

*Subject to approval at
the July 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, July 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:

Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
 Jeremiah Stoker, Ward 2
 Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3

Also present: Brad Davidson, Interim City Manager
 Erin Harris, City Attorney
 Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
 Katie/Grant/Carter Pickering, La Junta
 Betty Velasquez, La Junta
 Connie Shane, La Junta
 Randall Roberson, La Junta
 Tom Seaba, Director of Water/WW
 Julie Worley, La Junta
 Brittany Baylor, Inspiration Field
 Josh Harris, 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 June 17, 2024. The mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JUNE 17, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 4-0 (Ramirez, Stoker, Pantoya absent)

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

1. There was no citizen participation.

REPORTS

A. Economic Development Mid-Year Update. Mayor Ayala read a resignation letter received from Cynthia Nieb. The update is postponed to a future date.

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- B. Arkansas Valley Conduit Update.** The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District which is overseeing the Arkansas Valley Conduit Project in conjunction with the Bureau of Reclamation, did a cost update of the Arkansas Valley Conduit Project. In 2019, they were expecting the costs for the project to be between \$564 and \$610 million. As of this re-costing, that now stands at \$1.3 billion, plus an additional \$75 million, which is what they refer to as the Southeastern Sub Project for all the connection lines that would go from the main trunk line down to all the different customers. Participation still stands at their claim of 39 participants. There is a 35% contingency fund that is included in that project. 35% of \$1.375 billion is roughly \$455 million. This is an exceptional jump in cost, a lot more than the District, the Reclamation, and the participants were expecting. They have stated how they plan to try to seek several different avenues to reduce the cost that we would need to pay for that 35%. They suggest legislative action that might somehow reduce the responsibility we have. They will continue to seek low interest loans and grants. Current amount of low interest loans and grants from the State of Colorado towards this project equals \$120 million which is \$90 million in low interest loans and \$30 million in grants. It's a large gap that they're going to strive to try to reduce. One thing that is beneficial to La Junta at this point is that we received a \$300,000 grant for emerging contaminants. Through the use of this grant, we had a higher-level study done a few months ago by Hazen Engineering. We can now utilize this grant to bring that into a much closer scope to do closer testing and research to find what additional treatment methods La Junta might need to take care of the water quality issues that we have both on the drinking water and wastewater side. That would bring a more accurate cost of what those remedies would be and then we can begin to match that up more closely as to what the cost of the conduit might be. That's what will help us definitively choose and decide our path forward in the years to come. Regardless of which path it is, it will be expensive. We will find the least expensive but most beneficial route for our consumers and citizens.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. City Manager Search.** The first round of interviews will be held this week. For clarification, it is not the City Council who are doing the interviews, it is the Search Committee that was picked by the Council. Also, the Council does not know who the candidates are. When the Search Committee finalizes the candidates, then the Council and the public will know. At that time, the public process will begin.

NEW BUSINESS**A. Liquor Licenses**

1. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager.** The event is the **SECPA/SECOM Golf Company Classic to be held July 11th and 12th, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams 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 Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO INSPIRATION FIELD FOR THE SECPA/SECOM GOLF COMPANY CLASSIC TO BE HELD JULY 11TH AND 12TH, 2024 FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 11:00 P.M. AT 612 ADAMS AVENUE: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 4-0 (Ramirez, Stoker, Pantoya absent)

2. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager.** The event is the **9th Annual Poker Run and 4th Annual Smoke Out to be held July 27, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams 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 Attorney recommends approval.

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MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO INSPIRATION FIELD FOR THE 9TH ANNUAL POKER RUN AND 4TH ANNUAL SMOKE OUT TO BE HELD JULY 27, 2024 FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 11:00 P.M. AT 612 ADAMS AVENUE: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 4-0 (Ramirez, Stoker, Pantoya absent)

- B. A Resolution Authorizing Amendment of Ordinance #1663 to be Known and Cited as “The Protection of Persons Under Twenty-One Years of Age from Tobacco Act.”** Resolution No. R-9-2024 was presented for the council's consideration. The prior adopted ordinance was not the final draft recommended by the county.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-9-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: This version has greater detail added to the definitions and there was also a compliance piece for consequences of failure to comply.

VOTE: The motion carried 4-0 (Ramirez, Stoker, Pantoya absent)

- C. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 1242 (THE ZONING ORDINANCE) OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA AS CONCERNS TO VACATING OF AN ALLEYWAY.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 4-0 (Ramirez, Stoker, Pantoya absent)

- D. Downtown Walking Tour.** The Mayor invited Council and the public to a downtown walking tour this Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

E. Committee/Board Reports

1. Senior Center Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Have 519 members as of June 27th.
 - As soon as the Senior Center is back up to staff, the idea of renting the facility will be re-visited.
 - The La Junta City Transit and Southeast Transit are offering free fares for the months of July and August.
 - The Senior Center will be closed on the 4th of July.

F. Interim City Manager Comments

- There were over thirty vendors and over 500 people registered during the AMR Safety Jam at the City Park on Saturday. It was a great turn out. Thanks to everyone involved.
- The Library is going strong. Through June, there have been over 1304 people using the different programs. The Reading Program has a total of 335 people signed up so far.
- The Youth Core Group will be doing some landscaping and other work this week at the Brick & Tile Park.
- Due to the heat and high electric usage, there has been a lot of extra strain on the inner workings of the electrical system causing transformer issues.
- The Water Department is monitoring the main water line that runs from the Distribution Plant out to the Industrial Park. The line runs underneath the Arkansas River. With the extra rain that's been happening above us and the snow melt, there's a lot more pressure on this line.
- The Street Department has been painting the parking spots downtown.
- The project at 14th and Bradish Avenue has been completed.

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- One of the water pumps on 1st Street now has a float switch.
- Fourth of July is right around the corner. There will be extra police out patrolling.
- The Police Department has received some money to purchase four ebikes to help patrol the trail, special events and the parks. They are specialized bikes that require extensive training.
- The Fire Department did the Bucket Brigade in reference to helping make sure that you put your fireworks in water for twenty minutes after you use them. Lewis Bolt, Sutherlands, and La Junta Trading donated 150-170 buckets. They were all given out with an hour and a half.
- Almost \$450 was raised over the weekend for the K-9 program.

G. City Attorney Comments

- **Ballot Issue Process:** Basically, you have to submit a form of the petition to the City Clerk for approval. There is a certain number of days for the clerk to approve. If there's a problem, it would be sent back to have those problems revised. Once it's approved, the party who wrote the petition has to seek signatures from 15% of the electorate who voted in the previous election. When the petition has been successfully completed and certified by the City Clerk, it then is placed on the ballot. It's important to remember that there are timelines and deadlines for this process.

H. Governing Body Comments

1. Council Member Rikhof:
 - The math comment was in regards to the large gap between what the conduit was proposed to cost vs what was already identified.
 - Family was recently flocked by the Southeast Colorado Creative Partnership. Appreciate the fundraiser and the work that they do.
 - Attended the Colorado Municipal League meeting, along with Paul and Erin. There was a tremendous amount of information and opportunity to share ideas of local government with fellow peers who cared about making healthy cities and town in Colorado.
 - Many takeaways: getting a youth board going, a workshop about including disability and a presentation about the budget process.
 - The input from the City Council should come on the front end of the process, not in the middle and not at the end. Joe's downtown walking tour is a great start but would like to suggest there be a town hall style discussion about what the city council members budget priorities are. (Discussion continued.)
 - Have questions and suggestions on Economic Development. Very interested in looking at some of the tax revenues; sales tax has impacted both local businesses and the entities that were promised be kept around because of the passage of 2A.
 - Next Ward 3 meeting will be Monday, July 8 at the Brick & Tile park at 6:00 p.m.
2. Council Member Ochoa:
 - Talked about the ordinance on weeds. Take a look at your yards and your businesses. Have been getting messages and calls from people who aren't even in her ward. Have a short list and will make sure there's communication and a resolution of the problem. Not going to have dilapidated buildings and weeds growing all over in the alleyways or homes.

Mayor Ayala: The topic of the mosquito truck is online. There are only certain times they can go out. It can only do so much. Just because you didn't see the truck doesn't mean that it wasn't out.

3. Council Member Velasquez:
 - The tree at Quickees is a dangerous situation.
 - Shout out to Martin Montoya who does an excellent job on the projects he's working on with the limited budget he has to work with and for working on the pumps on 1st Street.

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There being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor