

Gallup Council OK's land deal, water budget adjustment

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 14 October 2016 05:23



The Gallup City Council unanimously passed a Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project-related land measure at its Oct. 11 regular meeting.

The matter was introduced by City Attorney George Kozeliski and was met with no opposition. The landmass in question is north of the Sacred Heart Retreat Center at 167 N.M. 602.

“This is an agreement to acquire 4.576 acres of land from the Catholic Diocese for the construction of the main south-side water tank,” Kozeliski explained. “The city will pay the appraised value of the land at \$26,000 and provide hookup for the Diocese property at this location.”

Kozeliski said the property lies on the northeast end, and at the moment, it consists solely of dirt. He said the site has been under consideration for some five years, and was determined to be the best place for a tank site to increase pressure to the south side of Gallup, including fire suppression for University of New Mexico-Gallup to provide water to the Navajo communities south of Gallup.

Had the city not purchased the land, “We would have probably started condemnation action or looked for other land,” Kozeliski said. “We never got to that point because the Diocese of Gallup has been very cooperative in that they realize this benefits Gallup and the Navajo communities to the south.”

The city must now conduct a title search, look into title insurance, and buy the actual property.

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"This is really needed so we can get going," Kozeliski told council members prior to the vote.

Also at the council meeting, a budget adjustment in the amount of \$479,000 was approved for water-main emergency repairs at the Second Street Crossing and Ellison Crossing.

Gallup Water and Sanitation Director Dennis Romero said a Sept. 14 break helped the city to realize that two transmission lines could have helped in the delivery of water throughout the city, but repairs were needed at the two locales.

Romero said due to the emergency nature of the Second Street Crossing, city staff worked to obtain the services of New Mexico Underground Contractors Inc. to restore the line. The Ellison Project repair went out to bid in an expedited process, and bids closed Oct. 1.

The actions required:

A budget adjustment of \$479,773 from the city water enterprise fund to complete both projects.

Retroactive approval of emergency procurement for services of N.M. Underground and Gallup's DePauli Engineering & Surveying Co. to repair the Second Street Crossing.

The approval of the Ellison Crossing Project to the lowest qualified bidder for expedited bids that closed Oct. 11.

The two repair matters under discussion connect the north side to the south side, Romero said.

"It's always something," City Councilman Yogash Kumar said of the matter.

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According to Romero, work would begin at the end of October and conclude by the end of 2016.

"We should be fine," he said to council members, saying that as of Aug. 16, the water enterprise fund had in it more than \$6 million and is estimated to have a fiscal year ending balance of more than \$5 million – without taking the asked for expenditures into account.

By Bernie Dotson

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