

Annexation makes way for major NGWSP water line

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
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A handful of McKinley County residents just became Gallup residents without moving an inch, as the city annexed a little over 45 acres around Cipriano Street west of State Road 602 to accommodate a major water line that will eventually connect the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project to the city's water supply.

Dubbed the Lewis Annexation, the acreage is mostly zoned Rural Residential but will include three commercially zoned tracts to take in an existing warehouse owned by Null Rentals and two more lots that belong to Wilson and Nieves Yazzie, who run a daycare licensed for 12 children. The Yazzies hope to expand soon to double capacity.

The annexed properties will be grandfathered in under city zoning rules; any nonconforming use may stay as it is, but must meet new code requirements if the owners plan to make changes.

The annexation will eventually let the residents of Cipriano Street tie into the city's water system – at their own expense. They're getting water from private wells now.

Some things the annexation won't include are a sewer line – the residents have septic systems – and road paving, Planning Director C.B. Strain said.

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Bigger picture, the proposed waterline will connect Reach 27.10 of the NGWSP to the city's water distribution system, providing a looped water system for NGWSP Reaches 27.10, 27.11, and 27.12. It will provide additional hydraulic capacity and redundancy to maintain an uninterrupted water supply for the city and regional water system.

The city is annexing the subject property under the petition method, which requires signoff from owners of at least 51% of the property to be annexed. They signed off on it, which allows the city to annex the full amount.

The annexation doesn't cost the city anything, Strain said, because NGWSP is picking up the tab. The Planning and Zoning Commission approved it at the panel's Dec. 13 meeting, and the council approved it Jan. 16 with only a zone change for the daycare.

WELL FUNDING SOUGHT

Later in the Jan. 16 meeting, the Council also unanimously approved submitting grant applications for \$10.8 million and \$1.62 million for water wells to help tide the city over until the NGWSP is delivering, presently projected to happen in 2029.

The \$10.8 million application includes a loan of almost \$1.1 million and a grant of over \$9.7 million for the projects. The city must pay back the loans from water department revenue over 20 years starting June 1, 2026 and ending June 1, 2045, although prepayment is allowed.

The larger grant agreement will obligate the city to advance up to an additional \$1.6 million

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toward completion of the project if the loan/grant falls short. It is expected that funding would come from a WaterSmart Grant if it becomes necessary, but the city would have to fill the gap either way.

The application is undergoing further staff review, and is expected to close Feb. 23.

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