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Where the 'city in motion' is headed in 2024

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Habitat for Humanity to build homes for low-income families on city-owned land. The project would allow participants to move into one of these homes and pay a monthly rent that they will be returned when they move out to be put towards a down payment on a permanent home. This program may be many people's only path to homeownership, and the city is very excited about this collaboration with the nonprofit and thinks it will open a lot of doors for citizens.

According to Coolidge, "There are several developers currently looking at developing housing near and around Winslow." These developers are interested in a wide spectrum of residential housing, including apartments, RV parks, tiny homes, low-income housing and duplexes. With these many housing developments, it gives the opportunity for people to move here for work, as well as hopefully reducing the burden residents face paying the high prices that they have grown used to over the last few years because of the lack of housing in the area.

For the $100 million Levee Project, the city anticipates very little movement on this project in 2024, besides planning and getting ready for development that should begin towards the end of 2025. Coolidge said, "By the end of this year, we expect to continue planning. Also, I hope in this year we can channelize the river to direct it away from the levee, as well as do some salt cedar removal." Coolidge wanted to clarify that the levee is for protection, in case of major flooding they do not want water up against a levee unless it's an emergency, and that's why they will channel the river accordingly.

The city is also in the middle of building a new public library, and there were a few snags along the way, however, Coolidge said, "It won't have any effect on when the library should be finished." The snags include a gas line that was thought to already be in place, but wasn't but a gas line has been added. The biggest hurdle was that the ground beneath where the library will sit is largely rock where the city thought it would be mostly dirt. This has made excavation and other parts of the building process require a bit more resources but the construction still plans to be finished in either October or November of this year.

The city is also moving into a new city hall. They will move from the building on First Street to the old Lee Medical building on the corner of Kinsley Avenue and Third Street. This puts the city hall more front and center, instead of back and off to the side from the main parts of downtown. There is a little bit of interior work that still needs to be done but the staff should be able to begin moving in April. According to Coolidge, "Admins and finance will move to the new building, and public works, transit, and community development will stay in the old city hall."

Around downtown, the city also plans on putting more parking spaces on First Street as well as public restrooms on Kinsley Avenue and First Street near the parking lot the city already owns.

Coolidge also spoke about the next steps with the city's adoption of its general plan. He said, Jason Sanks, the city's planning and zoning officer, is currently working hard to incorporate the many comments that were given by citizens and is creating a new draft of the plan that works better for residents. Although a public hearing has not been announced at this time, there will be a public hearing for the new draft, and The Tribune will update the public as the information becomes available.

"No matter what, the city is going to grow," Coolidge said. The city staff is excited about the increased opportunities on the horizon for its residents and a future of growth. Winslow has long been called the city in motion but the speedometer seems to read faster than it ever has before.

Interim City Manager Sullivan works to shape city's future, despite uncertainty of his own

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address residential code enforcement and that effort alone is quite extensive. Blythe has located several funding opportunities for residents to take advantage of that will allow them to improve the safety and weatherizing of their homes at no cost to the home owner. This effort not only improves the homes and the lives of the individuals living in them, it also improves neighborhoods.

Regarding the concern for nepotism amongst staff that was brought up by the city council, Sullivan resolved the problem and has moved Pat Serna from streets supervisor to the position of supervisor over parks and recreation. That position was previously held by Napo Baldonado, who retired this month. "The perception for the concern of nepotism was because he (Baldonado) was over his son and brother, but in reality, we really didn't have somebody else." Baldonado made the decision to retire from his position after 34 years with the city. Sullivan is pleased with having Serna over the parks and recreation program, noting that Serna began his career with the parks department and has actually served there the longest. "He's got some really great ideas. I think he's the best person for the job."

Regarding recreation, Sullivan brought up the concept developed years ago for a fishing pond at the west end of the city, north of Hopi Drive and west of the residential area. The previous manager had no interest in pursuing the project but Sullivan still views it as a viable project, not only to serve the residents but those visiting Holbrook.

"I met with Stantec (the original engineers on the project) and went through why they were done with the project and they basically felt they didn't have backing from the city before because (the manager) squashed it. But they still like the idea. They said there might be some things they have to work through as they have some concerns with water quality, which I think we can work out." However, Sullivan added, the engineers also said they wanted more support from the community and the council before they step up, as this was a project taken on by Stantec at no cost to the city.

"I'm trying to build that up again but I might not even be the city manager in two months and someone else might come in and squash it," he said. After meeting with Serna and Mayor Kathleen Smith, Sullivan is hoping to get the plan for the pond written into the general plan. "If we have it in the plan then it doesn't matter if I'm here or if it's someone else as city manager, it's in the general plan."

Sullivan also said the city is working on having all of the parks ADA compliant, meaning playground equipment that allows children with disabilities to enjoy. This includes bucket swings and even a swing for wheelchair-bound children, all of which have already been purchased. "We just need to build it. We're going to come up with a vision for each park. Lisitzky Park doesn't have any swing sets, so we have sets coming in for that park too."

Sullivan is also working with Serna to create programs for the community at the parks that will include input from the kids in the community. "We want the community to be involved and create something that everyone can enjoy." Sullivan is also vetting out an idea for a recreation center that is a safe and enjoyable environment for the city's youth.

Regarding Serna's former position as street supervisor, it remains open for the time being since with the colder weather no big projects are being completed. "I don't know if I'm going to fill it right away. If I'm not going to be in this (city manager) position, then it might be best for the next person to hire for that." The city begins developing the process for hiring a permanent manager this week during its work session scheduled for today (Wednesday).

Commercial code administrator hired as part of city's goal toward improvements

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downtown area but he was not able to find that overlay and the commissioners are not aware of where that is. What is suspected is that the overlay is the same as the historic commercial area, which is south of the railroad tracks right along Bucket of Blood. "We want to preserve the history of this beautiful community. But we recognize that some of the structures that represent this beautiful community are past their useful life and we may not be able to convince a wealthy donor to fix them. For some, it may be time for them to be razed. The city doesn't have the resources to do that."

The buildings being discussed included the Star Inn on Hopi Drive. The structure sustained critical damage due to fire in the past and, according to Jarvis, the property owner has not been very responsive to the communication from the city. That situation is different than the Bucket of Blood Saloon, which has its roof caved in. "We can't do a one size fits all. The Star Inn has a place in our community, the Bucket of Blood Saloon has a place in our community, somebody spent money building those buildings. But in my perspective the Star Inn has less historic value than the Bucket of Blood building."

When asked how the city will address other blighted buildings such as the old bus depot at the intersection of Hopi Drive and Navajo Blvd. and how city code will be implemented to ensure that property owner, and others in the city are held accountable for the condition of their properties, Jarvis said that he has no problem implementing and being firm regarding city code if that is what he is asked to do by administration.

"What makes that challenging is if there is political will to support it because you get sob stories, and you get connections, and if those sob stories and those connections undermine the decision to enforce the code, then you're not going to be able to enforce the code," explained Jarvis, adding that the other aspect is that just because it is written in code, that doesn't mean it's enforceable. "If it's enforceable that's great, but are you going to follow through with enforcement next year and the year after."

One of the other things Jarvis has been asked to do is review the code, as many times the code is outdated or unable to be enforced. Former city administrators have touted the cost of enforcement with lawyers and court fees as a barrier to enforcing city code, but Jarvis said that is not necessarily true. "We present to the property owner, you need to fix X, Y and Z. We set a date for them to accomplish it and then we go back and inspect. If they haven't, then we escalate it based on our city code. If they ignore all those transactions then we should be able to present it to our prosecutor to say, please present this to our local magistrate so that they can enforce this code. That should be able to be easily presented to the magistrate." Jarvis explained that the city presents its documented evidence, the defendant (property owner) presents theirs and the magistrate will make a decision. If the magistrate sides with the city, which the evidence should strongly support, the process continues. "The magistrate will say 'you have X number of days to get it done. If you don't, you're fined and it will still need to get it done.' That's how simple it should be. And, if there is still no response by the property owner and the city code allows you to enforce a lien on the property that can also be done."

Although he said he has no problem taking that route he has also used other solutions. "There's been times (in past administrative positions) when I've provided dumpsters to a property owner because they were going to demolish their property. It was much more efficient. That way we were helping them save thousands of dollars, we were getting rid of a dilapidated building. I don't like the easy answer of 'we can't afford to do that.' That means you're not being creative and you're not heading somewhere."

Regarding costs, Jarvis says it comes down to how the city wants to allocate their funding. "If you want something different, you're going to have to allocate your funding a little differently. If you want to remodel properties, and take over properties and demolish properties, that's great. What are you going to cut? Or who in your community can you collaborate with to raise those funds so that it will work. Or who are you going to apply to for grant funds to get a little bit of money to do that." He added that if the city takes a crew off of their duties to demolish a building, that's great but then you've also taken them from the job that was supposed to be done that day. "A city has to decide what it's minimum expectations are or what it wants to provide and then it needs to allocate its resources for that purpose."

When Mayor Kathleen Smith was asked if addressing code enforcement now is part of an overarching plan that has been laid out or if it's still a process that is being worked out, stated that in her opinion, it's still something being worked out. "That's what the work sessions that we're doing with the general plan are going to focus on. As we prepare for next year's budget, that's what we're going to be talking about, how much money are we going to allocate for code enforcement. There are so many issues that I think as a council, we need to prioritize those issues for this year and phase the others in but we can't fix everything all at once. We need our top priorities and not to be distracted by the other, although still important, issues," stated Smith.

In conclusion, Jarvis stated, "I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to know that Holbrook is looking at their serious issues and trying to address them. I think it takes leadership at the political level. I think it takes skill at the staff level and I'm seeing both of those things here. It's not easy, but I think being able to put together a plan is a major step that many municipalities lack."

NPC College Board welcomes new member

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(ADE).

Thacket spoke on the A Relational Model for Student Success (ARMSS) grant, which is under the US Department of Education's Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI) Program. "NASNTI awards Native American serving institutions that are not tribal institutions," explained Thacket. ARMSS is a five year grant, which NPC is currently in the second year of, which provides approximately $1.6 million. The five strategies of the grant are an online information center for students; virtual one-stop centers to help students interact with financial aid officers, NPC's veteran center and other resources easier; proactive, personalized relational advising training for staff and advisors; first-year learning communities for students with similar degrees of study which will be launched Fall 2024; and Native American student success by strengthening community ties that surround NPC centers.

President Hazelbaker provided a report at the behest of Board member Robinson on college's presidential succession. "Essentially, the way that it's traditionally done in higher education is when the president is gone, the vice president for academics tends to be the number one person that takes over in the short term," explained Hazelbaker. He also went on to explain policy and procedure if the president is unable to serve for a long term, which he added does have some gaps. He stated that he is to begin working with Chair Robinson to draft policy to ensure clarity and consistency on the subject.

Planning for the upcoming budget talks, the board also reviewed budget details and calendar. They also received reports on the assessment of student knowledge and NPC's 2024 All-Arizona Academic team members.

President Hazelbaker informed the board of a grant opportunity for the Kayenta region. The grant, provided by the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) for fiscal year 2024, is called the Economic Transition Resource Grant and must be within 20 miles of closed Black Mesa or Peabody Kayenta coal mine. The grant stipulates it must be used to improve conditions and quality of life for residents in the affected region mentioned above. The grant has approximately $9 million in funding.

The college intends to submit NPC's application for the grant, with the project outlined to include a rebuild of Kayenta Center on a new site, partnership with Kayenta library and a renewable pilot project at the building site. Expansions through the center as well as economic development and technical training space were also listed.

President Hazelbaker noted that although it's not typical to come to the board prior to being awarded a grant, he wanted to ensure that it was something the board was in support of. "It would be really embarrassing to get a $9 million grant and then get it to the board level and then say, 'we're not going to take the grant because the board doesn't think we should move forward strategically'."

Board President Laughter asked if the college does not receive the grant, what would be done to improve the Kayenta center. "Anything north of I-40 does not get the same attention as everything south of the I-40," stated Laughter. Hazelbaker answered that he would probably bring forward a discussion about the Facility Master Plan, which would include readdressing the current priorities of the college in relation to budget and funds available. No action was taken on the discussion.

President Hazelbaker went on to give a report on the activities from the president's office since the previous meeting in November. In the report, he went over the overall numbers of the college in enrollment, grant money and employee retention. Strategic action updates were also given.

In new business, the board:

* Approved the final list of hearing officers/investigators which are: Jamie Mayrose, James E. Mannato, Prudence Lee, C. Benson Hufford and Pierce Coleman.

* Approved a contract with Last Call Media for website services to build an Online Information Center landing page related to Title III grant activities, in an amount not to exceed $110,000. As the college already contracts with Last Call Media for website maintenance and support, this was a sole source request.

* Accepted $681,327 in grant funding from the Arizona Department of Health Services for the Nurse Education Investment Pilot Program for the current fiscal year. The grant was created to address the nursing workforce shortage in the state.

* Approved the purchase of two SimLab Solutions SimServeRx ESS Advanced Bedside Smartcarts and label printers from Dia Medical in the amount of $62,981. Funding for this capital purchase is available over the life of the Nurse Education Investment Pilot Program grant. The bid prepared by Dia Medical is consistent with national cooperative pricing.

* Appointed Christine Schaefer, Associate Vice President of Human Resources (AVPHR), as Trustee to the Mountain Public Employee Benefit Trust, replacing Maderia Ellison, Vice President of Administrative Services/CFO, effective Jan. 22, 2024.

* Approved a three-year support and maintenance contract with HyeTech Network & Security Solutions LLC in the amount of $61,462. This is a budgeted expense utilizing Government Procurement Agreement Contract 22-02PV-08 to ensure best value for the college.

* Approved the renewal of the Meraki support and maintenance license through HyeTech Network & Security LLC for $197,623. This is a three-year budgeted expense utilizing Government Procurement Alliance Contract 22-02PV-08 to ensure competitive pricing for the college.

* Appointed Justin White as a member of the Board of Directors for the Northeast Arizona Training Center (NATC) to replace David Huish.