

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Gallup City Council, City of Gallup, New Mexico held in the Council Chambers at Gallup City Hall, 110 West Aztec Avenue at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor DePauli.

Upon roll call, the following were present:

Mayor: Marc DePauli

Councilors: Linda Garcia
Sierra Yazzie Asamoa-Tutu
Sarah Piano
Ron Molina

Also present: Frank Chiapetti, City Manager
David Eason, City Attorney

Presentation of Proclamation

Mayor DePauli presented a proclamation declaring April 10 through April 17, 2026 as, "Week of the Young Child," in recognition of early childhood education through themed days focusing on play, creativity and community and to highlight the need for investment in high-quality early learning.

Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items:

Labor Persinger addressed the Council concerning the Octavia Fellin Public Library improvement plans, provided information on his professional background in artificial intelligence and the affiliation between education and the city's future business environment. He identified the current requirement for a two-acre downtown site and requested Council's attention toward the project's necessity for the city's future.

Presentation/Information Items

1. 2026 City of Gallup Drought Update – Jon Pairett, Fire Chief

Chief Pairett presented a PowerPoint detailing the 2026 Drought Update in preparation for the July 4th fireworks season. He explained, in accordance with the New Mexico Fireworks and Licensing Safety Act, local governments can restrict fireworks by ordinance or drought proclamation during extreme or severe drought, provided it is issued at least 20 days prior to the holiday. He noted the Act prohibits a total ban on fireworks and specified the authorized selling dates, clarified that proclamations are valid for 30 days, after which an extension is required based on meeting schedules and calendar days. Chief Pairett cited data from the National Integrated Drought Information System, the National Weather Service and the U.S. Forest Service which indicated Gallup and McKinley County are currently in a severe drought and would return for formal approval of a proclamation if conditions persist. He reported numerous calls from citizens regarding the legality of certain fireworks and explained State Law requires all fireworks stands to be inspected by the State Fire Marshall and the Gallup Fire

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/24/2026

Page 2 of 6

Department, in addition to surprise inspections conducted by staff and the authority to remove illegal fireworks and revoke licenses for non-compliance, therefore confirmed the permissible use of fireworks purchased in the city limits.

Brief discussion followed regarding the origins of the data and predictions, the data produced by the National Inter Agency Fire Center and the utilization of additional predictive models.

2. Housing Information Presentation – Tammy Parker, Community & Economic Program Manager

Ms. Parker presented a PowerPoint referencing the Silver City Housing Revolution and the progress made with their Land Development Standards over the past year. She highlighted that Gallup has codified an 800-square-foot standard for accessory dwelling units to the 750-square-foot standard utilized in other municipalities, noting that the larger footprint accommodates a more comfortable space. Ms. Parker outlined the importance of maximizing existing infrastructure through infill development on established lots, citing Silver City's current practices. She observed that Gallup's Land Development Standards mandate a Utility Service Agreement upfront to protect infrastructure from high-density overload, ensure cost effective growth and permit home-based businesses in residential zones. She addressed housing for vulnerable populations, specifically mentioning the use of Gallup's 800-square-foot standard for senior and disability supportive housing. Ms. Parker stated that Gallup's current standards exceed those of Silver City and concluded that by finalizing preapproved plans and promoting infill, Gallup would establish the gold standard for housing in New Mexico.

Mayor DePauli noted that pursuant to the Land Development Standards, the City would supply materials necessary to cover the frontage for any infill requiring water and sewer extensions.

Discussion followed regarding administrative processes, the purpose of the presentation, the definition of preapproved plans, data with regard to the demand for this type of growth and homelessness.

Presented to the Mayor and Councilors were the following Consent Agenda Items:

1. Approval of the Minutes from the Special Meeting on January 20, 2026 and the Regular Meeting on January 27, 2026
2. Budget Adjustment for Museum Division
3. Youth Conversation Corps (YCC) Grant Award & Budget Adjustment

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/24/2026

Page 3 of 6

Councilor Yazzie requested Item 2 be removed from the Consent Agenda for additional discussion.

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve Items 1 and 3 of the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilor Piano. Roll call: Councilors Molina, Piano, Garcia, Yazzie and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

2. Budget Adjustment for Museum Division – Alaina Noland, Exhibitions and Public Programming Curator

Ms. Noland stated that assistance was required to alleviate her workload, resulting in the transfer of Verna Yepez from the Senior Center a few months ago. Verna now serves as the Museum Clerk and is performing terrific, noting that she had no prior museum experience and is actively engaged in training and research. Ms. Noland noted that the majority of the operations occur at the Red Rock Park Museum, where she plans to station Verna to monitor visitors and enhance public engagement. The request was in the amount of \$12,500 to cover nine pay periods for the Museum Clerk through the rest of the fiscal year.

Brief discussion followed regarding Senior Center funding that could not be transferred.

Councilor Yazzie made the motion to approve the budget adjustment. Seconded by Councilor Piano. Roll call: Councilors Yazzie, Piano, Garcia, Molina and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

Presented to the Mayor and Councilors were the following Discussion/Action Topics:

1. Parks Department Budget Adjustment Request – Vince Alonzo, Parks and Recreation Director

Mr. Alonzo requested a budget adjustment to secure funding for the construction of a concrete retaining wall at the Joe Vargas Veterans Memorial Complex, located along the hillside west of the girls' softball field and the Stafie Little League field, which is designed to preserve the fields from dirt runoff during heavy rain and snow. He stated that the Department of Finance approved the use of the \$73,805. grant balance towards the project cost of \$164,655., and requested use of the Cannabis Excise Tax funds to pay the remaining \$90,805.; citing Council's approval to reserve the Cannabis Excise Tax exclusively for Parks capital improvements. He noted that as of April, \$1.9 million had been expended on fields at the Joe Vargas Complex, stressing the importance of protecting the City's investment and recognized Alicia Santiago, Grants and Contract Manager, for her contributions to the project.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of protecting the fields at the Sports Complex and the Joe Vargas Complex, the wall's specific location, the proposed length, the Cannabis Excise Fund's remaining balance and the wall's safety benefits.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/24/2026

Page 4 of 6

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve the budget adjustment. Seconded by Councilor Garcia. Roll call: Councilor Molina, Garcia, Piano, Yazzie and Mayor Bonaguidi all voted yes.

2. Building Department Budget & Budget Transfer for 4th Quarter of 2026 – Frank Chiapetti, City Manager

Mr. Chiapetti stated that a new Certified Building Official (CBO) had been on staff for approximately two weeks and has initiated meetings with the area's contractors and noted the CBO's professional background with the use of preplans. Mr. Chiapetti detailed the plan to separate permitting and inspections from the Planning and Development Department, reverting them back to an independent department and mentioned corresponding organizational chart adjustments. He explained staff's intentions to hire in-house Electrical and Plumbing/Mechanical Inspectors to replace State Inspectors, stating they come to Gallup a couple times a month which generates communication delays. He said the plan involves retaining permit fees locally to fund salaries and other departmental needs and aims to consolidate all required steps in one location for more efficient customer service. Mr. Chiapetti reviewed the requirements for the inspector positions and services, clarifying that the move extends current operations and carries a corrected fiscal impact of \$158,000 for the fourth quarter.

Discussion followed regarding building rental fees, facility capacity, long-term objectives of rebuilding City Hall, current permitting process challenges, frustration with processing times and the need to establish a more contractor-friendly environment, difficulty gathering accurate data on construction fees, governed spending by the annual budget, and incorporation into the formal budget discussions scheduled for the coming weeks.

Chief Financial Officer Patty Holland detailed the fiscal review process for agenda items, noting that the General Fund currently contains sufficient funding to cover the proposed impact. She advised that should the Council choose to proceed, specific cost projections will be finalized for the upcoming budget meeting. Ms. Holland requested Council guidance on balancing payroll and operational expenses and noted that while a pending annexation is expected to generate revenue, it cannot be included in the current budget due to State reporting schedules and the lack of verified data.

Further discussion followed regarding the potential budget implication of the proposal, specifically evaluating a restricted approval for the fourth quarter, infrastructure and personnel needs, critical requirement to secure a new CBO to prevent the permanent loss of that service option, department logistics, the busiest payment centers, proposed \$150,800 facility, utilization of internal inspectors as per the City Charter, status of outstanding departmental processes, comparative analysis showing that existing structures owned by the City are less suitable than the proposed building rental, safety concerns and discussions with the Construction Industry Division.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/24/2026

Page 5 of 6

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve the budget transfer. Seconded by Councilor Garcia. Roll call: Councilors Molina, Garcia, Piano and Mayor DePauli all voted yes. Councilor Yazzie voted no. Motion carried.

3. City Engineer Position & Budget Transfer – Frank Chiapetti, City Manager

Mr. Chiapetti provided a corrected fiscal impact of \$43,125., noting this figure reflects current competitive market rates for an engineering position. He offered a historical perspective on the City's previous use of on-staff engineers versus the costs and logistical challenges of outsourcing those services. He outlined the strategic benefits of the role, noting that the position would oversee Public Works, including Streets and Construction, as well as the Water, Wastewater and Building Departments and highlighted the changes would necessitate a formal update to the City's organizational chart.

Discussion followed regarding the history of engineering responsibilities and their impact on community stakeholders, specifics of the fund transfer and the long-term status of unspent General Fund appropriations.

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve the budget transfer. Seconded by Councilor Garcia. Roll call: Councilors Molina, Garcia, Piano, Yazzie and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

Comments by the Mayor and City Councilors

Councilor Molina commented on items pertaining to the permitting process and moving Gallup forward, noting their relevance to his campaign platform. He discussed the city's economic challenges, specifically the loss of revenue from the closure of the coal mines, the railroad and refineries. He further cited a lack of new development and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by staff.

Councilor Yazzie provided information regarding the Community Meet & Greet and recognized the participation of the Gallup High School Lady Bengals and the Rehoboth Boys basketball teams in the State Championship. She announced the Good Heart Medicine Tour at the El Morro Theatre, an event focused on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) awareness and acknowledged participants of that movement.

Councilor Garcia announced the start of ArtsCrawl and informed potential vendors of a participation fee. She advised interested parties to contact her for registration details and additional information.

Councilor Piano announced upcoming events including the Kids Day Spring Fling, Spring Job Fair and events throughout April in recognition of Sexual Assault Services Month.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/24/2026

Page 6 of 6

Mayor DePauli presented a bolo tie received from a former City employee, noted Planning and Development staff is currently addressing compliance issues. He further recognized Mr. Eason on the occasion of his final City Council Meeting and commended his service to City.

Comments by the City Manager and City Attorney

Mr. Chiapetti recognized Tourism and Marketing Manager Matt Robinson and City departments for the coordination of the St. Patrick's Day event. He acknowledged the event committee for their planning efforts and noted current advertising initiatives by Gallup Rides formerly known as Gallup Ride, Flight and Cruise. He noted the purchase of a drone using former Councilor Schaaf's discretionary funds and the objective of improving the City's public image.

Mr. Eason commended City staff for their professionalism, dedication to departmental missions and conduct during public interactions. He noted the challenges faced by staff and requested that the Council continue to provide support and recognition for their efforts. He concluded with a philosophical reflection on perseverance and offered final well-wishes to the City's employees.

There being no further business, Councilor Molina made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Piano. Councilors Molina, Piano, Garcia, Yazzie and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.



Marc DePauli, Mayor

ATTEST:



Alicia Martinez, Deputy City Clerk