashing.

Hamblen acknowledged that the signs have led to some people trying to increase their speed number.

Before the council unanimously agreed to approve the budget adjustment, Councilor Linda Garcia, Dist. 1, explained why she thought the radar signs are necessary. She also poked fun at the mayor’s comments about his own attitude toward the signs.

“[Speeding is] a real problem in the city and especially in the neighborhoods ... so it’s a deterrent that we’re trying to put [in] for men like [the mayor] and teenagers,” Garcia said.

SAFETY CONCERNS

Hamblen also spoke to the council about emergency concrete repairs that need to be made around the city. He noted that the Public Works Department has been getting numerous complaints about streets and sidewalks buckling throughout the city, and that it is becoming a safety concern for pedestrians and motorists. He requested \$20,000 to fix the issue.

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“We need to get these repairs done in a timely manner,” Hamblen commented.

The council unanimously approved the budget adjustment.

GOLF COURSE TO CHANGE EQUIPMENT LEASE

During the meeting Fox Run Director of Golf Matthew Alcala requested that the council approve the course’s switch from a fair market value lease to a one-dollar buy out lease for its maintenance equipment.

Alcala explained the difference between the two types of leases by comparing the market value lease to a car lease. He said when someone leases a car, they can only drive it for a certain number of hours and it has to be returned in a certain condition. The dealership or the bank is then able to put a value on that car or in the golf course’s case, the golf equipment once it’s returned.

A dollar buy out is an agreement with the bank or dealership that lets them know the golf course intends to buy the equipment once the lease is up. With a one dollar buy out lease, the golf course will only need to give the bank a dollar once the equipment’s lease is up and then they will own the machinery at the end of the lease.

Alcala said some of the golf course’s equipment leases are about to expire this year, and that this new proposal would extend the terms of the remaining equipment. The current lease will end in 2026, and that’s when the city will be able to make the one-dollar purchase.

Alcala stated that changing the lease type would lower future budgets by about \$182,000 in lease payments. The council unanimously approved the lease change.

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