

Ruidoso to review impact fees

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The ordinance imposing impact fees on new construction in the village of Ruidoso is scheduled to be reviewed and updated.

Members of the Ruidoso Capital Improvements Advisory Committee meeting Tuesday sent a recommendation to the village council to approve a \$44,400 contract with Duncan Associates of Austin, Texas, the same firm that handled the original impact fee ordinance adopted Jan. 1, 2007. An update is mandated every five years.

The scope of work covers updating the village's land use assumptions, impact fees capital improvements plan and impact fee ordinance. "Land use assumptions" are projections of changes in land uses, densities, intensities and population for a specified service area over a period of at least 10 years and in line with the master plan of the local government.

Public participation in the updating process is mandated and is projected for meetings in October through December, according to a company timetable.

Among other information, the village must provide to the Duncan team the village's adopted land use and facility plans, existing land use and building permit data, inventory of existing facilities, the number of nonresidential water and sewer customers by water meter size, the capital improvements program, annual budgets and debt payment schedules for outstanding bond issues.

The contract states that additional services will be billed at the rate of from \$225 an hour to \$125 an hour, and that expert witness testimony will be billed at one and a half times those rates.

John Cornelius, capital improvements advisory committee chairman, asked if a recommendation from the committee was required. Village Building Official Shawn Fort said it is not required, but appropriate.

Associate Village Attorney Zach Cook said he was comfortable with the contract terms and that all procurement requirements were met.

"They have experience working in our community," Fort said. Cornelius observed that their previous experience with the community didn't result in a lower fee.

Fort said the earliest he could submit the contract for approval would be at the council's meeting on Sept. 11.

"I understand we can use impact fee money to pay for this," Cornelius said of the update revision. Fort said money had been allotted from the impact fee fund.

"We're supposed to have three different accounts. Did some money come out of each fund?" Cornelius asked. Fort said he would have to check.

"(The contract) says they'll be done within a year, but their timeline is quicker than that, which would be a good thing," Cornelius said.

"A lot depends on how fast staff can gather and prepare the data," Fort said. People already have

begun that work, he said.

"Can the council spend any impact fee money before this is approved?" Cornelius asked.

"Yes, they're still working under the old capital improvements plan," Fort replied. "It's required by state law to update it, but the old one is active until they adopt the update."

Impact fees adopted in the 2007 ordinance per service unit increased each year for four years, but since Jan. 1, 2010, have remained static. The fees are \$3,839 for water, \$401 for sewer and \$1,655 for wastewater.