

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 16, 2024

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

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Monday, December 16, 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
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3



Subject to approval at the
January 6, 2025
City Council Meeting

Absent: None

Also present: Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
Tom Seaba, Director of Water/Wastewater
Katie Pickering, La Junta
Kathy DelRio, La Junta
Everett Ediger, La Junta
Chad Penner, La Junta
Nancy Harrington, La Junta
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 December 2, 2024. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 2, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: 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. There was no citizen participation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. **City Manager Search.** We are down to two candidates. There will be a public Q&A this Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the Armory. The candidates, John Kennedy and Michael Hart, will meet with council and city staff on Thursday.

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NEW BUSINESS

A. Appoint Council Representatives

1. Board of Utilities

MOTION TO REAPPOINT PAUL VELASQUEZ TO THE BOARD OF UTILITIES: Ochoa

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

2. Planning Commission (Mayor Appointees)

MOTION TO APPOINT CHANDRA OCHOA AND REAPPOINT TOM SEABA TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION: Pantoya

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

3. Planning Commission (Council Appointee)

MOTION TO APPOINT MAUREEN RIKHOF TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION: Pantoya

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

4. Recreation Advisory Board

MOTION TO REAPPOINT DAMON RAMIREZ TO THE RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

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

5. Senior Citizens Advisory Board

MOTION TO REAPPOINT PAUL VELASQUEZ TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD: Ramirez

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

6. Tree Board

MOTION TO APPOINT JEREMIAH STOKER TO THE TREE BOARD: Ochoa

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

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B. Board Appointments**1. La Junta Housing Authority Board****a. Marlene Boettcher (term to expire 12/31/2029)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT MARLENE BOETTCHER TO THE LA JUNTA HOUSING BOARD: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

2. Library Advisory Board**a. Terry Smalling (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT TERRY SMALLING TO THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

3. Senior Citizens Advisory Board**a. Sue Vance (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT SUE VANCE TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD: Velasquez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

b. Karen Prather (term to expire 12/31/2027)

MOTION TO REAPPOINT KAREN PRATHER TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD: Velasquez

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

4. Tourism Advisory Board**a. Rick Wallner (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT RICK WALLNER TO THE TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

b. Tracey Salzbrenner (term to expire 12/31/2027)

MOTION TO REAPPOINT TRACEY SALZBRENNER TO THE TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD: Stoker

SECOND: Ochoa

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DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- C. A Resolution Changing the Unclaimed Meter Deposit for Customers of the City of la Junta for the Year 2024; Providing for the Repeal of Conflicting Resolutions.** It was learned that the City was not following a State mandate for how to manage these unclaimed funds. We can still continue to handle the unclaimed funds by holding onto them and then donating them to Associated Charities.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-15-2024: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: The only thing that is changing is the holding period from two to five years.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- D. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING A LOAN FROM THE COLORADO WATER RESOURCES AND POWER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO THE CITY OF LA JUNTA ACTING BY AND THROUGH ITS WATER ENTERPRISE IN THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED \$300,000.00 TO FINANCE A PORTION OF THE DESIGN AND ENGINEERING COST OF A CERTAIN WATER RESOURCE PROJECT; AUTHORIZING THE FORM AND EXECUTION OF THE LOAN AGREEMENT AND A GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY BOND TO EVIDENCE SUCH LOAN; DELEGATING TO CERTAIN AUTHORIZED OFFICERS THE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE, WITHIN CERTAIN PARAMETERS, CERTAIN FINANCIAL MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE LOAN; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF DOCUMENTS RELATED THERETO; AND PRESCRIBING OTHER DETAILS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.** This is a program for the Water Enterprise. Each part of this ordinance is scripted because it manages to tap into certain funds that are only available for loan forgiveness. This \$300,000.00 will be represented as though it is a loan to us and then the loan will be forgiven.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: In Section 11, City representatives, the individual names are listed instead of titles. The party involved specifically requested this and can be changed by resolution, if needed.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

E. Committee/Board Reports

1. Utility Board (Council Member Velasquez):

- Every department is in winterization, vehicle, equipment or grounds maintenance, or playing catch up from the storm.
- Line Crew – Continue to drive the alleys to check on any limbs still hanging on power lines, working with homeowners who had to have their lines inspected and street lights.
- Water Department – In constant winterization and upkeep mode.
- Street Department – Know there's going to be more potholes coming because of the nature of the storm.

2. Senior Citizens Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):

- In January, Dawn will be transitioning to HR and grants to be effective in June. Celeste Kauten will take over in January becoming Senior Center Coordinator in June.
- Special shout-out to Juanita Hinkhouse for the decorations at the Senior Center.
- Deborah Nichols donated some crocheted items for the Senior Center to give out.
- The "Senior to Senior", which is High School seniors meeting with out seniors from the Senior Center, has gone over big.
- Today was the last day to reserve your roast beef meal for the big dinner. The dinner will be on the 19th at noon for \$5.00 a plate.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 16, 2024**F. Interim City Manager's Comments (was absent, report given by Mayor Ayala)**

- Interim City Manager Davidson – Make sure people are calling the city to report potholes. A list is being compiled. When the weather cooperates, they can go out and fill as many as they can.
- Police Chief Quick – Have a new Code Enforcement Officer who looks forward to hitting the ground running. Colby Martinez, (former Code Officer) graduated.
- Parks & Rec Director Hinkhouse – There may be a very sizeable grant for removal of trees on private property that will be coming hopefully in the year 2025.
- Director of Engineering Montoya – Been working on the downtown doing extra street sweeping.

G. Governing Body's Comments

1. Council Member Velasquez:
 - The Parade of Lights was fantastic.
 - To our community, fantastic city employees that make us look good, fellow council members, councilor, city clerk and everybody out there, (and Ms. Betty), Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
2. Mayor Ayala:
 - The Parade of Lights was amazing. Thanks to the Chamber and everyone that had a part in that.
 - Able to attend the Masked Singer at the Picketwire. Mr. Adrian Hart was a participant. There were eight contestants and the winner is on our City Manager Selection Committee, Mr. Gary Addington. Congratulations to Gary and the Picketwire for having that for our community.
 - Billy Remick is a seasonal employee with the City of La Junta. We're sending out our well wishes to their family and hoping for a speedy recovery for him.
 - In addition to wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, we're thinking of them, praying for them and hoping for a safe rest of the year for everyone out there.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

ATTEST:**CITY OF LA JUNTA**

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor