

Minutes of the Special 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 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 16, 2020.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jackie McKinney.

Upon roll call, the following were present:

Mayor:	Jackie McKinney
Councilors:	Allan Landavazo Linda Garcia Fran Palochak
Absent:	Yogash Kumar, Councilor
Also present:	Maryann Ustick, City Manager Curtis Hayes, City Attorney

Due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus, Mayor McKinney declared a Public Health Emergency for the City of Gallup effective March 16, 2020. A copy of the Proclamation is attached hereto and made a part of these official Minutes.

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

1. Closure of City Facilities and Public Events Due to the State Public Health Order – Curtis Hayes, City Attorney

Mr. Hayes said the New Mexico Department of Health issued a public health order last week to restrict mass gatherings of individuals to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As the Acting City Manager last week, Mr. Hayes directed the closure of the following City facilities: El Morro Theater and Events Center, Red Rock Park Convention Center, Aquatic Center, Gallup Senior Center, Cecil Garcia Fitness Center, Larry Brian Mitchell Recreation Center, Harold Runnels Athletic Center, Octavia Fellin Public Library and Children's Library, Gallup Veterans Center and the Boys and Girls Club. The Department Directors at these facilities will contact those who have booked the facilities for events and will advise them of the directive and provide information to them regarding the refund of any deposits. He provided information on how meals will be provided to seniors by the Gallup Senior Center. All employees are to report to work as regularly scheduled this week as department directors will determine which seasonal and temporary employees will remain beyond Friday, March 20, 2020. Due to the continuing change in guidelines and restrictions from the State Health Department, Mr. Hayes said the City will continue to monitor those changes and will advise the public as needed.

Discussion followed regarding the clarification that is needed for guidelines in providing services to seniors.

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2. Election Night Restrictions – Curtis Hayes, City Attorney and Al Abeita, City Clerk

Mr. Hayes said he and the City Clerk previously discussed their concerns about compliance with the State's Public Health Order on the evening of March 31, 2020 when the returns of the runoff election are processed. The posting of the unofficial election results usually draws a large public gathering in the Council Chambers. To address health concerns, the provisions of the State Election Code will be enforced by only allowing the precinct board members, candidates or their representatives and the news media to be present while the votes are being counted and tallied.

Mayor McKinney asked everyone to be patient since the election results will be posted on the City's website between 8:00 and 8:30 p.m. on election night.

3. Update on COVID-19 Pandemic – Chief Jesus "Chuy" Morales, Gallup Fire Department

Chief Morales provided an overview on the COVID-19 virus, which has affected over 116 countries around the world and over 153,000 people worldwide resulting in over 5,735 deaths as of the date of this meeting. He explained the phases of a pandemic, the data pertaining to New Mexico regarding the number of presumptive cases and tests conducted, the need for the elimination of mass gatherings, social distancing and isolation to help prevent the spread of the virus, the challenges in dealing with the pandemic such as the limited number of available medical resources, the preparedness activities being done by local emergency, medical and community service response agencies and the preventive measures that can be taken by community. Chief Morales and Mr. Hayes answered questions concerning issues with dealing with the inebriated and transient population and the COVID-19 virus.

Mayor McKinney said the official restrictions and mandates from the State are being updated on a daily basis. The City Manager has been directed to disseminate the information in a quick, consistent and precise manner.

Based on the State's public health order, Ms. Ustick said executive staff meetings will be done through the City's technological resources during the pandemic. She briefed the Mayor and Councilors regarding the discussion with the City's executive staff earlier in the morning concerning departmental plans for maintaining essential services and determining which employees will be able to work from home. All seasonal hiring has been frozen, in-person customer payments for utility bills will be suspended and membership payment for the Cecil Garcia Fitness Center will be prorated for the month.

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of March. The telephone number to the City Clerk's Office (863-1254) has been designated for any questions related to the pandemic. A crisis communications plan for the pandemic has been created to establish a system for the effective dissemination of information to public on a daily basis. City Council meetings will continue as long as they are held in accordance with the public health order that is in place at the time.

Mayor McKinney said City Council meetings may continue without the physical attendance by the public. He also provided an update on the latest public health order released by the State and information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The Fire Department will deliver information from the Department of Health to all local businesses.

Ms. Ustick assured citizens that the City's custodial staff and crews are sanitizing facilities. She commended staff for their diligence in cleaning and maintaining City facilities.

Mayor McKinney assured citizens that essential services will continue through the pandemic.

There being no further discussion, Councilor Palochak made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Garcia. Roll call: Councilors Palochak, Garcia, Kumar, Landavazo and Mayor McKinney all voted yes.

Jackie McKinney, Mayor

ATTEST:

Alfred Abeita II, City Clerk