

***Subject to approval at
the August 7, 2023
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 17, 2023, 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
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Edward Vela, Ward 3
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3

Absent: Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Elaine McIntyre, Ward 2
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2

Also present: Rick Klein, City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Phil Malouff, Jr., City Attorney
Debra Fraker, Admin. Asst.
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.
Eugene Marez, La Junta
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Connie Shane, La Junta
Cathy Hurd, La Junta
Gary Cranson, Utility Board
Zeke/Stacy Ayala, La Junta
Molly Gearhart, La Junta
Michael Hewitt, La Junta
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 July 3, 2023. Council Member Vela believes there were several things that he said that were not included in the minutes that would be critical for the citizens to make a better decision. He believes that somebody is influencing what goes into the minutes. He isn't happy with them and believes changes should be made using the Facebook video. Hearing no corrections or additions, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JULY 3, 2023 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Ramirez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no additional discussion

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ramirez, Ayala and Pantoya

Those voting NO: Vela

The motion carried 3-1 (Velasquez, McIntyre and Ochoa absent)

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – July 17, 2023

Mayor Ayala: Asked that those speaking during citizen participation think before making a statement. The council is only getting one side of the story. If further clarification is needed, research will be done to look into the items that are of concern. Then the council will come back with an answer either from the council, city management or the city attorney. We're here to listen to you but need time to look deeper into the issues that are brought to our attention.

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

1. Eugene Marez, 1121 Grace Avenue: 1) The other day there were two homeless people walking up the sidewalk on 2nd & 3rd Street on Bradish and there was a female cop standing there with her hand on her gun, intimidating these people. I went back and asked them why they were stopped and they said it was because they looked suspicious. Suspicion is not a crime. I told them the best thing to do if a policeman approaches them is to not say anything. The guy said he was scared because they called in another policeman. That's intimidation. The two homeless people was a lady and a male. They were Hispanics. There was some racial profiling. 2) They're still firing firecrackers up there in my neighborhood. Called the cops and what did they say? What's the address? How am I going to know the address if I hear a sound? I don't know where the address is where the sound is coming from. 3) I have heard that certain people in the council do not want to change the law of people walking on the streets. I intend to send a letter to the governor and a letter to the Department of Transportation that we are being put in jeopardy by people walking in the streets and we have to stop or go around them and they don't have to. Do I have the right to drive on the sidewalk? No. So why do they have the right to walk in the street and us being put in jeopardy of hitting them? That's not right. From what I see, you guys are set in your decisions. I'm set on mine.
2. Zeke Ayala, 702 Belleview Avenue: We are going to do the ART project again this year. It's going to be September 8th-10th. There's going to be some new walls available for the artists to paint as well this year. We're going to have new and returning artists. We have Tiger Trades, Goal Academy and some out-of-town schools involved this year. We're getting the youth involved. We'll have a kid's zone, bounce houses, face painting, along with some other surprises for the kids. There will be food and other vendors downtown, along with live entertainment. There will be a throwback street dance focusing on the youth this year. Art workshops are going to be available from some of the artists that come though. Autographed painting of the automobiles plus a special surprise with that. We will also have the porta potty experience, a photo booth and this year we will have 3-on-3 basketball tournament.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE CALLING AN ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 7, 2023 TO AUTHORIZE THE IMPOSITION OF AN ADDITIONAL 1% SALES TAX ON RETAIL SALES WITHIN THE CITY OF LA JUNTA; SETTING THE TITLE AND CONTENT OF THE BALLOT ISSUE FOR THE ELECTION; PROVIDING OTHER MATTERS AND RATIFYING ACTIONS PREVIOUSLY TAKEN RELATING THERETO; AND PROVIDING THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDINANCE.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Pantoya

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: Council Member Vela feels that it's too early for this and we need to wait. There are a bunch of different avenues to look into. The language of the ordinance could be a little different. He is not in favor of it for next year. He believes there is sufficient funding avenues he'll discuss later. He will also have more data to support that. Council Member Pantoya will have a group that will put together information for the public on questions or concerns that citizens may have.

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ramirez, Ayala and Pantoya
 Those voting NO: Vela
 The motion carried 3-1 (Velasquez, McIntyre and Ochoa absent)

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – July 17, 2023**NEW BUSINESS****A. Committee/Board Reports**

1. There were no committee/board reports.

B. City Manager's Comments

- The Brick and Tile playground is completed except for the last shelter. We will build the shelter in the next couple of weeks.
- We have sent the bid out for the trail.
- EPA has given us the ok to rebid the Brownfield grant.
- We had a sewer manhole that was replaced on 3rd Street and Highway 50.
- We have 275 kids in baseball.
- Level 1 water restrictions.
- The new scoreboard was placed at Veterans Field.
- We are patching and clearing weeds.
- There were 249 kids signed up for the Summer Reading program and 100 kids on Friday's programs.
- We have been monitoring the river.
- Phil Weiser, Attorney General, will be here on Thursday for two town hall meetings. The first one is about mental health priorities, challenges and opportunities in Southeastern Colorado at 3:45 p.m. in the council chambers. At 5:00 p.m., the second one will be about water, competition, the merger between Kroger and Albertsons and other timely priorities for the Ag producers.
- It's hot! Make sure you're taking care of your animals. Don't let your kids run around without their shoes on. The concrete can cause 3rd degree burns.
- Thank you to Mayor Ayala and his wife, Angela, and the Rotary people for painting the curbs and some intersections downtown this last Saturday. That's community involvement. (Also, First Church and La Junta High School football team participated.)

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- The weeds at 10th Street hill will be taken care of after the work on the drainage problems has been completed and a bit of patching gets taken care of.
- Warnings are being given out to residents about their weeds.
- CBI has released the house that is across from city hall so now we'll start taking action.

City Attorney Malouff: Very proud to say that a couple of city employees helped a citizen who had high water out over on 2nd and Harriet. They really went above and beyond. Pablo Bailon and Gilbert Leyba really showed their stuff and glad to publicly acknowledge that.

C. Governing Body Comments

1. Council Member Vela:

- CML is an organization of most cities in the State of Colorado. Wasn't able to attend the last couple of weeks but they did send me a municipal university plaque for a whole bunch of hours and congratulated me for having successfully gotten through the municipal university. They call it MUNiversity and I'm pretty proud of it because it took me seven years to get it.

2. Council Member Pantoya:

- At the recent Wet Parade, there were some water balloons that were being thrown. Don't believe it was by any of the participants in the parade but the people watching. We cannot have any water balloons thrown at the parade or we can't have the parade.

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There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor