

Council approves funding, proclamations for construction, police force

Written by By Rick Abasta Sun Correspondent
Friday, 11 May 2018 09:20



FIREWORKS Restriction MOTION PASSES

The Gallup City Council's May 8 regular meeting covered a range of issues facing the city. Councilors approved funds for the completion of a solid waste facility, opted to restrict the sale of fireworks during draught season, and accepted a proposal to expand the police force.

Councilors began by awarding Murphy Builders, Inc. \$2,988,789 to complete the Hasler Valley Road Solid Waste Facility.

According to solid waste superintendent Adrian Maruffo, Murphy Builders was the low bid for the project.

He said bids for the project were opened on April 3. The other bid was from Long Horn Construction Services, Inc. from Albuquerque. Their bid came in at \$3,488,745.

"We currently have \$2,124,569 budgeted for this project. This leaves us with a shortfall of \$864,220. I'm here to ask for approval of the bid award to Murphy Builders for the full project amount and the transfer of funds," Maruffo said.

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The requested transfer of funds was for \$864,054 from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund. The amount included a \$100,000 contingency fund for issues like change orders or rising building material costs.

Councilor Allan Landavazo had questions about the timeline.

“If the council approves this tonight, what’s the timeframe to finish the project?” he asked.

Maruffo said the project construction time will take up to 350 days.

“Barring good weather, maybe sooner,” he added.

Councilor Fran Palochak commended the solid waste department for being fastidious with city dollars to complete the project.

“I know you’re very frugal in making sure you have a positive fund balance in your account,” she said. “Also forgoing the purchase of a new truck so you can have savings. I appreciate all you have done to complete this project.”

Maruffo said the project will be aesthetically pleasing, especially with the new veterans cemetery that is going to be constructed in the area.

He added that the project also has solar panel options in the blueprints, should the city decide to include renewable energy sources.

The transfer of funds was approved unanimously.

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Wildfire Concerns

Fire Marshal Jacob LaCroix presented information for a proclamation declaring extreme drought conditions and the restricted sale and use of fireworks, which could cause fires if handled improperly.

“Just for your information, the sale of fireworks will start June 20 and run through July 6. We do have one business in Gallup that sells year-round and I think they may be affected by this proclamation as well,” LaCroix said.

He shared a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the steps for restricting fireworks sales. The proclamation would have to be declared prior to June 14 and will be in effect for 30 days.

The council also has the option to continue the proclamation if the extreme weather conditions continue. Conversely, the council may also modify or rescind the proclamation upon execution of an emergency hearing.

The restriction would be for missile-type rockets, helicopters or aerial spinners, stick-type rockets, and ground audible devices like chasers and firecrackers.

LaCroix shared a map of the U.S. seasonal drought outlook during his presentation.

“We’re right smack dab in the middle of extreme drought and exceptional drought,” he said.

Mayor Jackie McKinney felt that taking the extra precaution was wise.

“I certainly support anything that will keep our community safe,” he said. “Look at the fires in California. We don’t want that kind of thing here. We don’t want to displace people from their

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homes out of ignorance.”

The firework restriction motion was passed unanimously.

Policing Incentives

Police Chief Phillip Hart reported before the council to request new hire bonuses to assist the police department with recruitment efforts.

Hart said the Farmington Police is offering a \$15,000 sign-on bonus, New Mexico State Police is offering a \$10,000 sign-on bonus, and Hobbs Police is offering a \$30,000 sign-on bonus.

“It’s hard for us to compete in this local area and we need to do something to continue hiring quality people to work for the police department,” Hart said.

The proposal would be for Gallup Police to offer a \$5,000 sign-on bonus for all newly hired officers. Recruits would receive \$1,000 upon completing a state law enforcement academy and \$4,000 upon completing the probationary period of employment.

For lateral transfers with out of state certification, recruits would receive \$7,500. Upon successful completion of a law enforcement academy they would be paid \$2,500 and \$5,000 upon successful completion of probationary period.

For New Mexico certified lateral transfers, recruits would receive \$7,500. They would be paid \$2,500 after 30 days from their date of hire and \$5,000 upon successful completion of probationary period.

The Gallup Police Department currently has 16 open positions in the police force.

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“We’ve struggled greatly with what to do with retention and hiring,” Hart said. “If we can give ourselves an edge, maybe we can get a few (officers) who never considered coming here.”

The measure passed by unanimous vote.

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