

Taos Town Council votes to annex, enter Command Center lease

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A lengthy meeting of the Taos Town Council Tuesday (March 12) ended with votes to relocate dispatch operations to the Kit Carson Regional Command Center and, under threat of litigation, to annex the regional airport and 6 miles of Highway 64.

The topics have been controversial ones, and the council chambers were filled with town staff, Taos County leaders and close to 50 members of the public. The overwhelming majority of people who spoke on either issue expressed opposition to the ultimate actions of the council.

According to the lease with the option to purchase that the council approved for the Command Center, on Gusdorf Road, the town intends to occupy about 2,500 square feet for a 10-year term beginning Oct. 1, or when dispatch is fully operational in the new space, at a cost of \$2,768 per month. The town also has an option to expand.

The council voted 3-0, with Michael Silva abstaining to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, in favor of the lease/purchase agreement.

The council also engaged in lengthy discussion and a public hearing regarding the airport annexation, which county officials and El Prado residents vocally opposed, before ultimately voting 3-1 in favor of annexation. Silva cast the lone "no" vote; following the meeting he told *The Taos News* he thinks the town and county could have come to an agreement if they had more time.

After the meeting, county manager Stephen Archuleta said the county "absolutely" intends to challenge the annexation in court.

"They are forcing our hands," he said.

For more information, read Thursday's (March 14) edition of *The Taos News*.