

***Subject to approval at
the April 15, 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, April 1, 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 – arrived at 6:04 p.m.
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: none

Also present: Brad Davidson, Interim City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
James Horner, La Junta
Betty Velasquez, La Junta
Josh Harris, La Junta
Dottie Burnett, La Junta
Susan Dietrich, La Junta
Nancy Bennett, La Junta
Gary Cranson, UB Chairman
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 March 18, 2024. Council Member Rikhof has one amendment to the minutes. The mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MARCH 18, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: It should read, the “68th Annual Otero Arts Festival” not the 6th.

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

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

1. James Horner, 308 E. 10th Street: Handed out a flyer with upcoming dances at the Senior Center for the month of April and invited the city council to attend to see what’s been accomplished.

Council Member Stoker entered the Council Chambers

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. City Manager Search.** The Mayor spoke with Larry Gilley with SGR, once he receives a form that is being worked on, he will be able to present the council with a brochure that will be made available to the public. An online survey is also in the works.

NEW BUSINESS**A. Liquor Licenses.**

1. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Otero Museum Association, Dave Hill, Event Manager. The event is their Annual Museum Benefit to be held April 26, 2024 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at 218 Anderson Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fees have been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO OTERO MUSEUM ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR ANNUAL MUSEUM BENEFIT TO BE HELD APRIL 26, 2024 FROM 5:30 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M. AT 218 ANDERSON AVENUE: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

2. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Southeastern Colorado Creative Partnership, Nancy Aschermann, Event Manager. The event is their Annual Brew Fest to be held June 7, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. at Santa Fe Plaza.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fees have been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP FOR THEIR ANNUAL BREW FEST TO BE HELD JUNE 7, 2024 FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 11:59 P.M. AT SANTA FE PLAZA: Stoker

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

3. **Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by Red Dog Revisited LLC, d/b/a Red Dog Revisited, 709 E. 3rd Street.** 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 City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A RENEWAL OF A TAVERN LIQUOR LICENSE BY RED DOG REVISITED LLC, D/B/A RED DOG REVISITED, 709 E. 3RD STREET: Ramirez

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Stoker abstained)

- B. Recommendation that the Utility Board continue fact finding and conversations regarding the Ark Valley Conduit in order to be able to make informed decisions.** Last year, the Utility Board made a recommendation to council to say “no” to the Arkansas Valley Conduit based on the information that was available at that time. Since then, there hasn’t been any new information. The Utility Board would like to find out more answers to bring to the council. There is concern of being overcommitted regarding the estimates that were made as to what La Junta would need and there is a need to have a knowledgeable, skilled person review La Junta’s commitments.

MOTION TO REQUEST THE UTILITY BOARD REVISIT THE ISSUES OF CONCERN THEY WANT TO ADDRESS [REGARDING THE UTILITY BOARD’S POSITION ON WHETHER LA JUNTA

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SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT] AND LOOK AT A BUDGET TO SEE THE AMOUNT NEEDED [TO HAVE A NEW REVIEW BY AN ATTORNEY OR ADVOCATE] AND THEN BRING THAT NEW RECOMMENDATION BACK TO COUNCIL: Pantoya

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

C. Committee/Board Reports

1. Utility Board (Council Member Velasquez):

- The Board approved an additional \$11,000 be appropriated to the electric fund.
- Also approved a wastewater rate increase from \$55 to \$58.50, effective May 1st.
- Level 1 Water Restrictions. No watering between 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Avoid excessive water use.
- Some copper wire was stolen from the 600 block of Belleview.
- On the east side of town in dumpsters, they're finding human waste when they go to clean them out. A possible solution could be having a shared master lock.

2. Senior Center (Council Member Velasquez):

- Miss Elah Backes donated a new flower box as part of her Eagle Scout project and her family donated materials.

E. Interim City Manager Comments

- The 1% sales tax goes into the general fund not the enterprise funds. It is to build up the general fund for future projects.
- There were parking concerns at the Brick and Tile Park last weekend. Met with Brock and Martin to start looking into adding some parking west of the bathroom.
- There are currently 225 kids signed up for soccer. Just fifteen kids less than last year.
- Baseball sign-ups started today at the reduced fee.
- Cleaned up under the 3rd Street and Adams bridge after the fire. Thanks to the Police Department and Street Department.
- Chief Todd Quick and Sheriff Shawn Mobley will be doing a "Grab-a-Cup-of-Coffee" at Copper Kitchen on Wednesday April 10th starting at 8:00 a.m.
- Repairs will begin tomorrow on the large water leak from last week. The public is asked to limit unnecessary water use, such as outside watering. If you notice discoloration after the repair, flush the cold-water lines in your house or business starting at the lowest level working to the tallest.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS DISCUSSED:

- Tippy Martinez playground looking bad.
- There will be a general town hall toward the end of April.
- A homeless campfire was the cause for the fire under the bridge.
- There is an influx of abandoned shopping carts around town.
- The dog park is in the master plan; however, it is ranked as a low priority.

F. Governing Body Comments

1. Council Member Ramirez:

- The Koshare Indian group has the highest number of Eagle Scouts in the United States. Elah Backes is the first female in the area to be awarded the Eagle Scout badge.

2. Council Member Ochoa:

- Thanked all of the City of La Junta employees who worked hard the past couple of months, including: the Police Department, Fire Department, Streets Department and Water Department.

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3. Council Member Rikhof:
 - Reiterated that there will be public input as part of the six-month process for the City Manager search.
 - Welcomed Erin as the City's new City Attorney. Now is a good time to think about what kinds of processes can be changed or implemented and what the role of each council member is. There's still a lot of questions about how things get done in the city.
 - Will be hosting an eclipse watch party next August 12, 2045. La Junta will be in the middle of the path of totality.
 - (Continued discussion of council member onboarding and city manager search opportunities for the public.)
 - Otero College: Lunch & Learn Wednesday at 12:15 in the Learning Commons, Arts Festival from tomorrow to Friday in the Rizzuto Banquet Room, honoring Louis Armstrong on Thursday the 4th at 7:00 p.m. and the Rattler Run this Saturday.
4. City Attorney Harris:
 - It's an honor to serve. It's a great group of people and community. Excited to get to know everyone a little better. Want to be more accessible and understand how each part works together. It's exciting to hear the projects that people are doing and taking pride in. Having a chance to be a part of things is really different than watching the Facebook comments.
5. Council Member Pantoya:
 - The "Junction Journal" is a new weekly flyer provided by Ark Valley Entertainment.

There being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor