



City of Rio Communities Council Regular Business Meeting
City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd
Rio Communities, NM 87002
Monday, June 10, 2024, 6:00 PM
Minutes

Please silence all electronic devices.

Mayor - Joshua Ramsell

Mayor Pro Tem - Lawrence R. Gordon

Council - Arthur Apodaca, Thomas Nelson, Matthew Marquez

Call to Order

Mayor Ramsell called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Gordon led the Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Ramsell stated the Council will hold an executive session at the next City Council meeting for complaints against the City Manager.

Roll Call

Governing Body

Mayor Joshua Ramsell
Councilor Lawrence Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Marquez

Staff

Manager Dr. Martin Moore
Deputy Clerk Lalena Aragon
Police Chief Felix Nunez
Fire Chief Andrew Tabet
City Attorney Randy Van Vleck

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Apodaca to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Approval of Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes for April 1, 2024, April 16, 2024, April 22, 2024

Approval of Accounts Payable

Motion made by Councilor Gordon to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca. Councilor Marquez asked how come there are charges for three cell phones for the City Manager. City Manager Dr. Moore explained that it is for the City Manager's department. Councilor Marquez asked who else is in the City Managers department that has a cell phone. City Manager Dr. Moore explained that the assistant to the City Manager has a cell phone, and the other charge is a type of communication device for the department.

Councilor Marquez asked police Chief Nunez about the gas charges and why the Code Enforcer has a take home vehicle. Police Chief Nunez explained that Officer Ubanic has been using the Code Enforcer unit until her unit was ready.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Councilor Marquez made a motion to add an executive session to today's agenda regarding complaints against the City Manager to get some questions answered. Seconded by Councilor Nelson.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Voting Nay:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca

Motion did not pass with a 2-2 vote Mayor breaking the tie

Public Comment:

Arturo Saiz talked about Senator Willie Chavez state park and requested the City add a pet park to Senator Willie Chavez State Park. They will need to work with the City of Belen and Valencia County. He stated that the park can be gated and open from 7am until 7pm. He continued to explain that this has been discussed in the past. At the time, the City wasn't financially able to help with it.

Ron Gentry asked about the Grant proposal for Goodman Ave & Damon Rd. He stated that he has met with the City Manager and the Engineers and stated his concern about the flooding it would cause. He was told that it was a grant that hadn't been awarded. He then read in the Newsletter under City Manager's report about a project that is going to start on Damon and Horner. He stated that if that article was pertaining to the drainage, it will affect access to his property. He then stated that he hadn't received the information he requested.

Dick Irvin talked about a great event in Belen as a tribute to Veterans. He stated that the event held a raffle and raised \$3000 for Paws and Stripes. Dogs were adopted at the event and asked why the City of Rio Communities doesn't have anything for the Veterans, but yet the City can spend money on the City's 10-year anniversary. He talked about his neighbor graduating from the police academy for the sheriff's department and congratulated him. He talked about where the public comments are placed on the agenda. He talked about hiring another consultant and stated that the City needed to put ads in the Newspaper instead of hiring consultants. He asked about what the Yates property is bringing in and why nothing has been mentioned about it.

Lodie Silva talked about the property at 407 Horner and stated that she purchased the property in May from the State. The building was at a complete loss due to a fire. She has the deed to begin the cleanup of the property.

Leroy Chavez asked about the east side of Highway 47 and asked if it was part of the City. He stated that nothing had been done. He keeps hearing that things are going to get done and nothing is getting done. The east side of the City is in the dark.

Councilor Marquez talked about adding a baseball field on the east side. He then asked if the Goodman project would be reconfigured.

Manager Report

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that he has just heard back from the engineers about the drainage and stated that Mr. Gentry will be updated on that. He then explained to Council that this week City Managers from across the state will be meeting in Santa Fe. There won't be any cost to the City. They will be going over items that will be proposed to the legislature. He then stated that the budget was submitted on time.

Councilor Nelson asked when the third quarter report will be presented to Council.

City Manager Dr. Moore stated he will contact Beasley Mitchell and get that report to Council.

Councilor Marquez talked about having a civilian volunteer work in City Hall to help with filing and paperwork. He stated that the person volunteering is the spouse of a Planning and Zoning Commissioner. He stated that he has volunteered to help in the office. Council should be helping if the City needs help with paperwork and filing and not a civilian. He asked if anything was going to be done about this issue.

Mayor Ramsell explained that the volunteer has experience and stated that Council members do not have experience. If Council members worked in the office, it could possibly jeopardize their vote when matters are brought to Council.

Councilor Marquez stated that it is a conflict of interest to have the spouse of Commissioner in the office. The City needs to hire some help and not have volunteers.

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that the City has several volunteers, and that the City has an insurance policy to cover volunteers. Volunteers do not have access to any confidential information.

Councilor Marquez stated that volunteers have more access than City employees.

City Manager Dr. Moore stated that he is unaware of that and that no volunteer has access to confidential information. He stated that they are respectfully going to disagree on this matter. City Manager Dr. Moore requested to move on.

Action Items

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Up Ahead Software

Dakota Pierce from Up Ahead Software talked about a text alert to send text message to residents in the case of an emergency.

Councilor Nelson asked what the difference is between what he is offering and the Assist Rio Communities app the City already has.

Mr. Pierce stated that he isn't familiar with the app the City currently uses and he continued to explain the resources Up Ahead software offers.

There was a discussion.
There was no decision made at this time.

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Appointment of Alternate Judge

Judge Helen Smith explained that she would like permission to Appoint an Alternate Judge and that she has an individual in mind. However, she has not been able to contact him to ask him if he would accept. She explained that he would have the same training as any other Judge.
Councilor Nelson asked the name of the Individual.
Judge Smith stated his name is Fransico Melendez.
Councilor Apodaca made a motion to approve the appointment of an Alternate Judge. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez Motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Approval to Increase Court Clerk Hours

Judge Smith explained that with an active Police Department and the number of cases that will be brought to the Court, there is a need to increase the hours for the Court Clerk from 18 hours to 24 hours a week.
Councilor Nelson made a motion to approve the increase of hours for the Court Clerk from 18 hours to 24 hours. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Approval to Hire Executive Recruiting Firm for Municipal Clerk & Finance Officer

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that recruiting an executive firm will expand the coverage area rather than the newspapers.
Councilor Gordon asked how long the City has had the job openings posted in the newspaper.
Councilor Marquez asked for all invoices of the jobs posted in the Albuquerque Journal and Valencia County News Bulletin. He requested the job postings continue in the newspaper.
There was a discussion.
Councilor Nelson motioned to table hiring the executive firm and have a workshop. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Resolution 2024-XX, Declaring 407 Horner Street Parcel 1010027140105000000, Dangerous / Nuisance Property

Mayor Ramsell explained during public comment there was a statement that this property was under new ownership. He is recommending a motion to postpone this agenda item.

Motion made by Councilor Gordon to postpone Resolution 2024-XX, Declaring 407 Horner Street Parcel # 1010027140105000000, Dangerous / Nuisance Property until a future time and date. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca

Abstained

Councilor Nelson

Motion passed with a 3-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Resolution 2024-XX, Declaring 96 Norma Street Parcel # 1010028400128000020, Dangerous / Nuisance Property

City Manager Dr. Moore explained after discussion with Law Enforcement and Fire Department, the Code Enforcement Officer has looked at this property. The City needs to send out a clear message. He explained the process the City needs to take to clean up this nuisance property.

There was a discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve Resolution 20245-XX Declaring 96 Norma Street Parcel # 1010028400128000020, Dangerous / Nuisance Property.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Partner with Valencia County Efforts to Restore Willie M. Chavez Park

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that Valencia County is going to partner with the City of Belen to work on Senator Willie Chavez State Park and restore it.

Councilor Nelson stated that he was trying to get the park for Rio Communities.

Councilor Marquez talked about the resident's request to include a pet park and would like to include that in the plans.

Councilor Apodaca stated that this would be a great community effort to partner with the County and the City of Belen to get a park and agrees with adding a pet park.

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to partner with Valencia County in the efforts to restore Willie M. Chavez State Park. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez
Councilor Apodaca

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Council Discussion

Councilor Marquez requested the Mayor's new phone number. Mayor Ramsell stated that his number hasn't changed.

Councilor Marquez asked if the City of Rio Communities newsletter was published by a group of volunteers or if they were paid. City Manager Dr. Moore explained that the City Newsletter is paid for by the City.

Councilor Marquez requested to be on the board for the newsletter. He then asked if the Assistant to the City Manager's salary was taken out of the budget. City Manager Dr. Moore explained that the position was not taken out of the budget.

Councilor Marquez asked to be involved in interviews for potential applicants. He then asked about the animal ordinance and traffic code ordinance draft. He talked about the Paws and Strips organization.

Councilor Nelson asked about the park in Chamisa. He also talked about working on a Veterans Memorial.

Mayor Ramsell talked about Councilor Apodaca working to have a Veterans Memorial in the City.


Councilor Marquez talked about Mr. Irvin's request to have something for Veterans Day.

Councilor Marquez talked about the property behind the Oasis Plaza and asked if it could be utilized. He asked if the City has been able to find the deed or title to that property.

Adjourn

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Gordon. With a unanimous vote the regular business meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Martin Moore, (Acting) Municipal Clerk
(Taken and Transcribed by Lalena Aragon, Deputy Clerk)

Date: 9/23/24

Approved:




Joshua Ramsell,
Mayor

Lawrence R. Gordon,
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor



Arthur Apodaca,
Councilor



Thomas Nelson,
Councilor

Matthew Marquez,
Councilor