

Council Goals

Envision a safe, flourishing downtown that provides a strong commercial tax base

Strive to be active stewards of existing aging infrastructure

Recognize importance of experience, well trained, and community minded staff

Ensure its electorate is well informed of on-going successes and future plans

Envision a safe, secure community for its families and youth

Promote redevelopment of existing businesses and neighborhoods and increase quality of life for all its residents



AGENDA REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL

La Junta, Colorado
February 20, 2024

TUESDAY

6:00 PM

Council Chambers
Municipal Building
601 Colorado Avenue

CALL TO ORDER (Mayor Ayala)

INVOCATION (Mayor Ayala)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Mayor Ayala)

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

Council Members

Supervisors

Others

Ramirez

Velasquez

Stoker

Ayala

Ochoa

Pantoya

Rikhof

PRESENTATION OF YEARS OF SERVICE PLAQUE – Debi Fraker

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Mayor) (Action)

Regular Meeting February 5, 2024

Special Meeting February 15, 2024

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

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Application for a Special Events Permit by Our Lady of Guadalupe/St. Patrick Parish, Event Manager, Deborah Smith. The event is their Annual Dinner Auction to be held March 16, 2024 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. at 202 Lincoln Avenue (City Attorney) (Action)
- B. AVRMC Joint Meeting Scheduled – Wednesday, April 10th at 6:00 p.m. (Information)
- C. Search Firm Proposals (Mayor) (Action)
- D. Committee/Board Reports
- E. City Manager's Comments
- F. Governing Body Comments
- G. ADJOURN

*Subject to approval at
the February 20, 2024
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, February 5, 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

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
 - Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism/Events
 - Gary Cranson, Utility Board
 - Edward Vela, La Junta
 - Jennifer Foxhoven, La Junta
 - Morgan Foxhoven, La Junta FBLA
 - Dottie Burnett, La Junta
 - Connie Shane, La Junta
 - Cathy Hurd, La Junta
 - Douglas Golding, La Junta
 - Bob Houston, La Junta
 - Brittany Baylor, Inspiration Field
 - Livia Smith, La Junta, FBLA
 - Alexandra DelRio, La Junta FBLA
 - Reece Addington, La Junta FBLA
 - 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 January 16, 2024. Council Member Rikhof made a correction to Mayor Ayala’s commentary of Rick’s letter. It says that it was a “resignation letter”, but it was not. It was an announcement of his retirement. She believes there’s a substantial difference between a “retirement” and a “resignation”. Hearing no further corrections or additions, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – February 5, 2024

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 16, 2024 MINUTES AS AMENDED: Stoker

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of January 30, 2024. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE JANUARY 30, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

FBLA RECOGNITION. There were thirty-seven out of forty-two kids from La Junta who qualified for State. Four of them were present during the council meeting. State will be April 1, 2, 3 this year at the Gaylord in Denver.

Livia Smith, Junior. Her event was public service announcement. In which you make a video on a topic that is given to you. Her team placed first, which means they qualified for State.

Alexandra DelRio, Senior, FBLA President. Her group event was parliamentary procedure and they placed third.

Reece Addington, Senior, FBLA social media representative. She and her cousin did visual design and placed third.

Morgan Foxhoven, Senior, FBLA treasurer. His events were taking two tests: one in accounting and one in economics. He placed fifth in accounting and third in economics qualifying him for state also. He'll also be doing a seventeen-page report on the Chapter Local Business event.

Council Member Rikhof: Didn't have any of the students from La Junta in job interview but it was a very impressive group of students. If anybody is asked to judge, she would encourage you to do it. She was a 2-time state officer in FBLA that being one of her claims to fame and why she has a lot of roots here in the Arkansas Valley. She is a huge fan of FBLA and is super proud of the students.

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

1. Douglas Golding, 1316 Lincoln Avenue: He wants to thank those involved for some of the new ideas being implemented. It's a good start. He went on the golf course website and it is pretty sad. It says there's no dining facilities at the golf course. At the time, there wasn't any scheduled events listed but the La Junta Trading tournament is already planned and schedule. The things that were on the letter to members needs to be on the website and the website needs to be pertinent. He has other ideas and knows other people who have ideas. He would still like to see a committee formed and he offered to assist. There are ways to have money and add additional ways to make money for the city. People who travel are on their phones and use the website. If the information isn't there, we're missing opportunities.
2. Bob Houston, 701 W. 4th Street: Noticed today, in the back of his warehouse, that somebody had been scraping his property to accommodate the Brick and Tile trail. They also opened up his fence to do so. He approached the project manager, introduced himself, and asked for some dirt to be put back where they got it along with some gravel. Whoever did the bobcat work put his fence back up. He said he would check into that but it's been a week later and nothings been done. The project manager said he was informed by his foreman that he had permission to come on his property but he didn't get the right communication for the job.

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3. Edward Vela, 1101 Russell Avenue: He said that it's not good to have Joe nominate the selection committee for the interim city manager. He could have used the city clerk, who's very efficient to contact the other council people as they too have good sense to also know qualified citizens. Council members deserve respect and dignity also. Less than a week was given for the candidates to submit an application. That's super short. He's not sure how it was advertised but the council can do better than that. He said his next comment had no reflection on any of the current committee's integrity but there are two brothers-in-laws on the committee. Some folks say it was not good. He agreed. He believes it would have been easier for the council to appoint Bill Jackson as the interim city manager. He is multi-credentialed and has had the title of assistant manager for many years, that would have made it easier. Other supervisors could have huddled with him to shift some of his responsibilities till a new city manager was selected. He also asked the City Attorney to explain the serial sunshine law violation to the council. This would be if Paul were to call Damon and tells him a particular subject, hangs up and then calls Jeremiah and then Paul continues on down the line. He knows about this because he was caught years ago. In the future, the topic of an executive session should always be shown on the agenda. Citizens have the right to know in advance without asking. Transparency, remember?

Mayor Ayala: Asked Bill if Todd had an update for him.

Asst. City Manager Jackson: There was an incident this weekend involving multiple reports of shootings at three different addresses. One person sustained an injury from a gunshot. Those persons were identified and warrants were issued. The process is ongoing at this very moment.

Mayor Ayala: Todd and the rest of the Police Department have been working extremely hard since this happened. He thanked the other agencies that helped out: CSP, Sheriff's Department and CBI. There was a report on the 1500 block of Belleview, a report shortly after that at 5th & Lewis and then a third report from the 800 block of Santa Fe. If you have any information, please contact the local Police Department.

REPORTS

A. **Tourism Board Update.** Pam Denahy gave/submitted the following report:

Annual Report

- La Junta Tourism began in 2010 as an Advisory Board that manages and oversees the expenditures of a 4.5 percent lodging tax that is collected on all lodging facilities (8) in La Junta. The lodging tax is not a part of the general City sales tax fund. Revenue collected through the lodging tax can only be spent for tourism related functions. The Lodging Tax Fund is the primary source of City funding for tourism promotion.
- La Junta Tourism Advisory Board members include Chairman John Yergert, Ron Davis, Colleen Oquist, Tracey Salzbrenner, Rick Wallner, City Manager Rick Klein and Mayor Joe Ayala. Members of the Board, except for the City Manager, are volunteers and not paid. They all have experience with and a passion for tourism and are dedicated to growing tourism in La Junta. Pamela Denahy, Director of Tourism, serves as the La Junta Tourism administrator.
- As a result of the Lodging Tax ordinance – \$227,566.²⁸ in revenue was collected in 2023.

La Junta Tourism (Local)

- CTO Tourism Recovery Marketing Grant
 - \$75,000 (with \$7,500 match) \$82,500 – one of only seven grants awarded Statewide and one of two rural communities.
 - Marketing campaign 'You Would Never Guess' to promote tourism, over 2 years.
 - Content development (video and landing page) ad creative, media placement, SEO
 - Video Script:

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- *Who would guess all this was here? A region rich with history and full of unexpected adventure. A place where you are surrounded by wonder — up, down, all around. A place to see, smell, hear and experience the past. To disconnect from distractions and reconnect with what matters. Who would ever guess you could find all this and more in La Junta. Visit La Junta and experience the unexpected.*

- Visit La Junta Website
 - Refresh and redesign
 - Created in 2017
 - Tarantula Fest page ease of use, navigation and updates

- Short Term Rental Data
 - Prioritize Short Term Rental Data & Compliance in Otero County
 - Nearly 20 listings resulting in more than \$10,000 revenue not being collected.

- CTO Destination Development Mentor
 - 100 hours of mentoring (consulting)
 - Develop a responsible and respectful use communications campaign for the Tarantula Trek.
 - Convene key stakeholders to understand priority impacts related to the Tarantula Festival and fall tarantula tourism season
 - Develop responsible tarantula tourism content for use on VLJ's:
 - Develop a responsible tarantula tourism communications framework and set of recommendations for implementation

- America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission
 - The United States of America and the State of Colorado will mark two important milestones in 2026: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and Colorado's 150th anniversary of statehood.
 - The state legislature and Governor Polis created the America 250 - Colorado 150 Commission to lead the state's commemorative endeavors.
 - Visit La Junta's Director of Tourism was invited to become a member of the Advisory Panel that will help create opportunities for all Coloradans to participate in these commemorations.
 - Advisory Panel members will play key roles in the Commission's efforts to organize the dual commemorations in 2026. They will serve as "local captains" in their communities and regions, playing a lead role alongside the Commission in organizing planning efforts and commemorative activities in their area.

- Multi-Modal Project
 - Grant with CDOT – awaiting contract to move forward.
 - 100% grant funded for multi-modal design
 - Rick and Martin Montoya, City Engineer are leading this effort
 - Tourism Board will be a partner once project begins

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Canyons & Plains (Regional)

- C&P Board Interim President
- Canyons & Plains is a heritage tourism development organization located in Southeast Colorado.
- Representing 7 counties – Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, and Prowers.
- Promotes visitation to and stewardship of the unique historical, natural, and cultural assets of Southeast Colorado among resident, state, national, and international audiences.

Colorado Tourism Office (State)

- Member of the CTO Marketing Committee
- Chair of the CTO Leadership Journey Alumni Sub-Committee
- Member of the CTO Destination Stewardship Council
 - Strengthen the alignment of destination stewardship efforts across the state, provide leadership for future endeavors, and create resources to support the tourism industry.

Great Outdoors Colorado (State)

- Governor Appointment to the Board of Great Outdoors Colorado in 2019
 - Reappointment for 2nd Term officially on March 7, 2024
 - Previous CD 4 Rep, now Representing District 3
 - Current GOCO Board Chair
 - GOCO representative on the CPW State Recreational Trails Committee

Upcoming events:

- Arkansas River Basin Water Forum – March 6-7, Otero College
- 3rd Annual Tarantula Fest – September 27-28, 2024

NEW BUSINESS**A. Liquor Licenses.**

1. **Application for a Special Event Permit by Inspiration Field, Event Manager, Brittany Baylor. The event is their 3rd Annual Mardi Gras to be held February 17, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fee has been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO INSPIRATION FIELD FOR THEIR 3RD ANNUAL MARDI GRAS TO BE HELD FEBRUARY 17, 2024 FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 11:00 P.M. AT 612 ADAMS AVENUE: Ramirez

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

2. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Event Manager, Brittany Baylor. The event is their 39th Annual La Junta Trading Golf Company Classic to be held May 10, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fee has been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO INSPIRATION FIELD FOR THEIR 39TH ANNUAL LA JUNTA TRADING GOLF COMPANY CLASSIC TO BE HELD MAY 10, 2024 FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 11:00 P.M. AT 612 ADAMS AVENUE: Velasquez

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SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: The organizations pick their own hours and how they choose to operate within the day or even over several days.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

3. **Application for a Special Events Permit for Arkansas River Basin Water Forum, Event Manager, Jean VanPelt. The event is their Local Leaders Dinner and Reception to be held March 5, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and their Ark River Basin Water Forum Networking Dinner to be held March 6, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., both events will be at 612 Adams Avenue.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fee has been tendered and the premises have been posted. The City Attorney recommends approval.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM FOR THEIR LOCAL LEADERS DINNER AND RECEPTION TO BE HELD MARCH 5, 2024 FROM 5:00 P.M. TO 10:00 P.M. AND THEIR ARK RIVER BASIN WATER FORUM NETWORKING DINNER TO BE HELD MARCH 6, 2024 FROM 5:00 P.M. TO 10:00 P.M. AT 612 ADAMS AVENUE: Rikhof

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

4. **Application for Renewal of a Fermented Malt Beverage Off Premise Liquor License by Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc. d/b/a Love's Travel Stop #12, 308 E. 1st 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 approvals.

MOTION TO GRANT A RENEWAL OF A FERMENTED MALT BEVERAGE OFF PREMISE LIQUOR LICENSE BY LOVE'S TRAVEL STOPS & COUNTRY STORES, INC. D/B/A LOVE'S TRAVEL STOP #12, 308 E. 1ST STREET: Pantoya

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

5. **Application for Renewal of a Lodging & Entertainment Liquor License by Yak and Yeti Hotel Inc., d/b/a Yak and Yeti, 1325 E. 3rd 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 LODGING & ENTERTAINMENT LIQUOR LICENSE BY YAK AND YETI HOTEL INC., D/B/A YAK AND YETI, 1325 E. 3RD STREET: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

6. **Application for Renewal of a Fermented Malt Beverage and Wine Liquor License by Walmart Inc., d/b/a Wal-Mart #1384, 6 Conley Road.** 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 FERMENTED MALT BEVERAGE AND WINE LIQUOR LICENSE BY WALMART INC., D/B/A WAL-MART #1384, 6 CONLEY ROAD: Ochoa

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SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- 7. Application for Report of Change of Manager, from Jonna Leggitt to Heidi Samson, Walmart Inc., d/b/a Wal-Mart #1384, 6 Conley Road.** 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 REPORT OF CHANGE OF MANAGER FROM JONNA LEGGITT TO HEIDI SAMSON, WALMART INC., D/B/A WAL-MART #1384, 6 CONLEY ROAD: Rikhof

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- B. A Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Real Property to Inspiration Field.** This property is located at 1525 Lewis Avenue. It is part of a transaction to utilize EPA funds to be able to clear off the property. Resolution No. R-1-2024 was presented for council's consideration as follows:

WHEREAS, the City is a Home Rule City organized under the laws of the State of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the City owns certain real property described as follows:

Lots 25, 26 and 27, Block 2 in La Junta Heights Subdivision to the City of La Junta, according to the recorded plat thereof, in Otero County, Colorado.

WHEREAS, INSPIRATION FIELD donated the real property to the City of La Junta for the sum of \$1.00 and the City agreed to resell the property to INSPIRATION FIELD at a later date for \$1.00; and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes that the real property has no utility to the City and as such is surplus property; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to sell the same to INSPIRATION FIELD (a non-profit organization) for the sum of \$1.00.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO as follows:

1. The City determines that the property is surplus property.
2. The City authorizes the Mayor and City Clerk to execute a Deed of Conveyance to INSPIRATION FIELD in exchange for \$1.00.
3. The resolution is enacted by the City Council of the City of La Junta.

MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. R-1-2024: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: This property was donated to Inspiration Field. The City was able to take care of the blight through the EPA project.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

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- C. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TOWING ORDINANCE.** The Police Department requested that some energy be put into the towing ordinance that will allow for tows to be done more rapidly and quickly than the prior ordinance, which was fifteen days. This ordinance will change that time to seventy-two hours. The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Velasquez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: The violation usually ends up on the windshield of the vehicle. After it is towed, it is up to the owner to pay the fees to get the vehicle back. The City is never in possession of the vehicle. The tow company will take physical possession of it which creates an opportunity for them to assert a storage lien on the vehicle and they would sell it.

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- D. Interim City Manager Selection.** One person applied for Interim City Manager. That was Mr. Bill Jackson. Mayor Ayala asked the City Attorney on how the Board should proceed.

City Attorney Malouff: It might be slightly premature to take formal action. You can recommend to make that position available to Mr. Jackson but there's going to be some details that need to be ironed out. We should start with an executive session to decide what the parameters are that you're willing to give in terms of benefits and so forth. My recommendation would be that we have a short executive session with action to follow. It probably needs to be a communication between the Board and Mr. Jackson before we reconvene.

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING POSITIONS RELATIVE TO MATTERS THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS, DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND/OR INSTRUCTING NEGOTIATORS, UNDER C.R.S §24-6-402(4)(e) FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER SELECTION, MR. JACKSON: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

The Council went into executive session at 7:06 p.m. and reconvened at 8:11 p.m.

Mayor Ayala: There will be no action at this time.

E. Committee/Board Reports

1. Senior Center Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - San Antonio trip is May 19th through 25th. There are thirty-six people signed up and there is room for fifty-six.
 - Looking to restart dances in a couple of months with a variety of music and times to accommodate those people that don't like driving at night.
 - They'll be doing bingo on the 8th, 22nd and 29th starting at 10:30 a.m.
 - The discussion for renting out the senior center again has been tabled until next month.

D. City Manager Comments

1. There were no city manager comments.

Mayor Ayala: Received a text from Todd. There were no shell casings found at the 1500 block of Belleview but that's where the report came from. It could have been anywhere in that area or it could have been at one of the other sites. We don't know the exact area but that's what was reported.

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E. Governing Body Comments

1. Council Member Rikhof:
 - The design group for Otero is meeting for the fourth time. There are some interesting things that the architects are going to be putting forward for the Master Plan for Otero that a lot of people in the city of La Junta would be interested in. It's tomorrow night from 5:30 – 7:30 in the Rizzuto Banquet room.
 - Lunch and Learn with students from Brazil will be at 12:15 on Wednesday in the Learning Commons.
 - The Brick & Tile park needs signage. There are people that don't know how to get there.
2. Council Member Pantoya:
 - Just had the Chamber of Commerce Banquet. It was successful and sold-out tables. Looking forward to the next one.
3. Council Member Velasquez:
 - The American Legion lost their meeting space. If anybody has any space available, please reach out.
4. Council Member Ramirez:
 - Girls in the Middle Conference 2024 is March 2nd. It's an organization focused on inspiring 5th through 8th grade girls in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math.) There are a lot of sponsorships. Colorado School of Mines, Southeast Colorado, AHEC, CB&T, Secom, Secpa, Otero County Health Department, Las Animas Woman's Civic Club, 1st National Bank, Martin Pipe & Steel, Las Animas School District and the Sign Shop. Thank you sponsors. Registration is open through February 9th.
5. Mayor Ayala:
 - The Science Fair is this weekend at the Otero Jim Rizzuto room on the 8th, 9th and 10th.
 - At the quarterly Colorado Workforce Development Council with the governor, they took us on a tour of ULA, which is United Launch Alliance. They do rockets out of Denver, after SpaceX, they're the largest launcher of rockets into orbit that we have. They introduced us to four young adults. They said that they're actually thinking of starting their own college because the engineers that they get, they learn engineering with gravity and it messes them up to where they need to retrain them on doing stuff without gravity. They're looking at rural areas to partner with to get these kids at a younger age. Sometimes we just think of Ag and stuff like that. There will be talks with President Zant and the superintendent of our schools here to see if there's any way we can come together. The governor also talks about tarantulas when he recognizes us in these meetings.
 - The other thing that was talked about was quantum computing. The speak went through the very basics of quantum computing. He says you don't have to be a brain surgeon to do these jobs. There are also other jobs involved in quantum computing that they train for and they're looking for communities with strong industrial parks to where you're not actually building a computer but your helping build proponents that make up these computers.
 - Lamar does what they call the Tri-State 9/11 Memorial which is right on Highway 50. A gentleman named Doug Harbor does this. He's a former marine. He calls himself, "a marine with a dream." He was sitting at home around ten years ago and noticed that there was no mention of 9/11 when it came up and said, how are my grandkids and future generations, going to know about this event that took place if we're not really honoring the memory. So, he went to his county commissioners and asked if he could get some money to have a parade. They had a parade the first year. Then they raised some money and had another parade. Then they got a memorial built. Now that memorial is bigger. It has its own shaded area. They have a bronze statue and said we want to be sister cities with La Junta. But, every 9/11 celebration is usually the 2nd Saturday in September and that's our Early

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Settler Day. This year is going to be one of the few years where it doesn't fall on Early Settlers Day.

They talked about Yeneneh Betru and this is really cool. He's a doctor. He attended high school at The Abbey in Colorado. He worked in medical affairs for The Hospital Company in Burbank. One of the pioneers in a new practice of medicine referred to as Hospitalist Care. He traveled around the country to train hundreds of physicians. He immigrated here with a promise of taking care of his grandma and her friends when they got older. He was a friend, a role model, and mentor for his younger siblings who often say, all of our accomplishments are a result of his guidance. In June 1998, when his grandmother became ill, he flew back to Ethiopia to aide her doctors. Due to lack of equipment and supplies she, unfortunately, passed away. With poo facilities and absent equipment, the sick have little chance of survival, he said. With a renewed sense of responsibility, Dr. Betru vowed to help enhance the condition of medical facilities in Ethiopia, beginning the process of creating a kidney dialysis clinic in present day Ethiopia. Given the lack of kidney dialysis machines, persons with kidney failure had zero chance of survival. Investing his own time and money, Dr. Betru acquired over a half dozen dialysis machines and supplies. It was while Dr. Betru was working with the Ethiopian government to designate the proper location for the clinic that the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 took his life and ended his dream. He was only 35 and just beginning his life after years of education and planning for the future.

That was one person out of twenty-nine hundred who we lost. That impact is going to be huge. What this Tri-State Memorial does is they find a different person every year to honor, and remember. They're going to be doing some different things that they would like us to partake, if we can. When we get more information on that, I'll give you guys the details. That was a citizen who saw a need and instead of just saying we should do something, he put boots on the ground and he got it done.

- Scheduled a Special City Council meeting for Thursday the 15th at 5:30 p.m.

There being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor

*Subject to approval at
the February 20, 2024
City Council Meeting*

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

CALL TO ORDER: A special meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

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

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.
 - Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism
 - Brad Davidson, Fire Chief
 - Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
 - Tom Seaba, Director of Water/Wastewater
 - Cynthia Nieb, UR/ED Director
 - Meghan Wiker, RO Plant ORC
 - Martin Montoya, Director of Engineering
 - John Yergert, La Junta
 - Nancy Bennett, La Junta
 - Edward Vela, La Junta
 - Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

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

1. There was no citizen participation.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Interim City Manager Selection.

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO GO OVER APPLICATIONS FOR THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER WITH BILL JACKSON, BRAD DAVIDSON, AND MARTIN MONTOYA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING POSITIONS RELATIVE TO MATTERS THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS, DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND/OR INSTRUCTING NEGOTIATORS, UNDER C.R.S §24-6-402(4)(e): Ochoa

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – February 15, 2024

City Attorney Malouff: Suggested doing a random selection for which of the three candidates would go first so that no one has a claim of some favoritism one way or another, bias or prejudice. Council Member Ramirez drew names in the following order: Brad Davidson, Bill Jackson, and Martin Montoya.

Council went into executive session at 5:35 p.m. and reconvened at 7:55 p.m.

City Attorney Malouff: The terms that the city council would like to propose to the individual that would be selected tonight would be that they would receive a short-term salary payment of \$9,000 per month for the number of months that they would serve within the capacity of whatever we want to call this position, temporary interim, filling the gap position of transitioning between Mr. Klein and a permanent city manager. The promises that would be made to the individual who would be selected would be that there would be the normal benefits that are currently being received. All three applicants are current supervisors for the city and so they are receiving their benefits and that wouldn't change. Irrespective of the outcome, all three applicants would be encouraged to apply for the permanent position as the search committee goes through its process. When the successful candidate is put in place, once a permanent city manager is determined, that individual would go back to their current rate of pay in their current job. They would lose out on a raise. I think the \$9,000 per month indicates that each of them would be receiving more than they're currently receiving but they'd go back to their former position. For that purpose, we're sort of using the terminology of a leave of absence from the current position as they serve as this acting or interim city manager. I would share for the public that all three gentlemen were given an opportunity to speak and were given the same kinds of questions. We spent within half a minute, the exact same amount of time with all three candidates. Council spent an inordinate amount of time going through qualifications and trying to decide things. We did not take a vote in executive session. We will find out in a couple of minutes what exactly ends up happening. I can tell you the council is committed to the proposition that there will be an intense and vigorous search for a city manager on a more permanent basis. That search will be on not only a local level but a regional and national level and that the council will be looking for individuals that have more farsighted goals and are able to discuss that. We did not ask any of the three gentlemen to comment on their farsighted goals. Its just not fair to expect that they could have formulated a plan for a time period that they would have an opportunity to implement it. There were discussions of how to run the city but there was no a discussion of long-term planning. I can tell you that all three gentlemen presented very, very well and me as a citizen, I'm really glad that we have these people here because all three of them are just pretty special and all three of them, I believe, have interest in the city and maintaining the community in a positive light and in a progressive and positive fashion. So, we have the luxury of whatever we decide, in my view, and I don't get to vote, but whatever they decide, we're choosing from good people and we're choosing from people that will be successful in what they do here. My approach with council's permission, is that it will take the same approach that we took in the random choosing of who would come first. Brad Davidson was picked out of the hat first and then Bill Jackson and then Martin Montoya. I will present a motion to the council naming first of all Mr. Davidson and then we'll keep going down the road if there isn't a majority selection of who that candidate would be. With your permission, Mr. Mayor, I think you should entertain the following motion:

MOTION THAT BRAD DAVIDSON BE SELECTED BY THE COUNCIL TO SERVE AS TEMPORARY CITY MANAGER UNDER THE TERMS THAT THE CITY ATTORNEY JUST DISCLOSED AND WITHIN ANTICIPATION THAT THERE WOULD BE A LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING CREATED TO REFLECT THESE TERMS: Velasquez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ramirez, Velasquez, Ayala, Rikhof
Those voting NO: Stoker, Ochoa, Pantoya
The motion carried 4-3

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joe Ayala, Mayor

City Manager Comments

- The Brick and Tile trail will be completed by TLM Constructors by the end of February. They are working on the last remaining items. We are recleaning arroyo to start changing the vegetation along the trail and around park. Mile High Youth Corps will help us for hopefully 2 weeks. We are also finishing the parking lots and ordering signs.
- The fire department has had some hard calls and they are busy.
- Repaired a fire hydrant at 8th and Colorado. Replaced one at Industrial Park.
- Fire on the Plains conference is scheduled for the end of April. 150 people expected.
- Fire Department is getting trained on electric vehicles hazards.
- Winter maintenance
- We have started the Brownfields grant with Aryes and Associates. We will hold public meetings on how this program works in March.
- Senior Center San Antonio trip is full
- Softball has started
- Soccer registration is until March 6th
- 3rd-6th basketball games are going
- City Manager retirement party/Trail opening we be February 29th 10:30-2:30 at brick and tile park