

*Subject to approval at
the March 4, 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, February 20, 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
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: none

Also present: Rick Klein, City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.
Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
Gary Cranson, Utility Board
Tom & Debra Fraker, Cheraw
Becky Fraker, La Junta
James Horner, La Junta
Douglas Golding, La Junta
Julie Worley, La Junta
Bob Houston, La Junta
Cathy Hurd, La Junta
Connie Shane, La Junta
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

PRESENTATION OF YEARS OF SERVICE PLAQUE by City Manager Klein and Mayor Ayala.

Debra Fraker (May 2000 – January 2024)

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of February 5, 2024. It was added that the Chamber of Commerce was also a sponsor of the Girls in the Middle Conference. Hearing no further corrections or additions, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024 MINUTES AS AMENDED: Stoker

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – February 20, 2024

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of February 15, 2024. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 15, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Rikhof

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

LA JUNTA POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE.

Chief Todd Quick: On behalf of the La Junta Police Department, we've been very busy following up on leads and getting warrants. Some of the officers are getting up to thirty hours of overtime because we're not letting this rest. We've got some good partners here and we need the help of these two gentlemen and their people.

Sherrif Shawn Mobley: Chief Quick and I are working on improving the collaboration between our two agencies, working much more closely together on major cases. Getting our investigators together plus our patrol staff. The only way we're going to make an impact on crime is to come together. This is a team, not just as a team among law enforcement and not just police agencies and our DA's office, but the public as well. We're seeking some help here. Both agencies are working closely together because we take this very seriously. We are trying to make a significant impact in crime.

District Attorney Will Culver: Law enforcement is working very hard. This was maybe the worst holiday weekend that a lot of us have had in quite some time. We have had two weekends in a row with shots fired and three people in our community that have holes in them that didn't before. These guys are working night and day to try and solve this and get it done. It doesn't happen without the community. We've got members of the community out there who know exactly what happened, who hasn't come forward, who are not talking to the police, and every single one of us in these communities have an absolute vested interest in living in communities where bullets aren't ringing around the streets at night. I understand not everyone wants to talk to the police. All of us deserve to live in a safe community. Those who are affected, those who are part of this community, and these guys, can't do it without our help. Vince Fraker had his law enforcement academy out, walking the ditches to find evidence to help on these crimes. But people in the community need to come forward and they need to help. I hope they will because with their help, all of us will live better, safer lives in our communities.

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

1. Bob Houston, 701 W. 4th Street: I'm happy to tell you that TLM did come in and took care of the problem at my warehouse. I appreciate everybody that worked on it.
2. James Horner, La Junta: Shared a flyer of the dance schedule that will begin at the Senior Center in April. The Senior Center will host dances on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and evening dances will be the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There will be music of all types to include: new and old country & western, oldies, Latino and classic rock.
3. Douglas Golding, 1316 Lincoln Avenue: I went on the website and couldn't find a listing of the boards that the city has. I couldn't find meeting times of them either. How does the public find out when these boards meet? The only thing I think worse than not having a website in this day and age is having a website that's inadequate and out-of-date. Two weekends ago, I pointed out that it says there's no restaurant at the golf course and that's still on there. Maybe it needs an overhaul but take care of the obvious problems. We have a lot of new citizens, they don't know there's a library board, a senior center board, or a tree board, because they're not listed in there or when they meet. I think we have to do a better job of getting information to people about these. There's a lot of errors and things missing.

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4. Julie Worley, Chamber of Commerce: The Smithsonian will be open this upcoming Thursday from noon to 8:00 p.m. and at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., Chuck Hanagan will give a presentation on the Holly Swink Railroad and the Sugar Factory. Those will both be in the banquet room at the student center. The exhibit will also be open from noon – 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and at 1:00 p.m., the documentary, “The Five States of Colorado” will be shown.
5. Aliza Libby, Director of Finance: Went over the new format of the financial reports.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Our Lady of Guadalupe/St. Patrick Parish, Event Manager, Deborah Smith. The event is their Annual Dinner Auction to be held March 16, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. at 202 Lincoln Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fee has been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Manager recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE/ST. PATRICK PARISH FOR THEIR ANNUAL DINNER AUCTION TO BE HELD MARCH 16, 2024 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 11:59 P.M. AT 202 LINCOLN AVENUE: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- B. **AVRMC Joint Meeting.** This year’s joint meeting with AVRMC has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 10th at 6:00 p.m.
- C. **Search Firm Proposals.** Baker Tilly and SGR (Strategic Government Resources) submitted proposals.

Mayor Ayala: I think they’re both really great proposals. There’s a couple of different things about each one that is different. If there’s something you guys want me to go back to them with and say, can we get something tweaked here or there. We can do that as well.

Council Member Rikhof: I read through both of them but are there any highlights that stood out to you? Any differences that you think are worth pointing out?

Mayor Ayala: The only thing that I like a little bit more was that SGR worked with Lamar. They’re so similar to us, not just in size but the area of Colorado. The Baker Tilly one was great too.

City Manager Klein: SGR is probably your top firm from what I’ve seen.

MOTION TO ADOPT THE PROPOSAL FOR EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT SERVICES FROM SGR: Rikhof

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof has the same mindset as Mayor Ayala that their recent work with Lamar is really the only thing that pushed them over the other one. They’re both excellent proposals and very similar cost wise and what they’re proposing along with their process.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

D. Committee/Board Reports

1. Utility Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Good job to Aliza for the balanced financial. The new format is easy to follow.

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- From Mr. Seaba's report:
 - Assisted numerous customers with frozen service pipes due to customers tampering the water pits. If you need your water turned off or on, contact the Police Department non-emergency number or call the Electric Department at the same number as if you're calling in an outage.
 - Second notices of backflow violation were mailed to businesses. They should be receiving their third warning. If they fail to comply at this point, Mr. Seaba will go and visit them personally and if they continue to not comply, they risk having their water turned off until there is compliance with the backflow testing.
- From Mr. Jackson's report:
 - \$700 was approved for the ARPA scholarship that the City of La Junta and ARPA, for a combined total of \$1,400.00, to provide a student of La Junta who receives power from the City of La Junta. The deadline to apply is April 12th and you can pick up your application from Paula Mahoney.

D. City Manager Comments

- We are working on our 5-year Airport Improvement Plan with FAA.
- We had another main break on Raton in the 2100 block.
- The Brick and Tile playground is being constructed this month.
- We are waiting for the weather to clear to pour the floor for the bathroom for the Brick and Tile Park.
- We are waiting for our notice to proceed to construct the trail from CDOT and the Army Corps of Engineers.
- The Fire Department hosted an ice rescue training where 8 of our firemen were certified.
- The columbarium finally arrived over a year after we ordered it. It has been set.
- We have ordered the scoreboard for Veteran's field.
- The Library, Senior Center, Golf Course, and Pool are going to start having open houses showcasing their services.
- We are working with the School District on the bleachers, replacing seats.

City Manager Klein: Thank you everybody for everything that we've done. I've really enjoyed my career. I don't have any ill feelings. I wanted to come back to the valley and help. I hope I made a difference in your lives and in your family's lives. That's all I wanted. So, hopefully I did that. I feel satisfied. I hope you all are too. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Bike and electric scooters are okay to be used at the Brick & Tile Park; however, golf carts are not.
- Signage for the Brick & Tile Park is on its way.
- Maintenance is being done between Third Street and Highway 50, which will help with the "campers" along the trail.
- The trees that are being removed will be replaced with color trees. People at Evergreen and coming around the corner will have better looking trees and will have color in the fall.

E. Governing Body Comments**1. Mayor Ayala:**

- I want to say thank you for everything that you've done since I've been elected. When I first came into the office with Rick, we weren't on the best of terms. But we've worked together very well for the better of La Junta and the region. I'm going to miss having you here for different things. Just know that you're always a phone call away from me.

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- For those who don't know, Phil Malouff, our City Attorney for around thirty-six years, turned in a letter saying that the 29th would also be his last day as well. We don't need a search committee for that one. He gave me a list of names to see if there's any interest. Once I reach out and see if there's any interest, I will present that to council.
 - Right now, we're in the middle of this City Manager process and there's some things in this process that to protect the integrity of the search, there's some things that are going to be confidential. Once this process is complete, we will share all of that information. When we have contract negotiations, that will be in executive. Don't think that we're not being transparent. It's just the way it has to be for right now. When its over, we will absolutely share everything that we can.
2. Council Member Velasquez:
- Want to extend a thank you to Rick.
 - Point of clarification about the notice of violations. That's for commercial businesses only.
3. Council Member Ochoa:
- I wanted to thank Parks and Rec, whoever was on duty yesterday, on the holiday, that went out and searched the City Park. There were some posts about a whole bunch of broken glass, trash and equipment. It was just trash and they went out yesterday on their day off to pick up the park. I went up and kicked around the sand and there's no broken glass. As a community, we all came together just to make sure that it wasn't trashed for the kids that may not have been in school yesterday.
- Mayor Ayala: There's a cleaning schedule they do daily and if something happens over the weekend, it happens and they're not going to be on call to go and do stuff like that. But you as citizens also have responsibility. If you can post it, you can also clean it up.
- Council Member Ochoa: When we do those posts, it just brings up a whole bunch of other people out there who, I guess, just know how everybody's jobs work and they just want to point fingers. It just makes for a contentious conversation. Kudos to Parks and Rec.
- Mayor Ayala: Instead of talking about positives, we get stuck talking about these things and we should be celebrating Rick giving us thirty plus years of services and Deb giving us twenty-three years of service. That's what we should be promoting. Thank you to Parks & Rec and all our employees for everything that you guys do for us.
4. City Manager Klein:
- I'd like to thank all my supervisors and employees. You guys are the best and I know you all know how I feel about you.

There being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor