



Date: May 18, 2023
To: Mayor and Councilors
From: Al Abeita, City Clerk
Subject: Proposal to Opt In to the Regular Local Elections

As a cost saving measure, I am recommending the City of Gallup opt in to the Regular Local Elections held in November of odd numbered years rather than holding elections on Municipal Officer Election Day in March of even numbered years. By opting in to the Regular Local Elections, it will save the City approximately \$43,352 beginning next fiscal year.

Background:

The Local Election Act was enacted by the State in 2018. The Act provides for two local elections where municipalities can hold their elections for electing municipal officers:

- Regular Local Election: conducted on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of odd numbered years. This election is for municipalities and other local entities to elect qualified persons to serve on local governing bodies. Other local entities include school districts, branch community colleges, soil and water conservation districts and water and sanitation districts. The election is a non-partisan election and is conducted by the County Clerk. **The costs for conducting the Regular Local Elections are paid by the State.** With a consistent election day in November where voters may vote for more than one local government office, it may increase voter turnout.
- Municipal Officer Election: conducted on the first Tuesday in March of even numbered years. This election is for electing municipal officers. It is a non-partisan election and conducted by the City Clerk. **The municipality is responsible for the costs of conducting the Municipal Officer Election.** On February 12, 2019, the Gallup City Council adopted Resolution No. R2019-7 to establish the election of municipal officers on Municipal Officer Election Day.

Currently, there are 20 municipalities out of 105 in the state that conduct their elections on Municipal Officer Election Day. These municipalities, including the City of Gallup, may opt in to the Regular Local Elections if they adopt an ordinance to do so and have the ordinance filed with the Secretary of State by June 30, 2023.

Terms of Office for Opting In:

If the City Council decides to opt in, the ordinance shall determine if the terms of office for the current office holders will be shortened or lengthened to correspond with the new election date.

Option 1: If the terms are shortened, the following municipal officer positions will be elected at the Regular Local Election to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023:

<u>Municipal Officer</u>	<u>Current Term Expires</u>	<u>Shortened Term Expires</u>
Mayor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2023
District 2 Councilor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2023
District 4 Councilor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2023
Municipal Judge	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2023
* District 1 Councilor	March 31, 2026	December 31, 2025
* District 3 Councilor	March 31, 2026	December 31, 2025

* These positions will be elected at the November 4, 2025 Regular Local Election.

-OR-

Option 2: If the terms are lengthened, the following municipal officer positions will be elected at the Regular Local Election to be held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025:

<u>Municipal Officer</u>	<u>Current Term Expires</u>	<u>Lengthened Term Expires</u>
Mayor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2025
District 2 Councilor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2025
District 4 Councilor	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2025
Municipal Judge	March 31, 2024	December 31, 2025
** District 1 Councilor	March 31, 2026	December 31, 2027
** District 3 Councilor	March 31, 2026	December 31, 2027

** These positions will be elected at the November 2, 2027 Regular Local Election.

Run-off Elections:

If the City Council chooses to opt in to the Regular Local Elections, runoff elections will still be held as provided by the City Charter. The runoff elections will be administered by the County Clerk and the City will be responsible for the runoff election costs of about \$30,650.

Next Steps:

I originally planned to ask the City Council for their consideration of this proposal at the April 25th Regular Council Meeting; however, City Attorney David Eason analyzed this proposal and raised concerns with implementing it under the current provisions of the City Charter. I have been instructed to bring this proposal before the City Council for discussion and to ask Mr. Eason to address his concerns at the May 23rd Regular City Council Meeting.