

Solon

T I M E S

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Photo by Michael Steinberg

Members of the Chagrin Valley Islamic Center prepare for the opening next spring of the city's first mosque on Liberty Road. This week, members welcomed Mayor Edward H. Kraus to view the interior of the structure, which represents the first phase of the project. Pictured from left are Mayor Kraus, Dr. Syed Zaidi, Fouzia Ali, Masroor Malik and Nissan Suhail.

Mosque nears completion

Islamic members take look inside new center

By SUE REID

Against the bitter cold outside on Monday was the warmth of emotions that filled Solon's first mosque under construction on Liberty Road.

"It will be a central place for me

and my family and other families to come and join together in prayer," said Fouzia Ali, a resident of Aurora and a Chagrin Valley Islamic Center board member.

Ms. Ali, who will head activities for women once the mosque opens this spring, explained some of the calligraphy in Arabic on the outside of the building. There are 99 attributes for God, according to the Islamic faith, with a sampling of

some adoring the mosque's exterior.

Those include "the merciful" and "the forgiving," she described.

Construction of the \$2.5 million mosque, being built on a 5.84-acre parcel and measuring 7,000 square feet, is expected to be complete next spring in time for Ramadan, the Islamic holy month, which begins in April.

"It's just beautiful," Mayor Edward H. Kraus said, walking

inside for the first time since the groundbreaking in May of 2018. "It reminds me a lot of when the Chabad Jewish Center was under construction.

"It makes you realize that having a building is more than a building," Mayor Kraus continued. "You are building a community."

Mayor Kraus joined members of the Islamic center board as they milled

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Solon 2021 city budget shows \$843,000 deficit

By SUE REID

Beginning his 14th year on Solon City Council, Councilman William I. Russo said he will, for the first time, not vote in favor of the city's annual budget. It will also be the first unbalanced budget he is voting on, he noted.

The city is expected to enter 2021 with an estimated operating deficit of \$843,000 because of the projected revenue loss of between \$3 million and \$4 million this year linked to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

To offset this year's projected deficit due to the pandemic, Finance Director Matthew Rubino had recommended the city dip into its budget stabilization, or rainy-day fund, which has a total of \$7.5

million currently.

"I'm not voting in favor of the budget," said Mr. Russo, who represents Ward 7. "I'm starting my 14th year on council, and we never had a budget where we are spending more than we are taking in."

A total general fund budget of \$44 million is projected for next year, which is 3.9 percent lower than this year.

Revenues are estimated at \$43.2 million and a capital plan amounting to a total of \$23.9 million is recommended.

Mr. Russo said the city is fortunate that the initial projected revenue loss of \$7 million has come in much lower at the \$3 million to

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City jail operations heading back to normal, chief says

By SUE REID

The Solon Police Department's jail is running back to normal operations since a slowdown due to the coronavirus pandemic earlier this year, Chief Richard A. Tonelli said last week.

Chief Tonelli reported to members of City Council Safety and Public Properties Committee that the use of the jail and total arrests have increased.

The jail population began to decline around April and May, he said. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the average daily jail population was about 12.

Chief Tonelli said the jail began to remove the restrictions that were placed in March and began to return

to semi-normal operations in June by lifting most of those restrictions.

During the months of increased COVID-19 cases, the jail instituted restrictions linked to health guidelines on prisoners that would be accepted from both Solon and other contracting police agencies, Chief Tonelli explained. The jail also implemented a policy that officers entering the jail facility for routine matters would have their temperature checked as stipulated by the Ohio Department of Health, he added.

Jail visitations were canceled and changes were made to health screenings, Chief Tonelli continued. Corrections officers were required

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