



City of Rio Communities Council Regular Business Meeting

City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd

Rio Communities, NM 87002

Monday, March 10, 2025 6:00 PM

Minutes

Please silence all electronic devices.

Mayor - Joshua Ramsell

Mayor Pro Tem - Lawrence R. Gordon

Council - Arthur Apodaca, Thomas Nelson, Matthew Marquez

Call to Order

Mayor Ramsell called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Marquez led the pledge of allegiance

Governing Body

Mayor Joshua Ramsell

Councilor Lawrence Gordon

Councilor Thomas Nelson

Councilor Art Apodaca

Councilor Matthew Marquez

Staff

Manager Dr. Martin Moore

Deputy Clerk Lalena Aragon

Police Chief Felix Nunez

City Attorney Randy Van Vleck

Finance Officer Roy Hubbard

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Apodaca to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Apodaca

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve the consent agenda with the amendments of removing #4 recognition of the Fire Department. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Apodaca

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

Public Comment:

Willie Griego with ESGR presented a Patriot award to Police Chief Nunez. He explained that this award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of

employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. Each year, Guard and Reserve employees, or a family member acting on their behalf, have the opportunity to nominate their employer for the Employer Support Freedom Award. He stated that Angel Rijos nominated Chief Nunez for this award.

Dick Irvine Western Drive; Talked about his journey with the VA hospital. He then acknowledged Councilor Marquez in his leadership in planning the Spring Festival. He also thanked Loide and Councilor Nelson for volunteering their time in planning the event.

Manager Report

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that he is working on getting the information that Councilor Nelson has requested and stated that he is waiting for the documents from the engineers. He then talked about the bypass road and stated that he had a pre-construction meeting this afternoon. He stated they are projecting March 17 to begin construction. He talked about the transport of wind turbines and stated that if they are going to additional transport, they will need to get additional permits. Dr. Moore continued to talk about the traffic control on the road bypass construction.

Councilor Apodaca asked about the projected time frame for the construction of the bypass road.

City Manager Dr. Moore started a projected estimate beginning on March 17, 2025, and end date of July 29, 2025. He then stated he provided a copy of the budget calendar and stated that they will begin having budget review discussion on March 24th going to April and in May we will have a preliminary budget for approval to get it to the State and in July is when we will approve the final budget. He stated he has talked with Department heads to get their budget in. Dr. Moore then talked about the Universal Waste contract and stated there will be a Public Hearing on March 24, 2025. He then explained that he intends to fix and clean up the personnel manual to keep up with state law.

Councilor Nelson asked if the Universal Waste contract was available for the public to review.

Deputy Clerk Aragon stated that the contract is on the city website under contracts and in the packet that is on the city website. Dr. Moore stated that hard copies of the contract are available at City Hall as well.

Councilor Marquez stated that he has requested a more structure Managers report of the Police, Fire and Public works department. He then suggested that with a dangerous fire season that he would like to have the Fire Chief update the electronic board for no burn days and stated he has also talked to the Fire Chief about taking on this responsibility.

Public Hearing - For the purpose of the request for a special use permit for a cannabis retail only operation located at the Proposed Location: 300 Rio Communities Blvd, Rio Communities, New Mexico 87002. Legal Description: UPC: 1-009-027-440-440-000000, Legal Summary Subd: LAND OF RANCHERS STATE BANK Tract: 1 0.66 ACRE 1999 REV

Motion and roll call vote to recess Regular Business Meeting session and to go into Public Hearing

Motion with a roll call vote to recess the regular business meeting made by Councilor Nelson to go into a public hearing for the matters listed above. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:
Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote at 6:29pm.

City Manger Dr. Moore explained there has been a change of ownership with a previous special use permit and it is required for the new owners to get a new special use permit and stated there has been a lot of work being done to the building due to a fire.

Deputy Clerk Aragon swore in Francine Gabaldon

Mrs. Gabaldon stated that they are getting close to opening and stated that the only piece of documentation they are missing is the actual license from the state and explained that when they put the zip code in it only registered as Belen not Rio Communities and stated that she has an email stating that the State has corrected that and they are waiting on the License and it will say Rio Communities not Belen.

City Manger Dr. Moore stated that the State has changed the requirements and stated that the State wasn't recognizing 87002 as the City of Rio Communities.

Mrs. Gabaldon stated that they are scheduled to have the State Fire Marshal come out and do a fire inspection.

Councilor Marquez asked if Cameras have been installed.

Mrs. Gabaldon stated that they have not yet installed them, but it is a State requirement, and they will be installed with 30 days of data that is required.

Councilor Gordon asked when they are plaining to open.

Mrs. Gabaldon stated they are still working on the building, and they are hoping to open by summer.

Councilor Apodaca welcomed them to the community.

Ralph Mimms was sworn in by Deputy Clerk Aragon.

Ralph Mimmis stated that he would like to have a ribbon cutting ceremony and asked for their information.

Motion and roll call vote to go back into Regular Business Meeting session

Motion with a roll call vote to go back into regular business meeting session made by Councilor Gordon. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:
Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote at 6:37pm.

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Request for a special use permit for a cannabis retail only operation located at the Proposed Location: 300 Rio Communities Blvd, Rio Communities, New Mexico 87002. Legal Description: UPC: 1-009-027-440-440-000000, Legal Summary Subd: LAND OF RANCHERS STATE BANK Tract: 1 0.66 ACRE 1999 REV

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve this agenda item. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Apodaca

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Approval of Rio Communities Spring Festival Celebration Authorization not to Exceed \$8,500.00.

City Manager Dr. Moore stated that Councilor Marquez has been planning this spring event and stated that the estimated cost is about \$8,500.00.

Councilor Marquez explained that the amount listed is for everything that will go into the spring fest and stated that the tents and the bands will be reimbursed by the fire auxiliary 5013c. He continued to explain that employees over time and the banners that can be reused will be paid for with this \$8,500.00.

Mayor asked if there is a letter from the axillary stating they will reimburse the city.

Councilor Marquez stated that he will ask the auxiliary to provide a letter.

Councilor Gordon asked if all employees over time is included in this \$8,500.00.

Councilor Marquez stated that all over time for public works, fire department and police department is included in this amount.

Councilor Apodaca thank Councilor Marquez for all his work and stated his only concern is the time of year with the weather and it being graduation time.

Councilor Marquez stated that there are no graduations on that day and explained that they have a plan due to weather.

Councilor Nelson thanked Councilor Marquez for planning this event.

Councilor Marquez thanked everyone who is helping with this event.

Councilor Gordon talked about his concern is the city is going to be discussing revenue and residents asking how the city could afford this when we are talking about mill levy.

Councilor Marquez stated that this spring fest will bring in revenue and promote the city.

Mayor Ramsell asked if there is a contingency plan if the event doesn't bring in revenue cost.

Councilor Marquez stated that there will be about 150 cars with a \$25 entry fee and craft fair is \$25 per table and stated that it is not refundable.

Mayor Ramsell stated that in future meetings the city will be looking into spending freeze for non-essential spending and that is his only concern. He stated that it is a great event.

Councilor Marquez stated that the city gave the attorney a raise and looking to renew a contract with Universal Waste that will be an increase and stated that there isn't a problem with that.

Mayor Ramsell stated that contracts and professional services is different then a car show and that is his only concern. He stated we may have enough money to reimburse, or it might not.

Councilor Marquez stated that the Finance Clerk said there is plenty of money.

Mayor Ramsell stated that he remembers the Finance Officer stating \$6,000.

There was a discussion.

Motion made by Councilor Gordon to table this agenda item until the next business meeting. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:	Voting Nay:
Councilor Gordon	Councilor Nelson
Councilor Apodaca	Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 2-2 vote Mayor breaking the tie.

Discussion – Update of Presentation by Geno Zamora, Esq. regarding the Governmental Code of Conduct and Open Meetings Act Training Updates

Mr. Zamora gave a follow-up from his presentation at the last meeting. He stated that while he attends, he observes and may use some of his observations as examples. He went over ethics as an elected official, roles, effective leadership and strategic direction. See attachment.

Discussion – New Mexico Water Service Company Proposed Price Increase

City Manager Dr. Moore explained that New Mexico Water Service Company has a proposal that has been presented related to increases in water and sewer hooks up. He explained they went from \$800 to \$12,000 he suggested that the city needs to work with New Mexico Water Services and see what the city can do and stated that this could affect new development and affordable housing. He stated that he is waiting to hear from the corporate office and is requesting a meeting.

Mayor Ramsell stated that the city was aware of increases from New Mexico water, but this increase came as a shock and stated they have been looking for alternate resources and reaching out to DFA and see what options the city has.

Councilor Apodaca stated that this is a substantial increase and stated he feels that they are looking for the city to talk to them and negotiate come up with a suitable amount for them and the city.

Mayor Ramsell gave a Lodie Silva a chance to give a public comment.

Lodie Silva stated that she has a letter from NM water to the PRC from January 16, 2025, and stated that since this is for a new hook up, they didn't not have to notify current residents. She stated that she is working with a current client, and her client was quoted \$14,010.95 for one residential water & sewer hook up with a mandatory one-page document saying that they agree to these costs without any reimbursement in the future. She stated there is a complaint and a protest process that residents can become a part of and a public hearing they can attend. She suggested landowners that will be affected should show up. She stated that the PRC did deny this without prejudice, and it can come back they stated there wasn't proper notification and any rate increase over 8 percent requires a public hearing. She stated the city has the opportunity and time to gather numbers and present something that can make the city stand better for the future.

Councilor Nelson stated that this is going to directly affect Mavrik he stated that the connection current fee is \$1,400 .00 the new connection fee is \$187,00.00 he stated that also applies to the new RV park and stated this will shut down any growth to Rio Communities. He stated that business manufacturing is an 8-inch main that will cost almost a million dollars to hook in.

Council Discussion

Councilor Marquez stated on Saturday March 8 that the city and Valencia County conducted a joint jurisdiction illegal dump clean up and stated that this was not presented to Council and stated that if the city is going to conduct a joint clean up Council and the community needs to be informed. He asked when the city was notified of this clean up.

Police Chief Nunez stated code enforcement received this notice about two weeks ago right after the last meeting. He stated there are plenty of more clean-ups that will be conducted, and we will make sure council is aware of it. He stated that over 200 tires were picked up on Sherrod Road and state that there was a massive clean up and stated that it was on the electronic board and Facebook. He stated that the code enforcer is trying to work on this clean up. He stated that there will be an having Earth day in April and are also working with Toss no Moss. He stated that there is a lot of illegal dumping around the city and stated that they have moved the dumpsters and the recycling to a more convenient location. He stated there are more clean ups coming up if Council would like to join in the clean ups.

Councilor Marquez stated he didn't know the recycle bins were for the community. He then talked about code enforcement vehicles not being marked and asked if they will be getting city logos on the code enforcement vehicles. He suggested that they get marked being the city is short on officers, and it will be good for citizens to see marked vehicles on the streets.

Councilor Marquez stated he didn't know the recycle bins were for the community. He then talked about code enforcement vehicles not being marked and asked if they will be getting city logos on the code enforcement vehicles. He suggested that they get marked being the city is short on officers, and it will be good for citizens to see marked vehicles on the streets.

Councilor Gordon thanked the Code Enforcer for the work he did to get those clean ups done.

Councilor Nelson asked what color the new Code Enforcer Vehicle was. Police Chief Nunez stated that it was black. Councilor Nelson suggested that it should be white and stated that black is too aggressive and that all vehicles should be marked the city shouldn't have any unmarked vehicles on the street. He then stated that on Friday the Public Works supervisor was in his personal vehicle and stated that he should not be using his personal vehicle while conducting city business. He talked about fire fuel trash in the green belt down from Olsen. He stated for the clean up there should have been a possible quorum so Council could have attended and asked if grant money was used for the cleanup.

City Manager stated that the County worked with Universal Waste.

Councilor Nelson stated that he talked about having a cleanup in January and no one has got back to him. He stated that ICP on the website was not the one they agreed on and stated that the City Website needs to get up to date.

Councilor Apodaca gave an update on the Veterans Memorial and stated that he has been talking with Dr. Moore and the architectural firm and getting dates set to have a meeting to plan the design and as soon as they have a date, he will contact Councilor Marquez and Mr. Irvin.

Mayor Ramsell thanked Councilor Gordon and stated at a previous meeting that the city was not working with business, and Councilor Gordon took the initiative to go out to business and reach out and give them resources that are available. He then talked about how the city is not able to take mattresses and he talked with Universal waste and there is an extra fee for mattresses. He stated that Universal waste does pick up 2 large items 4 times a year so residents could call them and set them on the curb to be picked up. He talked about the clean-up and thanked everyone that was involved and stated he looks forward to working with the County more to get things cleaned up.

Councilor Marquez asked how the city could allow several employees over time and stated that the city has three public works and the code enforcer to work on the weekend to collect overtime without getting approval but for him to have a community event there are issues with the same employees having overtime.

Mayor Ramsell stated that the clean ups were authorized.

Councilor Marquez asked how the city can authorize overtime for city cleanups and not a city event.

Executive Session - For the purpose of Police Chief Evaluation pursuant to NMSA 10-15-1(H)(2) - Limited Personnel Matters and for the discussion of the purchase, addition or disposal of real property or water rights by the public body pursuant to NMSA 10-15-1(H)(8)

Motion and roll call vote to go into closed session

Motion with a roll call vote made by Councilor Nelson to go into closed session for the matters listed above. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote at 7:59pm.

Motion and roll call vote to go back into the regular business meeting session

Motion with a roll call vote made by Councilor Apodaca to go back into the regular business meeting session. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote at 9:15pm.

Welcome everyone back and statement by the Mayor:

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve the Mayors Statement. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Gordon
Councilor Apodaca
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

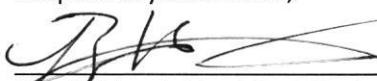
Discussion, Consideration, and Decision - Amended Contract of Police Chief

Mayor Ramsell stated that no decision was made at this time.

Adjourn

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Marquez. Motion carried at 9:16pm.

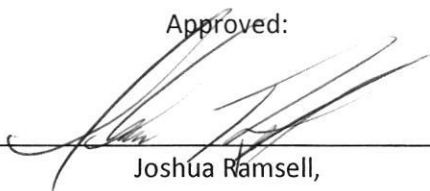
Respectfully submitted,



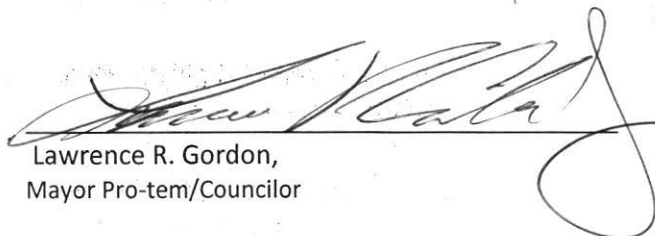
Roy Hubbard, Municipal Clerk - Treasurer
(Taken and Transcribed by Lalena Aragon, Deputy Clerk,)

Date: 3/24/2025

Approved:



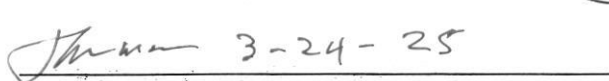
Joshua Ramsell,
Mayor



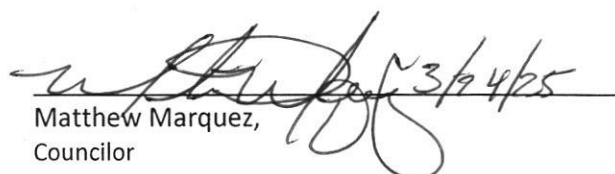
Lawrence R. Gordon,
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor



Arthur Apodaca,
Councilor



Thomas Nelson,
Councilor



Matthew Marquez,
Councilor