

STATE OF COLORADO)
COUNTY OF OTERO) SS
CITY OF LA JUNTA)

*Subject to approval at
the December 4, 2023
City Council Meeting*

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, November 20, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

INVOCATION: Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.

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

ROLL CALL: The following Council Members were present:

Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Edward Vela, Ward 3
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3

Absent: none

Also present: Rick Klein, City Manager
Bill Jackson, Asst. City Manager
Phil Malouff Jr., City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Paula Mahoney, Admin. Asst.
Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
Gary Cranson, UB Vice-Chair
Christine Rael, La Junta
Cathy Hurd, La Junta
Betty Velasquez, La Junta
Harris Family, La Junta
Douglas Golding, La Junta
Cheryl Lindner, La Junta
Gil Esquibel, La Junta
Alvin/Kimberly Gallegos, La Junta
Neils/Maureen Rikhof, La Junta
Cassie Sanchez, La Junta
Mary Martinez, La Junta
Deb Nicholson, La Junta
Leslie Romero, La Junta
Rick Ochoa, La Junta
Elaine McIntyre, La Junta
Tara Stevens, La Junta
Angela Ayala, La Junta
Angie Swedhin, La Junta
Robin Lopez, La Junta
Kristine Rios, La Junta
Liz Roberts, La Junta
Ruth Ayala, La Junta
Tara Ayala, La Junta
Adrian Hart, SECO News

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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of November 6, 2023. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 6, 2023 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ward 2 Vacancy)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. A Resolution Approving the 2024 Amended Budget. Resolution No. R-15-2023 (Amended) was presented for the council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, a proposed budget for the City of La Junta for the year 2024 has been prepared in conformance with the La Junta City Charter; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing has been held on September 20, 2023 regarding the proposed 2024 budget for all funds for the City of La Junta;

NOW, THEREFORE, Be It Resolved By the City Council of the City of La Junta that the proposed 2024 budget for income and expenditures of all funds be approved as follows:

General Fund	\$10,208,700.00
Library Endowment Fund	\$ 500.00
Internal Services Fund	\$ 1,973,300.00
Employee Benefit Claim Fund	\$ 2,407,500.00
Economic Development Fund	\$ 101,700.00
Property Management Fund	\$ 1,340,800.00
Lodging Tax Tourism Fund	\$ 247,000.00
Electric Fund	\$12,206,700.00
Water Fund	\$ 3,818,700.00
Sewer Fund	\$ 3,503,900.00
Sanitation Fund	\$ 1,513,500.00
Moving Violation Surcharge Fund	\$ 600.00
Cemetery Endowment Fund	\$ 10,300.00
Conservation Trust Fund	\$ 391,000.00

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-15-2023: Velasquez

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0 (Vela Abstained, Ward 2 Vacancy)

B. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE MILL LEVY FOR ASSESSMENT OF VALUATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2023. The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Velasquez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ward 2 Vacancy)

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- C. **Second Reading/THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE: APPROPRIATING SUMS OF MONEY TO DEFRAY EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO FOR THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2024 AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2024.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Ramirez

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ward 2 Vacancy)

PRESENTATION OF YEARS OF SERVICE PLAQUE TO OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBER EDWARD VELA. Mayor Ayala presented Council Member Vela with a plaque for his years of service from November 2015 through November 2023.

OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS. The City Clerk administered the oath of office to newly elected Council Members Paul Velasquez (Ward 1), Chandra Ochoa (Ward 2), Jeremiah Stoker (Ward 2), and Maureen Rikhof (Ward 3). She then administered the oath to Joe Ayala (Mayor).

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO-TEM. Mayor Ayala opened the floor for nominations for Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Velasquez nominated Council Member Pantoya. There were no other nominations.

MOTION TO ELECT COUNCIL MEMBER LISA PANTOYA AS MAYOR PRO-TEM: Ochoa

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

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

1. Douglas Golding, 1316 Lincoln Avenue: Congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected members of the council. I wasn't in favor of 2A but I see the necessity for it passing. I don't think I'm alone. I don't think a lot of people voted for a tax increase, they voted to avert having things closed. I hope with the passage of 2A, our city leaders don't see this as a mandate for business as usual. In the last two years, under current leadership, the city financials have become worse, which necessitated the passage of the sales tax increase. If our leaders continue, as in the past, we will again face the same problem in the future. I hope our leaders understand and are more financially prudent in their spending in the future. I also hope our leaders refrain from using falsehoods in justifying their actions. I ask the re-elected mayor and this council to do the job they are elected to do and hold the line on frivolous spending and say no to push personal pet projects. We also need to call on our citizens to take responsibility for their properties.
2. Daxton and Drew Stokes (Talor Hall), 16 E. 22nd Street: Requested a street closure on Saturday December 2nd in conjunction with the Parade of Lights for a small holiday event. They will serve hot dogs and will be roasting smores as a fundraiser for the CSP Toy Drive.
3. Kimberly Gallegos, Woodruff Memorial Library: Myself and everybody behind me, we don't think that 2A only passed because people wanted to save places, it was about the future. (The following letter was read and submitted): "On behalf of Woodruff Memorial Library, we extend our sincere gratitude to every person who showed their support during the election. The goal for us was to educate the community about how your local sales tax dollars go to the General Fund and make it possible for 22 City of La Junta departments to serve our community. It took a "village", and ALL TOGETHER, WE DID IT!! Our efforts were always about the future of La Junta. The opportunity to see an ocean of people come together with a common goal to explain to people the importance of their investment, was incredible! A huge shoutout to the "2A 4 LJ Committee" who were a group of people from all walks of life, some who could vote on 2A and some who could not, who made a decision at some

point to spend time, energy and money on fighting for what is best for our city. Even if you were not a part of this committee, the time you spent keeping the discussion going on the importance of sales tax made a world of difference. How amazing it feels to be a part of a community that cares!

We desire to serve our community to the best of our ability providing a plethora of resources, some that can only be found at Woodruff Memorial Library. We look forward to the road ahead where we will be able to continue our service to the Arkansas Valley and beyond. We are grateful for your continued support of Woodruff Memorial Library and the City of La Junta!" We are so hopeful that all of you will lead us into that future. Thank you.

4. Liz Roberts, Woodruff Memorial Library: (Read and submitted the following letter): Connie Elder passed away November 11, 2023. In Memory of Connie and George here is an article of the importance they played in the history of Woodruff Memorial Library and founding Woodruff Memorial Library Friends.

Giving back to the community

October 27, 2008 | La Junta Tribune-Democrat (CO)

Author/Byline: Jennifer Justice

Woodruff Library Friends George and Connie Elder were honored Friday as a conclusion to library week as part of the 120th celebration.

Connie moved to La Junta in 1963, George was born here. In the early 1990s Sandra Hockmeyer was the librarian and she, with several others, approached the Elders with a great vision of having a group of people, aside from the city of La Junta, who would be known as "Friends of the Library" and would help in the interest of the library. By May of 1995 the Friends of the Library were incorporated and the first book sale was held in 1996.

George and Connie Elder have been dedicated to the library without fail from the beginning of the Friends. When asked why they have been so dedicated to the library the answer easily came. "Because we believe in it." They both also added that it is "A way to give back to the community." They plan to stay active with the library "until we can't move."

In the 14 years that the Elders have been highly involved with the Friends of the Library they have seen great technological progressions. They were there when everything was done by hand, have seen computers come in, and the use of databases, just to name a few.

When asked what their favorite part of the library is they struggled to narrow their answer down to just a couple. Both Elders decided that for fun reading they like mysteries. But both agree that they like to read just about anything.

Connie feels that getting the new library was their biggest accomplishment while George thinks getting book sales done was his biggest accomplishment during their time at the library. But when asked if there was anything they have not been able to accomplish as a Friend of the Library George stated that new needs are discovered continually. It is impossible to say one specific thing.

They feel that as technology grows and needs change there will be changes in the Friends' and library's futures.

Current Woodruff Memorial Librarian Sandy Messick reported meeting George and Connie in the summer of 1979 and has shared many personal experiences over the years. Messick reports that they have provided much support for her as well as others and have worked very hard at fundraising. "They've only been a call away."

La Junta City Manager Rick Klein said that communities are made up of individuals. Some of those individuals step up. He said, "They (The Elders) gave me courage to do

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my job." Klein also feels that a plaque does no justice for the work they've done. In receiving the award Connie said, "it's been a pleasure serving the community. We appreciate the plaque, but couldn't have done it alone. We appreciate the help over the years." And George sums up with "It's been fun."

Library advisory board chairman Mack Burtis reported that the Friends of the Library was officially started in May 1995. At last count there were about 80 Friends. In the strategic planning, modernization was a goal. By November 1995 the Friends of the Library formed a committee "Yes on 2A." Their first fundraising was a \$1.5 million bond issue to build the new library. It passed with a vote count of 1,008 to 998.

NEW BUSINESS**A. Reappoint Lorenz Sutherland to the ARPA Board – term to expire 12/31/2027.**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT LORENZ SUTHERLAND TO THE ARPA BOARD – TERM TO EXPIRE 12/31/2027: Velasquez

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

B. Application for Renewal of a Beer & Wine Liquor License by Safeway Stores 46 Inc., d/b/a Safeway Store #3723, 315 W. 2nd 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 BEER & WINE LIQUOR LICENSE BY SAFEWAY STORES 46 INC., D/B/A SAFEWAY STORE #3723, 315 W. 2ND STREET: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

C. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO THE GENERAL FUND, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FUND, ELECTRIC FUND, AND WASTE WATER FUND FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2023. The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Pantoya

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: Section 2 Item A1 needs clarified. It is improvements to the building located at 27786 Railroad Avenue Bldg. 82. It's more than just a roof. It is not to the business Ark Valley Pallet; they are the lessee. (This will be amended prior to second reading.)

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

D. Committee/Board Reports

1. There were no committee or board reports.

E. City Manager's Comments

- The EPA has torn down six houses, five were on the east side. We have five more for next year.
- TLM has poured on the north side tying into the playground of the Brick and Tile trail. The bridges are currently being built.

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- Patched 4th Street and Carson Avenue.
- The Health Service District is taking in their first residents.
- The through-train study has been put on hold until they get done with the Front Range Rail study from Colorado Springs to Pueblo
- Happy Thanksgiving to everybody. Christmas is coming up. The Parade of Lights is December 2nd. On December 4th, Bent's Fort will have activities for the kids.
- The grant for the tires for the City-wide clean-up was successful.
- We should receive the hardware for the RO Plant SCADA system by the end of the year.
- We had a water break north of the North La Junta bridge. That line feeds all of North La Junta and the Industrial Park. It was put in in 1951.
- We still have entities trying to pick off our employees.

F. Governing Body Comments**1. Mayor Pro Tem Velasquez:**

- Thank you to the constituents of Ward 1. Congratulations on 2A. That's a win for La Junta.
- The Senior Center hosted a fantastic Thanksgiving lunch making 173 meals. Thank you for the hard work and phenomenal job of the advisory board: Dortha McLain, Karen Prather, Bobbi Rains and Kathy Martinez. Visited with two international students. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff.
- Mr. Vela did a good job presenting the Chief of the Fire Department and the Chief of the Police Department with a very nice banner thanking them for their dedication.
- International Food Night offers the chance to be enriched by students of other countries and getting their point of view.
- Happy Thanksgiving. Safe travels.
- A special thank you to my wife Betty. She's the biggest supporter that I have.

2. Council Member Pantoya:

- Had the honor of being a judge for the 10th Annual Southeast Colorado Youth Entrepreneur Fair. Julie Worley is the director of the project. There were schools from Bent, Baca, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers County. I was blown away at all the kids projects and how well spoken they were. It was impressive.
- With 2A passing, we don't plan on looking at the past. We have over fifty years of financial experience up here. We plan on looking forward.
- Quote: "The windshield is bigger than the rear-view mirror because where we are going is more important than where we have been. The future is so much bigger than the past.

3. Council Member Ochoa:

- Thank you, God. Thank you to the Ward 2 voters for trusting and believing in me by voting for me to represent you again. To all of those who voted for 2A4LJ. We did it. Two weeks ago, you all helped make history in La Junta by voting yes and saving our city. I am forever grateful. Thank you to my family and friends for always supporting me. A special thank you to my husband Rick. You are so supportive and willing to help in any way. From coaching little league to setting up Santa Claus in the Parade of Lights back in the day. To helping organize clean-ups and just clean-up around town on your own. You help our community and shape the future by giving back. I'm proud of him for that. Thank you for all you do. I couldn't do any of what I do without you. Thank you for being my rock.

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4. Council Member Rikhof:

- I'd like to thank my husband Neils. Thank you to everybody. I appreciate this community so much. I appreciate the support. I am looking forward to the future.
- The Otero College is my day job. I'm the director of International Relations. We have thirty-six countries here in La Junta. Otero College is involved in a master planning process. Our president, Dr. Zant, asked us to encourage our networks to attend the process on December 5th at 5:30 p.m. in the Rizzuto Banquet room. We're gathering information from the community for the Facilities Master Plan. Everyone is invited.

5. Council Member Stoker:

- I want to thank everybody for their vote for my Ward 2 position. There was a need and I felt it was time for me to step up. While, I'm the Ward 2 representative, I am also a representative of the City of La Junta. One of the reasons I ran for this spot is because of 2A. Nobody wants a tax increase. I hope I do my job well enough that we never have to have a 2A4LJ Committee again. I hope I can fulfill that job. I'm going to try my best at it. While we're thanking spouses, I want to thank my wife Elizabeth, who is actually working her second job tonight. I want to thank you and I look forward to doing the job I was elected for.

6. Mayor Ayala:

- I want to thank everyone again, especially my wife, my daughters and my family. I want to add a special thanks to the 2A supporters, whether you were on the committee or supported in your own way, I thank you. The pain and stress from 2B was rough. That vote came back and it was voted down by more than 600 votes. A quick story: Me, Dean, Rick and Bill were out at the golf course, Dean says we have to have a special election, we have to do a sunset. He had all these different ideas. I said, I think we can run it back again the same way. I think that they didn't know what they were voting on. He gave me a look like, you didn't narrowly lose Joe, it was a big loss. We decided to try it one more time. With the help of everyone on 2A, we got out in front of it and the voters voted for it. I'm so thankful for them for doing that. It is about the future. If you listened to what I'm going to say tonight, its like we all coordinated together. It was well worth it. Thank you to all the voters, not just those who voted for me but for all the voters. Thank you for participating and letting your voices be heard through the ballots. Believe me, we know that our work is not done and we understand that your vote should not be taken for granted. We will continue to be working to make La Junta the best it can be. Not just for the City Council or city employees but for you the community, with your input as well. Keep showing up. We're excited to have new council members with new ideas and are happy to have those same council members who are staying on with us so we can continue the work. 2A was one step. Now that we have that step completed, we have to make sure that we're good stewards of this community's choice. I want to thank everyone once again and as we appreciate this moment; we remain eager to see what the future has in store.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor