

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 10, 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

Comments by Public on Non-Agenda Items:

None.

Mr. Eason certified for the record that the February 24, 2026, Closed Session was limited to discussion regarding the disposal of real property by the City of Gallup. He addressed a question regarding the legality of the session's closure, confirming the procedure was appropriate. He said the Legal Department is continuing its inquiry of the matter and should the status of the matter change, the Mayor and Councilors will be updated.

Presented to the Mayor and Councilors were the Presentation / Information Items:

1. Recognize the Area 2026 NMAA State Wrestlers

The Mayor and Councilors recognized the Girls and Boys Miyamura High School Wrestling Teams for their achievements at the State Championship. The Girls Team was honored for their 3rd-place overall finish. Individual awards were presented to State Champions Alexis Morales and Gage Sellers, as well as Austin Lopez and Sundean Halkini – 2nd Place, Veronica Rodriguez – 3rd Place and several other top-six finishers including Emmy Lopez, Amber Gutierrez, Taye Silversmith, Kiera Soto and Benjamin Vidales.

2. Dream Court Opportunity for Gallup in Honor of Olympian and Hall of Famer Juliene Brazinski Simpson – Juliene Simpson and Tommy Mims

Mayor DePauli introduced Juliene Simpson, a teammate of Nancy Lieberman on the 1976 USA Women's Olympic Basketball Team, to present a Dream Court partnership proposal. Ms. Lieberman's charity goal is to have a Dream Court in every state and selected Gallup for this project based on her coaching and teaching experience in Gallup several years ago.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 2 of 11

Mr. Mims provided a testimonial regarding his relationship with Coach Simpson, her professional background and commitment to student achievement. He noted the national prevalence of Dream Courts and stated that Gallup's selection was attributed to Mrs. Simpson's previous professional experience and ties to the community in addition to the community's established basketball culture.

Mr. Mims clarified the project funding including 80% provided by the organization and 20% by Ms. Simpson. No City funds would be required for construction. He noted youth scholarship opportunities provided by Ms. Lieberman.

Discussion followed regarding the national distribution of Dream Courts, property selection, prospective plans for basketball court construction at the Sports Complex and project support.

3. Brief update on the Warming Shelter – Debra Martinez, Behavioral Health Manager; Tommy Mims, Gallup Express Director, Dr. Valory Wanger, Gallup Community Health and Alexis Lucero

Ms. Martinez introduced Dr. Wangler and recognized her selection as the 2026 Remarkable Woman of Year.

Dr. Wangler provided a report on local homelessness trends, citing rising national housing costs as a contributing factor to the population increase. She noted that McKinley County recorded the highest rate of exposure and highlighted an increase in exposure-related hospital injuries. She explained the collaborative response of the State Workforce Department for provided funding to open a warming station and the City of Gallup for the issuance of an Emergency Declaration which expedited the process. Dr. Wangler detailed the warming stations establishment within ten days by personnel with prior COVID-19 shelter management experience and requested the Mayor and Councilors' guidance on transitioning the project from an emergency response to a long-term service model.

Former Warming Shelter Director Alexis Lucero reported on the shelter's progress and impact relative to the prior year. She noted the operational insight it provided to all involved and acknowledged Ms. Martinez and the 11-member staff for their contributions to the project's execution.

Mr. Mims acknowledged Ms. Martinez for the inclusion of Gallup Express and recognized his 13-person staff and the warming shelter team. He reported that standard operating procedures were revised to maximize service accessibility, noting that no female individual was denied service. He explained the acquisition of dedicated vehicles would expand warming shelter staff's service capabilities and provided operational feedback for the future project implementation.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 3 of 11

Discussion followed regarding bus stop locations, City-funded service expansions, Gallup Express' local match requirements and financial viability, staffing shortages and supplemental driving provided by Mr. Mims and the correlation between shelter operations and public safety.

Ms. Martinez presented a summary data sheet detailing statistical information, including intake demographics, family size and ethnicity. She stated key data points included duration of homelessness, alternative site reporting, emergency service calls to the shelter, impact on partner agencies (Na'Nizhoozhi Center, Inc. (NCI), Public Service Officers, Saint Joseph's Shelter) and barriers to housing. Ms. Martinez identified collaborative and operational outcomes and areas for future improvement.

Discussion followed regarding future improvement recommendations and the total financial impact, feasibility of service expansion, city department participation and labor hours. Ms. Martinez explained benchmarking against established shelter models to quantify service efficacy and partnering with the Navajo Nation for regional service expansion.

4. Presentation on Golf Course Status – Vince Alonzo, Parks and Recreation Director

Mr. Alonzo reported the closure of the course during the 2021, 2022 and 2023 seasons; noted the opening of nine holes in April 2024 that hosted nearly 5,000 rounds. He submitted photographic documentation of all 18 greens taken in February 2026 and again 27 days later, which depicted visible improvement. Mr. Alonzo recommended the continued closure to continue to prioritize long-term turf life and provided key technical points including the necessity of rest periods for greens to ensure survival. He mentioned a conversation with staff from the Grants golf course and noted similar conditions and maintenance needs, encouraged anyone with concerns pertaining to the golf course or his crew, to contact him directly and emphasized the importance of a united front, requesting the Council's support for the next two years.

Discussion followed regarding the current operational status of the golf course, logistical updates, physiological fragility of the turf and the scientific requirements for completing the growth cycle, environmental challenges unique to the local climate, irrigation improvements to the course, turf recovery progress, inter-departmental support, acknowledgement of Golf Course Superintendent Eric Yazzie and clarification that the driving range remains restricted to Gallup McKinley County student golf teams, with a general public reopening in April contingent upon site conditions and no possibility of opening all 18 holes. Further discussion followed regarding the total number of sprinkler heads and the replacement of non-critical turf with xeriscape installation to maximize water conservation and visual standards.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 4 of 11

Mayor DePauli returned the Council's attention to Presentation/Information Item #2 (Dream Court Opportunity). Presenter Juliene Simpson, who was unavailable earlier in the meeting, joined via Zoom to provide the presentation and respond to inquiries by the Council.

Ms. Simpson provided information regarding a potential partnership with Nancy Lieberman Charities. Ms. Simpson outlined her history coaching in Gallup and her 1976 Olympic background with Ms. Lieberman, highlighting the charity's mission to support underserved youth through education and wellness. She reported the organization has served 5.5 million children nationwide. She briefly detailed the basketball court's technical construction process, associated youth programming opportunities and the proposed partnership process, noting no immediate deadline for a decision.

The presentation was deferred to a future meeting, to be scheduled by Mr. Chiapetti and Mr. Mims.

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

1. Budget Adjustment in the Amount of \$2,825. for Interest Payments Due on Drinking Water Loan No. DQWL 6347
2. Budget Adjustment for Municipal Court

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve Items 1 and 2 of the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Councilor Garcia. Roll call: Councilors Molina, Garcia, Piano, Yazzie and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

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

1. Approval of \$63,970.97 in Revenue and Expenditures for Eligible Activities as Defined in the Law Enforcement Retention Fund (LERF) for the Gallup Police Department – Erin Toadlena-Pablo, Chief of Police

Chief Toadlena-Pablo presented an overview of the Law Enforcement Retention Fund (LERF), noting the department has received this funding for the past four years and hopes to maintain funding for the remaining two-year period.

Discussion followed regarding the LERF incentive structure, the number of participating employees and vacant positions, comparison to regional sign-on bonuses, return of unused state funds and ongoing social media recruitment efforts.

Councilor Garcia made the motion to approve the revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$63,970.97. Seconded by Councilor Piano. Roll call: Councilors Garcia, Piano, Yazzie, Molina and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 5 of 11

2. Recommendation of Award for Bid No. ITB-2611 to Murphy Builders of Gallup New Mexico for Well Contract 1 - Station Yard Piping – Jan Boone, Water and Wastewater Superintendent

Mr. Boone detailed the project's financial components, \$2,370,207.96 from the Economic Development Administration, a \$3,515,108. loan, a \$5,000,000 Bureau of Reclamation Drought Relief Grant and \$10,800,000. from the Water Trust Board. Total cost for POD Wells 8 and 13 is \$3,271,829.83 and recommendation to award the contract to Murphy Builders.

Mayor DePauli noted for the record a supplemental handout provided by Mr. Boone concerning the Federal Water Smart Grant, which was not included in the presentation.

Discussion regarding the significant cost to construct a well house, costs established a per unit price of about \$1.6 million for two well houses, inclusion of installation and conduit but not electrical switch gear, the chlorination system in Well POD 13 and permanency of general construction cost increases.

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

3. Recommendation of Award for Bid No. ITB-2612 to Hydro Resources-Rocky Mountain, Inc. of Las Cruces New Mexico for Well Contract 2 -Well Equipping – Jan Boone, Water and Wastewater Superintendent

Mr. Boone said funding for the project would come from the Water Trust Board.

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

4. Senior Center Funding with Budget Adjustment – Keegan Mackenzie-Chavez, Project Manager and Steve Wargo, Senior Center Manager

Mr. Wargo requested authorization to utilize \$1.75 million in previously allocated funds with the existing State Aging Bureau grants received by the City to finalize construction and improvements in areas of the Senior Center. He noted approval would allow the use of as much funding as possible to ensure the facility is fully completed prior to opening and highlighted the facility's use by local and McKinley County residents on a daily basis.

Ms. Mackenzie-Chavez defined, "value engineering," clarified "overlooked," as used in the staff's report and described the project as well thought out and designed. She presented ten items' staff would like to utilize funding for including, curb, gutter and sidewalk replacement to ensure ADA compliance, sidewalk extension to the T-ball field, improvements of the west parking lot and detention pond, installation of generator

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 6 of 11

components for emergency shelter use, security fencing, walking trail, raised planter beds and xeriscape landscaping and the purchase of outdoor patio furniture.

Discussion followed regarding the requirement for City facilities to adhere to uniform rules and regulations of new construction and utilization of originally allocated City funds and State Aging Bureau grants to ensure the project's completion, rather than reverting those funds to the General Fund.

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

5. **Public Hearing** on the Proposed Issuance of a Restaurant A – Beer and Wine Liquor License to 305 Fire, LLC DBA 305 Fire – Jennifer Van Drunen, 305 Fire Owner and City Staff

Mayor DePauli opened the public hearing by providing information relative to the Restaurant Liquor License application for 305 Fire, located at 305 S. Second Street, Gallup, New Mexico. The application includes a request for on-premises consumption and patio service. He noted preliminary approval from the Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Division and public notice compliance including legal notifications published in the Albuquerque Journal on February 7, 2026 and March 7, 2026 in addition to the City of Gallup's website.

Mayor DePauli established the legal parameters for the public hearing pursuant to New Mexico Law, noting that the Council must determine if the license is prohibited by state law, violates local zoning or is detrimental to public health, safety or morals. He reported that the location is compliant with state laws and local ordinance. He clarified that any disapproval based on health, safety or morals must be supported by substantial evidence and that generalized testimony regarding alcohol's negative effects is not legally sufficient for denial.

Mayor DePauli outlined the post-hearing requirements, noting a 30-day statutory deadline for the City to report its decision to the ABC Division. He clarified that if no decision was rendered within that timeframe, the ABC Director possesses the authority to issue final approval. He stated that the Director is bound by the Council's formal approval or disapproval and identified the New Mexico Court of Appeals as the court of initial jurisdiction for appeals.

Mayor DePauli proceeded with the public hearing for a Restaurant A – Beer and Wine Liquor License to 305 Fire, LLC d/b/a 305 Fire located at 305 South Second Street, Gallup, New Mexico. He instructed individuals wishing to testify to stand, identify themselves, and raise their right hands while the City Clerk, Alfred Abeita, swore them in.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 7 of 11

Mayor DePauli outline the quasi-judicial framework for the hearing, establishing an order of testimony that started with the applicant, followed by proponents and concluded with opponents. He noted that the City Council and City Attorney could question witnesses at any time and issued formal directive to all parties to refrain from repetitive testimony. He stated upon conclusion of all witness testimony, the Council may request a summary from both sides if they determined it would be helpful.

Mayor DePauli explained their role is to ensure that the law, in this case the law relating to the issuance of a Restaurant A - Beer and Wine Liquor Licenses to 305 Fire, is correctly applied to the facts of this particular case, which provides that the City Council may approve or disapprove the issuance of a Restaurant A License based on the Applicant's status and its satisfaction of statutory and regulatory requirements, the proposed location, including whether it is within an area where the sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited by New Mexico law or would violate a zoning or other ordinance of the City and whether the issuance would be detrimental to the public health, safety or morals of City residents.

Mayor DePauli outlined the legal criteria for the hearing, noting that the Council's decision must rest on statutory compliance, zoning and public welfare. He stated that denials based on morals must pertain to the specific applicant or site and safety denials require substantial evidence of detriment. He further clarified that general testimony on the negative effects of alcohol is not legally sufficient and that all evidence must directly relate to Restaurant A License standard.

He noted that the Council's decision must be based solely on factual evidence relevant to the application and asked if anyone had questions regarding the procedure.

Mayor DePauli outlined the standards for impartiality required for the quasi-judicial proceeding, noting that members with personal, financial or familial connections to the parties involved should not participate and asked if any Council members wished to recuse themselves in the matter or if the applicant wished to ask that any Council member not participate in this matter due to a concern of impartiality of the Council member.

Mayor DePauli requested the Applicant's representatives to present testimony and any other evidence the Applicant wished Council to consider.

Chuck Van Drunen introduced himself and his wife, Jennie, stating they have been in business for 16 months and expressed pleasure in investing time and energy into downtown and Gallup. He said one of the main reasons they made the decision to start the business was to see the community and their business integrate with community development by creating a space for people to come together. He expressed pleasant surprise by the community's embrace as well as tourists, noted the mention of their business in the New Mexico and Edible

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 8 of 11

magazines for their culinary offerings and requested the Council's consideration for a Beer and Wine Liquor License as an addition for their patrons. He said he receives a couple of calls per week, mostly from non-residents, asking if they serve beer or wine. Mr. Van Drunen said that offering beer and wine would bring tourists to downtown and enhance the dining experience, if done in a thoughtful and careful manner and hoped the way they have run their business preceded that. He thanked the City for being a wonderful partner and acknowledged Planning and Development staff, Chief Pairett, Gallup Police, Solid Waste and Electrical Department staff for all their help.

Mrs. Van Drunen said it has been a privilege to be in the space, noting they live close to the area, which has created a feeling of being at home in the neighborhood and said it has been fun to see their community grow, noting they have had customers from different parts of the world visit their restaurant.

Mayor DePauli asked if anyone else wished to provide testimony in support of the application.

Rose Eason expressed support of 305 Fire's application for a Beer and Wine Liquor License, noting it has been one of the best things to happen to downtown in the past ten years and provided some of the programs and game nights they currently offer. She stated this opportunity will help their business grow and increase foot traffic downtown creating a more welcoming neighborhood. Ms. Eason congratulated them on their success and mentioned that people have traveled from out of state to eat their pizza.

Mr. Abeita swore in Matt Shepherd.

Mr. Shepherd, organizer for 305 Fire's Trivia Night, spoke in support of the application. He testified to the applicant's character, describing them as responsible, caring and respectful members of the community. He stated they fully understand the gravity of concern with regard to alcohol in the city and highlighted their inclusivity. He noted the business plan includes unique alcohol service methods not offered anywhere else in Gallup. He respectfully asked that the Council approve the application.

In response to questions posed by Mr. Eason for the record, the applicants established 305 Fire LLC is a limited liability company that was established in New Mexico, where they are the only two members, are in good-standing with the New Mexico Secretary of State's office and no history of liquor license denials or revocations associated with the individuals or the company.

Councilor Yazzie asked if they would be willing to take alcohol serving training considering the issues with alcohol in the community.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 9 of 11

Mr. and Mrs. Van Drunen stated that anyone who sells or serves alcohol must take a training course as part of State Law requirements, therefore, both have done so. Mr. Van Drunen said it was an impressive but a tough 3-to-4-hour training that will have to be completed by anyone who serves alcohol. Mrs. Van Drunen said they are walking into this with eyes wide open and thinking of ways to protect their space and ensure this is done the right way.

Councilor Yazzie asked if they were considering expanding their hours.

Mrs. Van Drunen stated they are currently in their winter schedule where they close at 8:00 pm, would extend to 8:30 for spring / daylight savings and extend that to 9:00 pm for their summer hours but had not discussed beyond that, as of yet and were unsure if they would in the future. Ms. Van Drunen added they are only opened Thursday through Saturday.

Councilor Yazzie mentioned the 60/40 State requirement, specifying that at least 60% of their revenue must be from food sales and no more than 40% of the revenue from alcohol sales and if they foresaw that becoming an issue.

Mr. Van Drunen said based on the fact that they sold out of pizza dough last weekend, he did not see that being an issue. Mrs. Van Drunen stated they would like to be known for their pizza and not the place to go to get a drink. Mr. Van Drunen explained they wanted to set the tone of the restaurant first, which is why they did not apply for a beer and wine license immediately after opening. He explained having to make people leave who had too much to drink even without selling alcohol in an effort to maintain the tone of the restaurant they have worked to set.

Councilor Piano commented on the fact that people cannot go to the establishment for the purpose of having a drink and that food must be purchased.

Mr. Van Drunen clarified that it is the overall sales that must follow the 60/40 rule but would be opened to and has discussed setting their own limits for beer and wine sales.

Councilor Yazzie clarified food must be available for purchase if alcoholic beverages are being sold.

Councilor Molina noted the quality of the establishment's ambiance and cited his confidence in the management's ability to maintain liquor license. He requested that the applicants provide information regarding their background and local history.

Mr. Van Drunen provided a personal history regarding his residency in Gallup, beginning with his arrival in 1997. He detailed his permanent return to the area in 1999 and his subsequent marriage to Jenni Van Drunen, a teacher at Rehoboth. He noted the couple's professional history as founders of the Gallup Journey magazine and cited

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 10 of 11

the local culture, infrastructure, and community support as the primary reasons for his long-term residency and current business venture.

Mayor DePauli asked about the applicant's intent to serve beer on tap or bottles.

Mr. Van Drunen stated the intent to offer beer on tap and noted that staff is currently evaluating New Mexico-sourced craft beers and wine-based cocktails.

Ms. Van Drunen addressed the facility's physical constraints, noting that the interior layout would need to be designed in a way to maximize the limited space.

Mayor DePauli asked if anyone would like to testify in opposition of the liquor license.

Mayor DePauli confirmed all testimony and evidence had been presented. The Council was queried regarding the need for a summary of evidence, there being no request.

Councilor Molina made the motion to approve the issuance of the Restaurant A License. Seconded by Councilor Piano. Roll call: Councilors Molina, Piano, Garcia, Yazzie and Mayor DePauli all voted yes.

Comments by Mayor and City Councilors

Councilor Molina expressed support of the senior citizens.

Councilor Garcia mentioned the start of the City of Gallup's 16th Annual Clean-up and provided details regarding the first scheduled pick-up.

Councilor Piano provided a report on a water outage near the hospital caused by an unexpected valve failure, an update regarding the suspension of Las Vegas flights at the airport, announced St. Patrick's Day event, a Youth Digital Storytelling Workshop at the library and the Easter Bunny located at Rio West Mall for pictures.

Robert Hamblen, Public Works Director, reported on the suspension of Las Vegas flights, citing occupancy rates below 30% and unsustainable operating costs. He said staff will monitor the market for potential future service.

Councilor Yazzie highlighted the St. Patrick's Day scavenger hunt and the Gallup Arts student programming at Art123.

Comments by City Manager and City Attorney

Mr. Chiapetti recognized the Fire and Police Departments for their extra efforts and reported on an emergency response at mile marker 13. He acknowledged the performance of local winter sports and provided an updated on the girls and boys basketball championship tournaments.

MINUTES

Regular Meeting – 03/10/2026

Page 11 of 11

Mr. Eason provided an update on the status of the District Attorney and that a successor would be named soon.

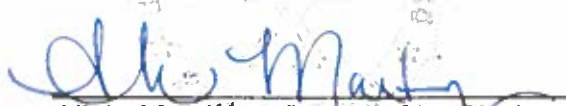
Mayor DePauli stated April is the month of the monarch butterfly which coincides with their migration periods and reported their 90% population decline.

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



Marc DePauli, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alicia Martínez, Deputy City Clerk