



City of Rio Communities Council Regular Business Meeting
City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd
Rio Communities, NM 87002
Monday August 24, 2026, 6:00 PM
Minutes

Please silence all electronic devices.

Mayor - Joshua Ramsell

Mayor Pro Tem - Lawrence R. Gordon

Council – Michael Melendez, Thomas Nelson, Matthew Marquez

Call to Order

Mayor Ramsell called the meeting to order at 6:01pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Marquez led the pledge of allegiance.

Roll Call

Governing Body

Mayor Joshua Ramsell
Councilor Matthew Marquez
Councilor Lawrence Gordon
Councilor Thomas Nelson
Councilor Michael Melendez

Staff

Manager Dr. Martin Moore
City Attorney Cori Strife

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve agenda. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez
Councilor Gordon
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Marquez

Motion Passed with a 4-0 Vote

Consent Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Marquez to approve amended consent agenda. Seconded by Councilor Nelson.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Marquez
Councilor Nelson
Councilor Gordon
Councilor Melendez

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Don Diego Update

Don Diego St. Phase 3 construction: active, neighbors consulted on driveways; solar street lights on corners under review, grant funding likely available

Zip Code Update

Zip code issue: continuing to escalate to USPS regional director in Phoenix; congressional staffers directing city to keep trying

Veterans Memorial Park Update

Construction underway, fenced off; contractor is Mountain West Golf Scapes

Healthy trees relocated and being watered; two infested trees removed

Concrete/block foundation remnants (former breezeway) being cleared; drainage ditch found filled with concrete, also being removed

Contractor photographed entire site perimeter to document pre-existing conditions

New travertine stone and updated six-branch military placard (including Space Force) ordered

On schedule for Veterans Day completion

Action Items

Discussion Only- Veteran's Day Celebration.

- Proposal: inaugural Veterans Day celebration held at the memorial site, 10am–12pm
- Last year's agenda was used as template: color guard, opening prayer, flag folding, Taps, recognition of departed veterans, closing remarks
- Councilor Nelson volunteered to co-lead the committee
- Councilor Marquez to reach out to family of recently deceased active-duty Valencia County soldier about possible incorporation into the event
- Community members invited to join the Veterans Memorial Committee

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Approval of Project 26-K3123 ; Capital Appropriation- Purchase and Equip Public Safety Vehicles and Equipment for Rio Communities in Valencia County (Police/Fire/EMS). Motion made by Councilor Nelson to Approve to Prepare and File Electronic TAP application with NM Water Trust Board. Seconded by Councilor Melendez.

- Project 26K3123 approved: \$870,000, no match required, for police, fire, and EMS vehicles and equipment
- Fire department priority: second Braun-style medical rescue unit (4WD); first unit already purchased and reimbursement pending

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- Fire department priority: second Braun-style medical rescue unit (4WD); first unit already purchased and reimbursement pending

- Police department: new senior command vehicle recommended; incoming police chief to bring specific recommendations to council
- Funds available until 2028; council preference to expend within 18 months
- Ghost graphics vs. marked vehicles: only two current police vehicles have ghost graphics; rest are marked
- Stickers/graphics and vehicle specs deferred to incoming police chief

Motion made by Councilor Nelson of Project 26-K3123 ; Capital Appropriation- Purchase and Equip Public Safety Vehicles and Equipment for Rio Communities in Valencia County (Police/Fire/EMS). Motion made by Councilor Nelson to Approve to Prepare and File Electronic TAP application with NM Water Trust Board. Seconded by Councilor Melendez. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion Passed with a 4-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision –Direction for Zone Code Amendments to Create a Definition(s) for Data Centers.

- No current definition of “data center” in Rio Communities zoning code
- City attorney outlined three key questions for council to consider:
 1. How to define a data center (threshold-based vs. all-inclusive with exclusions)
 2. How to enforce violations
 3. Whether any zone would permit data centers as a special use
- Council discussed Socorro’s definition as a model, including “direct supporting infrastructure”
- Meta/Los Lunas context: started at ~510,000 sq ft, now ~3.8M sq ft; IRB provides 30-year property tax exemption; PILOT payments scale to \$450K/year at full build-out; GRT reimbursement capped at \$1.6M/year
- Council concerns: water consumption, energy draw, noise, aesthetics, erosion, compensating tax recovery
- Tabled to September 14, 2026; council members to send definition preferences and zone recommendations to city attorney before that meeting

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to Table Direction for Zone Code Amendments to Create a Definition(s) for Data Centers until September 14, 2026. Seconded by Councilor Marquez.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion Tabled with a 4-0 vote

Discussion, Consideration, and Decision – Moratorium on undefined uses exceeding 40,000 square feet in Commercial, Industrial, and Manufacturing zones.

- Moratorium passed as amended: applies to undefined uses exceeding 20,000 sq ft in commercial, industrial, and manufacturing zones for 365 days, effective immediately
- Applies to new permit applications from effective date; applications already in progress are exempt
- Can be repealed and replaced at any time; council may also formalize as a resolution at the Sept 14 meeting
- No resolution number assigned (not noticed as a resolution); moratorium is enforceable as passed
- City attorney noted 10-megawatt continuous draw discussed as a potential metric but not included: enforcement mechanism unclear and no existing code definition to support it
- Timeline to permanent ordinance: town hall (late Sept), publish/post (early Oct), council vote (early Nov), effective (early Dec)

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve Moratorium on undefined uses exceeding 40,000 square feet in Commercial, Industrial, and Manufacturing zones. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Gordon

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Marquez

Motion Passed with a 4-0 vote

Executive Session - Pursuant to NMSA 1978 §10-15-1 (I)(2) and NMSA 1978 §10-15-1.(H)(2) Limited Personnel Matters, for the Purpose of Reviewing Applicants for the Position of Chief of Police. No Action will be Taken at this Meeting

Motion and roll call vote to go into close session

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to go into close session. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Marquez

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Gordon

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

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

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to go back into the regular business meeting session. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Marquez

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Gordon

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote

Welcome everyone back and statement by the Mayor:

Mayor Ramsell Stated that on Monday August 24, 2026, City of Rio Communities City Council did hold an Executive Session - Pursuant to NMSA 1978 §10-15-1 (I)(2) and NMSA 1978 §10-15-1.(H)(2) Limited Personnel Matters, for the Purpose of Reviewing Applicants for the Position of Chief of Police No Action was taken and no other items were discussed at this time.

Motion made by Councilor Nelson to approve the statement by the mayor. Seconded by Councilor Gordon.

Voting Yea:

Councilor Melendez

Councilor Marquez

Councilor Nelson

Councilor Gordon

Motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

Council Discussion

- **Councilor Marquez-** Judge departed; pay cited as primary barrier to retention
- Two options under consideration:
 - Increase salary (mid-term increase possible if administrative duties are expanded; ~\$20–25K range cited as feasible within reserves)
 - Pass resolution to redirect ordinance enforcement to magistrate court in the interim (magistrate gets 15 days to begin enforcing; committee process required)

- Council consensus: pursue both tracks; city attorney to engage magistrate court informally before bringing resolution forward
- Fiber optic and gas lines on Manzano Expressway: utility companies engaged, plan to shore up with rock cages or similar; excess construction dirt may be used for erosion mitigation
- Abandoned/nuisance properties: \$300K legislative grant available (expires 2028); DFA has placed conditions on disbursement citing anti-donation clause concerns; city attorney drafting resolution to clarify lien/reimbursement process for DFA

Councilor Gordon stated the residents wanted to thank EMS and the Fire Department.

Councilor Nelson- Campers/RVs in residential areas: Councilor Nelson requested code enforcement follow-up from staff

Councilor Melendez-

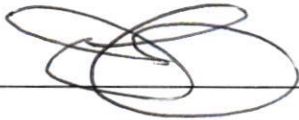
- NM Water Service Company: Councilor Melendez met with them; company planning to connect ~450 Hillandale homes from septic to wastewater; expressed interest in recycled wastewater for data center cooling; meeting with California HQ reps scheduled for Aug 25
- Water/sewer grant application: submitted and under review with Water Trust Board; engineering team (Bohannon Huston) assisting pro bono

Our Next Regular Scheduled Meeting will be Monday September 14, 2026, at 6:00pm

Mayor Ramsell Adjourned meeting.

Adjourn at 8:40pm

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Gauna Municipal clerk
(Taken and Transcribed by Patricia McCloskey, Deputy Clerk)

Date: 9-14-26

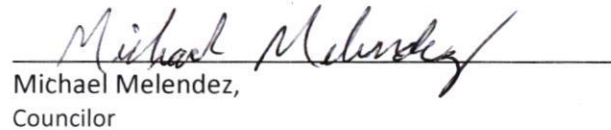
Approved:



Joshua Ramsell,
Mayor



Lawrence R. Gordon,
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor



Michael Melendez,
Councilor

Thomas Nelson 9-14-2026

Thomas Nelson,
Councilor



Matthew Marquez,
Councilor