

*Subject to approval at
the January 16, 2024
City Council Meeting*

STATE OF COLORADO)
COUNTY OF OTERO) SS
CITY OF LA JUNTA)

CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

INVOCATION: Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Ayala led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: The following Council Members were present:

Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Jeremiah Stoker, Ward 2
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: none

Also present: Rick Klein, City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Phil Malouff Jr., City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.
Gary Cranson, Utility Board
Connie Shane, La Junta
Cathy Hurd, La Junta
James Horner, La Junta
Douglas Golding, La Junta
Greg Portch, La Junta
Betty Velasquez, La Junta

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of December 18, 2023. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 18, 2023 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Stoker

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS (5-minute time limit per person):

1. James Horner, 308 E. 10th Street: Would like to see different music being played, other than cowboy music, at the Senior Center dances along with more advertising to all of the communities in the county. He would like to see something get done. (Mr. Horner was invited to attend the Senior Center Advisory Board meeting that Thursday at 10:00 a.m.)
2. Gregg Portch, 522 Santa Fe Avenue: Shared several concerns he's seen around La Junta, including: potholes, homeless, wanting the street sweeper out more, lack of maintenance on storm drains and storefronts downtown that are less than desirable. He did mention that the last chip seal is still working.

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NEW BUSINESS**A. Board Appointments****1. Planning Commission Board****a. Gregg Portch (term to expire 12/31/2025)**

MOTION TO APPOINT GREGG PORTCH TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION BOARD:
Pantoya

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

F. Committee/Board Reports**1. Utility Board (Council Member Velasquez):**

- Gary Cranson was appointed as the new Chairman and I was appointed as Vice-Chair.
- Aliza brought up the point about looking after your neighbor as we're entering the time of season when temperatures are going to drop. A great way to help somebody out or to pay it forward could be to put a little something on their utility bill.
- There was some discussion about solar panels. The City won't endorse or not endorse any solar company. It's up to the homeowners to make those decisions. There should be an abundance of caution used when you do seek a solar company. Make sure they're reputable and that they're going to come back and explore all the avenues of what your contract may entail.
- The City assisted Rocky Ford in the use of trash trucks since theirs were broken down. It's good mutual aid and good neighbor policy that seems to get us through the rough stuff when we need to.
- They'll be conducting a lead and copper survey of the resident's properties. Lead and copper will have to be removed.
- Two poles were changed out at Highway 350 & 6th Street and 10 Cactus Drive; both were hit by vehicles.
- Overloaded connectors at the La Junta Mill & Elevator were replaced.
- We currently have thirty solar customers with a total of \$469.48 in savings.

D. City Manager's Comments

- Have a hard drop as far as the bridges for the trail. They'll be here January 15th.
- Black Hills Energy gas is going back up again with a 2.2% change on residential and 1.9% change on small commercial. Last year they hit us with a 25% increase. Things are happening in the energy industry and we need to keep our eyes on it.

E. Governing Body Comments**1. Council Member Velasquez:**

- It was nice to drive by the golf course today and see golfers out there in 42-degree weather. They are dedicated.
- The signage at the entrance of the Industrial Park is looking really nice.

2. City Attorney Malouff:

- Regarding utility bills and helping your neighbor, I have personal knowledge that over the years, Rick has dipped into his personal funds many times to help little old ladies who were going to have their utilities cut off.
- Rick and his daughters have been known to go and clean the grates after storms and that's been done over the years many times.
- Self-help, fixing the streets, etc., don't do it. Even though you put fill and it's a good intention, our insurance coverage would fail when somebody is doing something to fix the streets of which we have responsibility and then it fails.

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3. Mayor Ayala:
 - Look forward to serving with all of you this year. When we passed the 1%, it wasn't just to survive. It was to be a better city than we've been before. I encourage all of the citizens to shop local, dare to be great, do as much as you can to volunteer. So much can be done and accomplished if we do it together, if we all stay on the same page. Disagreements are fine as long as we do them respectfully. I encourage you all to get involved. The city is looking forward to hearing new ideas and to working together to make this a great city.
4. Council Member Ramirez:
 - Woodruff Memorial Library opens on Saturdays starting January 13th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor