

Gallup extends NCI funding 6 more months

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 24 June 2016 05:33



City keeps promise not to abandon NCI

The Gallup City Council kept its word June 14 and unanimously approved emergency funding for Na'nizhoozhi Center, Inc., commonly called NCI, and Gallup's sole detox center. City Manager Maryann Ustick informed council members that a current emergency-funding contract that the city shares with NCI expires June 30.

NCI runs the detox center, which was established back in the 1990s. Ustick told council members that the city has expended a one-time amount of \$234,000 toward NCI operations. The re-instituted agreement pertains to the detoxification center and for emergency shelter during winter months.

"Since full annual funding has not yet been determined, it is recommended that the contract with NCI be extended six months to Dec. 31, 2016," Ustick explained. "This would be month-to-month after this [December] date — pending identification of additional funding."

Mayor Jackie McKinney — who in past meetings on NCI funding noted that the city will not abandon the detox center — said in a recent meeting that the city will continue to explore

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funding possibilities with the Indian Health Service, the liquor excise tax fund, and funds associated with the Behavioral Health investment zone.

McKinney said the city is in talks with IHS about funding mechanisms. Currently, the city funds NCI with about \$500,000 from the liquor excise fund and with like funding (\$500,000) from the recently established Behavioral Health investment zone fund. There is some funding that comes from IHS, and that component of the funding puzzle will continue to be looked at, McKinney has said.

Every little bit helps

City Councilor Yogash Kumar suggested every little bit of funding helps. He said he'll continue to donate to NCI materials like soap, shampoo, and used bedspreads from the hotels and motels he owns.

"There are a lot of things we discard and don't use," Kumar said. "These things can help."

City Councilor Fran Palochak, the newest member to the panel, said NCI Executive Director Kevin Foley took her on a recent tour of the facility. Palochak said positive things about NCI, particularly in regards to its staffers.

"I saw a caring and compassionate staff," Palochak said. "They [the staff] are very dedicated to the people who come to NCI."

Until about three years ago, the Navajo Nation was a primary funding agent for NCI. At one time, the Navajo Nation was forking over close to \$4 million annually toward the functioning and operations of the facility. Lately, though, the city has stepped in with respect to funding.

NCI was built and opened in 1992. At the time, an inter-governmental agreement existed between the City of Gallup, the Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo, and McKinley County in regards to

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running the institution, which still primarily functions as a detox center.

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