



City of Rio Communities Council Regular Business Meeting
City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd
Rio Communities, NM 87002
Monday, August 12, 2024 6:00 PM
Minutes

Please silence all electronic devices.

Mayor - Joshua Ramsell
Mayor Pro Tem – Lawrance R. Gordon
Council - Arthur Apodaca, Thomas Nelson, Matthew Marquez

Call to Order

Mayor Ramsell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Council Apodaca lead the pledge of allegiance

Roll Call

Governing Body

Mayor Joshua Ramsell
Councilor Lawrance Gordon
Councilor Thomas Nelson
Councilor Art Apodaca
Councilor Matthew Marquez

Staff

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

Approval of Agenda

Councilor Gordon made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Approval of Consent Agenda

Minutes for Approval of Minutes for Regular Business Meeting May 30, 2024

Approval of Accounts Payable

Councilor Gordon made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Public Comment:

Ron Gentry talked about Our police department and the hours of operation. He explained that he owns a piece of property, and he got a call from the person next to his property about 9:00pm and she stated she can hear people on his property, and they were stealing paneling he called dispatch, and they stated Rio Communities Police didn't work at night and they sent a Sheriff deputy. He then stated he went to his property and Belen police department showed up and he was told the Sheriff's department was busy on another call. Mr. Gentry stated the City of Rio Communities have an agreement with the Sheriff to cover the City after hours, and the Sheriff has an agreement with Belen to cover them. Mr. Gentry asked if the City would consider creating a shift that would be on duty when the crooks and druggies were out.

Leona Vigil, talked about her concerns about the job openings she stated that she applied for the Municipal Clerks position and received an interview with Councilor Gordon and the City Manager. She stated that she has 19 years of experience in Municipal government. She then stated she wanted to be sure that the City was not wasting money on hiring outside companies to search for qualified applicants when they already had one.

Mary Huneke gave a copy to the Clerk of what she read as her statement. *"As a new resident of Rio Communities, I am deeply appreciative to of the exponential work our local Police Department and their dedication and understanding are an outstanding service to our community despite the limited number of officers. They truly deserve recognition. Their commitment to the safety and well-being of the residents often goes unnoticed and I believe it's crucial to highlight their hard work. However, serious concern arises when we consider how the city allocates \$95,000 tax dollars to Valencia County Sheriff office which seems unable to provide the service that the residents rightfully expect and deserve. It is frustrating to see our hard-earned taxes funneled into a service that is significantly under par particularly witnessing experiences and the lack of responsiveness from the VSO officers. I have witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by the residents of this community when trying to reach out for help in times of emergency. Deputies have instructed residents to call non-emergency not 911 and this leaves citizens feeling confused, frustrated, and extremely undervalued especially when response time stretches from one hour to three hours and that's if they show up. More often than not after calling 911 the dispatcher calls back stating that Valencia County Sheriff's office will not be responding to the request for help because the deputy deems the residents call not an emergency but will let Rio Communities know when they come on duty but never communicate to Rio Communities police that there was a call for assistance. This is highly concerning and should be concerning to all residents of Rio Communities not just myself which only raises more questions about the effectiveness and reliability of the Sheriff's Office in addressing community safety concerns. Moreover, it is disheartening when a sheriff openly criticizes our local police force on social media which not only undermines their efforts but also indicates a lack of support for this community. To illustrate this disconnect I often liken the situation to paying for an upscale steak dinner only to be served 2-day old cold fast-food fries. It is a disservice that is hard to accept especially when we are funding a service that falls short of expectation it prompts me to ask whether the city should reconsider the allocation of funds to VCSO and redirect them towards supporting our local Police Department which has consistently demonstrated its outstanding commitment to serving this community. I urge the council and the mayor to prioritize the safety of Rio Communities citizens by ensuring that taxpayer dollars are invested in services that meet*

Council Regular Business Meeting Minutes August 12, 2024

our needs and expectations. The exceptional work of our local police force deserves our full support and it's time to address the shortcomings of Valencia County Sheriff office to ensure that our community receives the protection it deserves because right now it feels like we're eating \$95,000 two-day old fries. Thank you."

Dick Irvin complimented the Police Chief, and everyone involved in National Night out. He stated that the Police Department only has a Chief and two patrol people and that it is hard to tackle the crime in the City.

Manager Report

City Manager Dr. Moore talked about the rain and weeds that have been popping up around the City. He stated that it is hard for homeowners and the City to keep up with and that the City understands and will be giving homeowners time to clean them up. He then stated that he received word that the budget and the fourth quarter report was turned in for final approval.

Councilor Nelson asked if Public Works could get the street sweeper and clean up the street on Horner and Goodman.

Councilor Marquez asked how come Council Members were not aware of Leonas application and stated that he requested to sit in on interviews. He then requested that Leona Vigil has another interview.

Councilor Gordon stated that if a person isn't hired that does not mean they did not have a proper interview or that they are not qualified.

Councilor Marquez state that he wanted to be included in the interviews and asked why he wasn't informed of the interviews the City has been having.

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that in the practice of Mayor, Council, Manager form of government that managers do not involve City Council members, except in certain circumstances such as an executive municipal official.

There was discussion.

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Resolution 2024-10 Declaring 94 Olson (Legal Description UPC: 1010028425140000320) A Dangerous / Nuisance Property

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that Councilor Gordon has brought this property up a few years ago. He then explained that the City can use the money form the Capital Appropriation grant to clean up this property.

There was discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve resolution 2024-10 declaring 94 Olson (Legal Description UPC: 1010028425140000320) A Dangerous / Nuisance Property. 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 – Participating Entity Agreement Cooperative Educational Services

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that this is a housekeeping matter and is requesting approval to work with Cooperative Educational Services to assist the City with a 2.2-million-dollar project he explained the City has never dealt with a grant this big before.

Motion made by Councilor Gordon to approve Participating Entity Agreement Cooperative Educational Services. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Discussion – City of Rio Communities Code of Conduct

Dr. Moore explained that the City has been working on having all employees sign the code of conduct and I requesting to have City Council sign it as well.

There was discussion.

Council Discussion

Councilor Apodaca nothing at this time.

Councilor Nelson thanked Officer Rodriguez for all he did for National Night out. He then thanked Dr. Moore for going out to see the flooding and asked to have a grand opening for Chamisa park, he also asked for a copy of the vehicle take home policy.

Councilor Gordon thanked everyone for all they did for National Night out. He also thanked the Optimus club for all their help with Movie Night as well.

Council Marquez thanked the National Guard for showing up to National Night out. He asked about updates for Willy Chavez State park.

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that they are working on an agreement, and they will be bringing it in front of Council as soon as the City gets any updates.

Councilor Marquez stated that this weekend the Belen Police department had an officer involved shooting that resulted in River Road being closed and asked if Dr. Moore knew anything about that.

City Manager Dr. Moore stated that he was informed, and he was dealing with some personal matters that he was dealing with. Dr. Moore explained that the Fire Department was assisting Belen.

Councilor Marquez stated that if Dr. Moore isn't available that someone needs to be to inform the residents of an alternate route. He talked about creating a safety plan to get some training for employees. He then asked if all vehicles could be detailed with the City decals and asked about the Uniform Traffic codes and asked if it has been completed.

City Attorney Van Vleck explained that the Penalty assessments schedule has been provided to the Police Chief and the Judge and is ready to go. He then explained that the Uniform Traffic Ordinance will take some time, and he is in the process of updating that.

Mayor Ramsell talked about the incident that happened on Saturday night with Belen Police on River road and stated that it was pretty chaotic and that there wasn't a statement of any type put out until the next day, so the City was very limited to that information. He then thanked the Police Department for the amazing job they did for National Night out and thanked all the sponsors and everyone that was involved.

Adjourn

Councilor Nelson made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Gordon motion carried at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date: _____

Approved:

Joshua Ramsell,
Mayor

Lawrance R. Gordon,
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor

Arthur Apodaca,
Councilor

Thomas Nelson,
Councilor

Matthew Marquez,
Councilor