

*Subject to approval at
the March 18, 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 Monday, March 4, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

INVOCATION: Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Council Member Velasquez led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: The following Council Members were present:

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

Absent: Damon Ramirez, Ward 1

Also present: Brad Davidson, Interim City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.
Douglas Golding, La Junta
Cathy Hurd, La Junta
Connie Shane, La Junta
Christina & Samuel Tozzie, La Junta
Norma Haugen, La Junta
Everett Edger, La Junta
Nancy Bennett, La Junta
Susan Dietrich, La Junta
Steve Cordova, Total Concept
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

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 20, 2024. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE FEBRUARY 20, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Stoker

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

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SAMUEL TOZZIE, 16 Mountview Drive, Teen of Impact: I am currently an 8th grader at La Junta Junior/Senior High School and I'm excited to be here today to talk about my community service project with the American Heart Association. It's an honor to represent not only La Junta but all of Southern Colorado as one of only five communities in Colorado and New Mexico competing to be named 2024 American Heart Association, Teen of Impact. I'm also the youngest candidate in Colorado. Every year the American Heart Association nominates teens who show incredible passion and ability to make a difference in their communities. We compete by earning points through monetary donations and mission activities. For every dollar raised, my team gets one point and the team with the most points at the end of the competition will be named 2024 Teen of Impact. It's a blind competition. So, we don't know how the other teams are doing until the very end. It all started when I was in 2nd grade at La Junta Primary School and I made a lofty goal of raising \$1,000 in our schools Hoops for Heart fundraiser. Through the help of family and friends, I was able to raise over \$1,300 for the American Heart Association and the stakes are even higher now as I aim to reach \$25,000 by April 4th. I decided to accept the nomination from the American Heart Association because of my personal connection with devastating effects of stroke on my family and last year, when Damar Hammond collapsed on the football field, it really hit me hard. As a football player and athlete, myself, I realized how critical life-saving CPR can be. This community service project is also incredibly important because I am passionate about making a difference in our community and helping others. I want to help fund research and raise awareness to fight the number one and number five killers in our country. Heart disease and stroke. I want to support the American Heart Association's mission to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. By supporting the American Heart Association, we can collectively fund ground breaking research and science to prevent teens and their families from suffering from cardiovascular disease. We can educate people on living a healthy lifestyle and support them on their journey to eating well, moving more, managing stress, knowing their health numbers, getting enough sleep, and more. Transform healthcare to ensure equitable access to care for everyone. We can advocate for legislator policies that bolster the helms of our communities and we can equip more people with the knowledge they need to save lives through CPR. The project isn't just about making a difference in the world. Its also about gaining experience and community service hours that will help me stand out on my college applications in the future endeavors. Together with organizations like the American Heart Association and the support of our community, we can make a real difference in fighting against heart disease and stroke. For anyone who would like to follow along with my campaign progress, you can find my campaign page on Facebook or you can reach out to me or my team and we can provide you with more information. Thank you all for your time and attention this evening.

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

1. Douglas Golding, 1316 Lincoln Avenue: Other than the redo of Carson from 1st to 5th, I haven't seen much in the way of street repair for a couple years. Everybody's aware of the conditions of the streets. I know we're not supposed to repair holes but when you drive around on one that's a foot and a half deep and its going to throw your tire off if you hit it. It was on my gravel street. I filled it in with gravel. I don't know if there's a schedule coming up to repair streets. Then, just to follow up, I'm still waiting to understand how action gets done on questions that are brought before council. There's still work to do and I'm still willing to volunteer to help out wherever I can.

CRIME PREVENTION LETTER.

Mayor Ayala: Mr. Cordova and a couple other entities received a letter regarding the crime issue in our town. We are trying to work on ways to be creative and work together with homeowners and property owners. Council was provided with the letters that went out. Mr. Cordova reached out and wanted to be on our agenda to speak about his letter and his ideas on how we can do better moving forward.

Steven Cordova, Executive Director, Total Concept: We are based in Fowler and we own and operate a number of properties throughout the State of Colorado. We develop real estate properties primarily affordable housing properties and also attainable housing properties and market rate single-family homes as well. We own a number of businesses and we manage a couple of them including some housing authorities and also a construction company. We're very active in landlord and tenants' rights and advocacy. If any of you have been aware of some of the legislation that has been passing over the past couple of years, primarily around affordable housing, I was involved in many of the draft language

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of that and a lot of the feedback but I do have to say that many of the teeth that landlords had were taken away particularly during the pandemic. As we received this letter from the City of La Junta concerning the number of calls of the police force to our properties, I reached out to say, I appreciate the letter, I agree there is a problem and when we take a look at what's going on statewide and in other communities, it's no different here in La Junta than anywhere else. Just a few weeks ago, February 20th, you had law enforcement here talking about the previous two weeks where three people have holes in their bodies. We then get this letter dated February 21st, the day after that meeting. That tells me this is an important issue. Let's work together. Let's elevate this, and keep it on the agenda for the City of La Junta to work on it. You have towns up and down this highway experiencing these issues. All along I-25, along the front range in the metro areas as well too. My conversation with the mayor was, my staff do not carry weapons and we cannot enforce the law. My staff are leasing agents. They are not weapon carrying individuals and we cannot enforce the law. In the past, when Bill Jackson was on my board, we used to have police reports to us. Practically every single time that an incident occurred. Today, speaking over the last thirty days, as we reach out, there may be a case number, but no police report. We find that very interesting. We would like those police reports because we can then build a file in that tenants file to indicate we have got to either non-renew their lease or because of the repeated lease violations, we put them on notice. Once an action occurs, we cannot evict. We can give them a demand letter. If they were partying too loud and the noise was crazy, we issue then the violation to cure it in thirty days. It was cured by the end of the weekend. They have technically resolved the situation. But if they do that every single weekend, at some point, we can say, that's a repeated violation and infringing on peaceful enjoyment to the rest of the residents. Not only the ones within the community of Morning Side Heights or College Overlook or Mount View but the entire community. There are some things in this letter that we have done, such as install cameras. Nobody's ever asked us to provide any coverage. If the police come in on a Saturday to our properties, my staff do not look at 24 hours of three days of footage to find that one time something happened. We need to know so we can go look for it and then work together. We need those police reports. They're not coming and when we do ask for them, there's a case number but no report or it just gets forgotten. So, we would like and request that somehow there be a standing process to do that. These three properties represent 3.45% of all housing units available in the City of La Junta. I'm not one single landlord with one unit. You add in some of the other properties we have and all the rest of the people we touch in different ways. The percentage of the households that we can interact with, anything above 1% is pretty large. 3.45% with just these three properties let us work together. How many of the landlords are there that have that type of penetration into the market? Maybe four or five more. It would be very simple for a task force to come together, focusing in on 10 to 20% of the entire housing units available in the City of La Junta and we can eradicate or address perhaps, 8% of these situations that are occurring. This is what we call the 80/20 rule where 20% account for 80% of the effect. How do we distinguish who those 20% are to alleviate 80% of what's going on. Pueblo, for example, is developing a real-time crime center and there are other towns that are doing those types of things. I'm very interested in knowing how and what ideas is the City of La Junta law enforcement, and the surrounding Otero County Sheriff's Department doing in relation to some real-time crime intervention. I get that not every crime rises to the level where you need to see it right away. There are some things that I would like some answers to as well. In addition to what I just said, it would be very interesting to know what the trends for these properties have been over the last five years. We did have this thing called COVID and is the interaction more or less over those last five years. What type of citations were issued and fines assessed? One thing that I mentioned to our mayor is that part of the reason people don't respond is the fact that nothing happens. Sometimes my staff go back to their property and say, hey, I heard that the police were here, what happened? They don't want to talk to them because nothing happens. We've got to get beyond that. People have to have natural consequences and only a notice and a notice and a notice just does not cut it. These offenders need to pay a price, whatever that is and it could be very useful such as domestic violence intervention. How many of these calls were due to domestic violence. One of my properties was visited on average two times per year per residency. Did everybody, every address who got visited twice, this last year, get a letter. Now the reason I say that is because that property is specifically for disabled individuals, physically, mentally, and developmentally. How many of those calls were due to perpetration upon those residents. We cannot continue or allow perpetrators to infiltrate and just keep getting away with that. Every one of those calls should have been issued a citation or a fine and there should have been some action on those. From the resident to the landlord, to the police department, to the DA, to the Rural Legal Services, to the Judge, we all need to get tougher on crime.

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Mayor Ayala: Chief Quick wanted to be here but was unable to. He would have had some solid numbers for us. He'll review this and we'll get with you and let you know what's going on with the police reports. When you say nothing happens, our officers could very well be making arrests and those people could be getting out that same day or the next. We have no control over that. Sometimes that's where the blame game starts. The main thing is that we do try to work together not just with your but with also private landlords that have a lot of residences and find a way to help take back this town before it gets too far gone from us. It starts with tough conversations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TOWING ORDINANCE.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

NEW BUSINESS**A. Liquor Licenses.**

- 1. Application for a Special Events Permit by Trillion Tree Corps., Event Manager, Angela Davis. The event is a Veteran Appreciation Tree Planting Event to be held March 16, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 116 Dalton 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 Mayor recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO TRILLION TREE CORPS. FOR A VETERAN APPRECIATION TREE PLANTING EVENT TO BE HELD MARCH 16, 2024 FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. AT 116 DALTON AVENUE: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

- 2. Application for a Special Events Permit by Southeastern Colorado Area Health Education Center, Doreen Gonzales, Event Manager. The event is their annual Nurse Recognition Banquet and Awards Dinner to be held March 22, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at 2001 San Juan Avenue (Otero College).** 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 posed. The Mayor recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER FOR THEIR ANNUAL NURSE REOCGNITION BANQUET AND AWARDS DINNER TO BE HELD MARCH 22, 2024 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M. AT 2001 SAN JUAN AVENUE (OTERO COLLEGE): Pantoya

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

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- 3. Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by Ronald E. Hall, d/b/a The Railyard, 114 Colorado Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. Appropriate fees have been tendered and the Mayor recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A RENEWAL OF A TAVERN LIQUOR LICENSE BY RONALD E. HALL, D/B/A THE RAILYARD, 114 COLORADO AVENUE: Velasquez

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

- B. A Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Property – 218 Harriet Avenue.** Resolution No. R-2-2024 was presented for council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the City is a Home Rule City organized under the laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City previously owned certain real property described as follows:

Lot 9 in Block 5 in Bradish Addition to the Town, now City of La Junta, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, in Otero County, Colorado.

More commonly known as 218 Harriet Avenue, La Junta, Colorado.

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the real property has no utility to the City and as such is surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the City decided to sell the same to STEVE FREIDENBERGER.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO as follows:

1. The City determines that the property is surplus property.
2. The City authorizes the Mayor to execute a Deed of Conveyance to STEVE FREIDENBERGER in exchange for the gross sum of \$500.00.
3. The resolution is enacted by the City Council of the City of La Junta.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-2-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: These properties were sold using a sealed bid process. This has been the standard procedure for many years. All structures on these properties have been removed.

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

- C. A Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Property – 1507 Edison Avenue.** Resolution No. R-3-2024 was presented for council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the City is a Home Rule City organized under the laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City previously owned certain real property described as follows:

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Lots 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 in Block 3, La Junta Heights Subdivision to the City of La Junta, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, in Otero County, Colorado.

More commonly known as 1507 Edison Avenue, La Junta, Colorado.

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the real property has no utility to the City and as such is surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the City decided to sell the same to JAMES BUSH.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO as follows:

1. The City determines that the property is surplus property.
2. The City authorizes the Mayor to execute a Deed of Conveyance to JAMES BUSH in exchange for the gross sum of \$2,500.00.
3. The resolution is enacted by the City Council of the City of La Junta.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-3-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

D. A Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Property – 1510 Lewis Avenue. Resolution No. R-4-2024 was presented for council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the City is a Home Rule City organized under the laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City previously owned certain real property described as follows:

Lots 11 through 24 in Block 3, La Junta Heights Subdivision to the City of La Junta, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, in Otero County, Colorado.

More commonly known as 1510 Lewis Avenue, La Junta, Colorado.

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the real property has no utility to the City and as such is surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the City decided to sell the same to JAMES BUSH.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO as follows:

1. The City determines that the property is surplus property.
2. The City authorizes the Mayor to execute a Deed of Conveyance to JAMES BUSH in exchange for the gross sum of \$2,500.00.
3. The resolution is enacted by the City Council of the City of La Junta.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-4-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

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DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

- E. A Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Property – 501 Barnes Avenue.** Resolution No. R-5-2024 was presented for council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the City is a Home Rule City organized under the laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City previously owned certain real property described as follows:

Lots 19 and 20 in Block 2, Inge's Addition to the Town, now City of La Junta, as shown by the recorded plat thereof, in Otero County, Colorado.

More commonly known as 501 Barnes Avenue, La Junta, Colorado.

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the real property has no utility to the City and as such is surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the City decided to sell the same to JAMES BUSH.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO as follows:

1. The City determines that the property is surplus property.
2. The City authorizes the Mayor to execute a Deed of Conveyance to JAMES BUSH in exchange for the gross sum of \$1,000.00.
3. The resolution is enacted by the City Council of the City of La Junta.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-5-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramirez absent)

- F. City Attorney Contract.** Mr. Malouff gave the Mayor a list of names to contact. After contacting those individuals, along with some others, we have one potential person that we are in deeper talks with. Hopefully by next month, we should have that position filled. That individual is chosen by a vote of the council.

- G. Tree Dump Information.** The following proposed costs were presented for council's consideration as follows:

- There is a need to monitor incoming material and where it was generated.
- This will allow the city to avoid trash and shingles dumping, as well as tires and non-wood products being dumped.
- Charges for Dump
 - No charge for City of La Junta residents – Proof of residency is required, just like at the compactor.
- Proposed Costs
 - Pickup or small Trailer \$10
 - Large Trailer or Truck \$20

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- Commercial \$20/Load

Currently, we are receiving materials from all over the county and other counties and cities.

Requires city more time, manpower, and equipment to push debris and burn pile.

This would eliminate improper materials being dumped.

All other dumps charge to pay for this service. Because we don't charge, people are using the tree dump in stead of taking debris where it belongs.

Regardless of charging for dumping, we need to monitor loads coming in and charging pays for the monitoring.

MOTION TO ADOPT THE PROPOSED FEES AS PRESENTED IN THE "TREE DUMP INFORMATION" SHEET, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024: Ochoa

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: Council Member Stoker went over the proposed costs for those listening online. Council Member Velasquez asked about situations with extreme weather events. Mr. Jackson said that special arrangements will have to be made case by case.

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ramriez absent)

H. Committee/Board Reports

1. Tree Board (Council Member Ochoa):
 - Taking down the diseased elms at the City Park and replacing them with more colorful trees.
 - Will be lining the Brick & Tile Trail with different trees that will be non-evasive and more colorful.
 - There will be forty plus trees that will be planted this year.
 - Considering doing the 50/50 tree removal program again this year or next. It was very beneficial for homeowners and business owners.

D. Interim City Manager Comments

- Thank you. This is going to be a great adventure and I look forward to working with you and doing what we need to do to keep things moving forward and stay afloat.
- Want to remind the council about CML that's coming up.
- Met with supervisors and we had a very good conversation on goals and expectations and where we want to be going. It was a positive meeting.
- There was a big fire last weekend in Las Animas. I sent some crews down along with myself. Kudos to all of the surrounding agencies for their cooperation.

E. Governing Body Comments

1. Council Member Stoker:
 - Welcome to Brad. I look forward to working with you in this position. Although the vote for Interim City Manager wasn't unanimous, I'm pretty sure we all support Brad.
 - Went to the Brick & Tile Park over the weekend, several times. One thing I want to point out is that motorized vehicles are not allowed on the trail. Be safe while riding your bicycles and scooters. Watch out for pedestrians.
2. Council Member Pantoya:
 - The porta potties were also knocked over this last weekend. Whoever is doing that, please don't.
3. Council Member Velasquez:
 - I have a question regarding emergency responses. Is there any color coordination along the park to where somebody calling in can say that they're in the blue section or green section?

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Interim City Manager Davidson: Brock and I have been talking about that but we haven't decided how we're going to come up with color coordination or signage. We will be working on that process this week.

4. Mayor Ayala:
 - We had a gentleman come and complain about speed on 3rd Street before we have the crossing there. We should have a speed limit sign posted there. (Mr. Davidson will refer that to our Engineer.)
5. Council Member Pantoya:
 - Young AmeriTowne On The Road is in La Junta at the Armory. They will be here for two weeks.
6. Council Member Velasquez:
 - Thank you to SECO News for your tremendous job of keeping us all informed.
7. Mayor Ayala:
 - SGR sent the contract on the 27th. I had Dean look it over. It's signed. Someone from SGR will be at our next council meeting.

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