

McKinley County, Zuni OK law enforcement pact

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 24 February 2017 04:26



The McKinley County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a mutual law enforcement agreement Feb. 21 with the McKinley County Sherriff's Office and the Zuni Pueblo Tribal Police Department. The action took place at the regular county meeting and was not met with opposition.

Commissioners Bill Lee, Carol Bowman-Muskett and Genevieve Jackson approved the measure.

Tim Trimble, the chief of police at the Zuni Police Department, told commissioners that he and other Zuni law enforcement and government representatives have met with county folks as well as pueblo reps and everyone is on the same page. He called the agreement a big plus for Zuni.

McKinley County Attorney Doug Decker said the agreement mirrors one that is already in place with the Navajo Nation. The agreement voted on this week allows a Zuni officer to have the same authorization as a McKinley sheriff's deputy in criminal and traffic situations, Decker explained.

"It's something that's been talked about for a long time," Trimble said. "Everyone that I've spoken with is in agreement with this."

McKinley County Sheriff Ron Silversmith echoed Trimble's comments, saying he knows of no one who isn't in agreement with the measure. Silversmith said such an agreement is first and foremost a safety matter, calling it akin to "cross-commissioning."

"It's definitely something that we welcome," Silversmith said. "You want as many resources as possible."

Silversmith said such an agreement comes in handy on Sunday's when there are beer and wine sales in parts of the county – and at a few stores along New Mexico 602 which head into and out of Zuni. The sales are popular on Sundays and that sometimes stretches the McKinley County force, Silversmith said.

"We've been working with Zuni on this for about a year-and-a-half," Silversmith said. "This is the final piece of the puzzle."

Jackson asked Silversmith if such an agreement exists with Cibola County. Silversmith replied that there really isn't an interchange with Cibola except near Ramah as it nears Cibola County. He said the mutuality is particularly important with respect to narcotics strategies in the Ramah-Cibola area.

Also at the commission meeting, the Board of Commissioners:

- Adopted a policy which provides procurement card services for McKinley County. The matter was introduced to commission members by county purchasing director Ron Caviggia.

Caviggia noted that the county's current policy is governed by a written procedures manual, which has not been adopted as formal policy. Cavaggia said a clear and defined policy calls for periodic modification to reflect changing conditions.

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A purchasing card enables the buying of non-restricted commodities, by telephone or directly from the vendors, Caviggia said. He said it is an alternative which offers a different purchasing method, saying it provides an effective and fast method for buying small dollar items.

- Also, the Board of Commissioners approved a lease and servicing agreement with Tommy Elkins to lease the old Thoreau ambulance building and to use the space in questions as a warehouse and marketing center.

McKinley County Manager Anthony Dimas said the operation and use that the lease brings will upgrade and maintain the building in adequate shape. Dimas said the operation will enhance economic development in Thoreau.

“The county desires to promote the economic opportunities of the Thoreau area and needs the building occupied to preserve and enhance the property,” Dimas said.

By Bernie Dotson

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