TOWN OF LA JARA

PO Box 273

La Jara, CO 81140

Phone: (719) 274-5363

Fax: (719) 274-5986

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Regular Meeting

Date: February 10, 2022

A permanent set of these minutes are maintained in the Town Clerk’s Office. Approved Minutes are also available on the web at www.colorado.gov/townoflajara

**Call to Order**

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 the Regular Meeting of the La Jara Town Board of Trustees was held as a hybrid meeting by trustees attending either in person or virtually. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Medina at 6:00 pm.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Medina.

**Roll Call**

Present in person were Trustees: Villagomez and Mayor Medina. Trustee Espinoza arrived at 6:05 pm; Trustee Chavez and Mayor Pro Tem Valdez joined virtually.

Absent: Trustee Wagoner

Also present were Chief Lujan, Town Attorneys Farish and Walker, Building Inspector Rodriguez, Maintenance supervisor Jimmy Hinojos, Town Manager Zaragoza and Town Clerk Pagnotta.

**Approval of Agenda**

***Motion:*** Mayor Pro Tem Valdez moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Trustee Villagomez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustee Chavez, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez, and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

**Consent Calendar**

***Motion:*** Mayor Pro Tem Valdez moved to approve the consent calendar; seconded by Trustee Chavez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

**Guests**

No Guests were present.

**Citizen Comments**

No Citizen Comments.

**New Business**

Schedule work session with Chris Brandewie regarding water and sewer rate study. Work session was scheduled for March 9th at 6 pm.

Audit Engagement Letter with Wall, Smith, and Bateman, Inc. – Town Clerk Pagnotta stated that Martille Faatz, the town’s CPA, spoke to John Hollman from Wall, Smith, and Bateman, Inc. to preform the Town’s annual audit. The engagement letter was presented to the Board of Trustees. Attorney Walker stated that he reviewed the engagement letter and had no issues and pointed out that there was a cap on the fees to not exceed $13,500. Town Clerk Pagnotta stated that the fees may be less depending on the amount of foot work that is done prior to the audit.

***Motion:*** Trustee Espinoza moved to accept the audit engagement letter from Wall, Smith and Bateman, Inc.; seconded by Trustee Villagomez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

CF Altitude, LLC liquor license renewal – Mayor Medina stated that Chief Lujan signed a letter stating that there had not been any issues with the store regarding their liquor license.

***Motion:*** Mayor Pro-Tem Valdez moved to approve the liquor license renewal for CF Altitude, LLC; seconded by Trustee Chavez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

**Old Business**

Business/Sales Tax License Fees – Mayor Medina explained this issue was brought up by business owner Luke Larson at the last meeting. She stated the Town Attorneys have researched the issue extensively and went on to state that Ordinance 2021-2 repealed the requirement of a town issued sales tax license in November of 2021. Attorney Farish stated that Mr. Larson did not pay the Sales Tax License fee and didn’t have any standing to raise the issue. Trustee Espinoza stated her concern that a number of businesses did pay the $10 Sales Tax License fee every year for the past several years and asked what responsibility the Board had in refunding the money that was collected when the town had no authority to do so. Attorney Farish explained a few options for settling the issue with those business that did pay the fee. It was decided to gather information on the number of businesses that paid the Sales Tax License fee and table the issue until the next meeting.

**Reports**

**Town Manager Report**

Town Manager Zaragoza submitted a written report and noted the following:

* Discussed the non-compliance issues at the sewer lagoons. He has been meeting with Erick Worker and a team with CDPHE who determined that the Town may not need to do the $1.5 million project to install an aeration and disinfection system, but rather conduct an I&I study that will include funding for the sludge removal. He reported that the I&I study will consist of a smoke test, using theater smoke to identify where infiltration may be occurring. He reported that citizens will be provided with information when the smoke test will be done. He thanked Engineer Martin Reynolds for the many hours that he has been working on this issue.
* Town Manager Zaragoza presented a list of his accomplishments that he has completed over the course of his employment and asked the board to consider giving him a 3.5% cost of living raise.
* Town Manger Zaragoza presented information on the Resilient Recovery Roadmaps team and explained that HB-1271 has made money available for housing, particularly abandoned homes that can be renovated. The San Luis Valley team is seeking a $80,000 grant to obtain a consultant to help address the housing needs. The team will need to secure a 25% cash match; each community is asked to contribute $5,000 for their part of the matching funds. Town Manager Zaragoza requested that the Board consider making a commitment of $5,000 for the Town’s portion of the matching funds.
* The letter that was mailed to the owners of the dilapidated building on Main Street was never picked up from the post office. Town Manager Zaragoza will meet with the attorneys to get direction on how to proceed.
* The maintenance yard has been broken into two different times and about 70 gallons of diesel was stolen. Security cameras are needed, and locks will be put on the fuel tanks. Mayor Pro Tem Valdez suggested putting up panels of metal along the fence where it is being cut.

Mayor Medina asked if it was appropriate to discuss the Town Managers raise request. Trustee Espinoza stated that Town Manager Zaragoza’s raise should coincide with his yearly review. Mayor Medina stated they would discuss this further in April when the Board does his review.

Trustee Espinoza suggested if the Board agreed to give matching funds to the Resilient Recovery Roadmaps grant that they make a commitment to engage with the businesses.

***Motion:*** Mayor Pro-Tem Valdez moved to approve $5,000 as the Town’s portion of the matching funds for the Resilient Recovery Roadmaps Grant; seconded by Trustee Villagomez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Town Manager’s Report

***Motion:*** Trustee Espinoza moved to approve the Town Manager’s report; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Valdez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

**Town Attorney Report**

Town Attorney Farish reported that they have been approaching issues as they have been presented to them and reviewing the town’s codes. He suggested a comprehensive ordinance or resolution for the designation of official status. He mentioned the various ordinances that need to be amended such as the election code, land use code, and short-term rental code to name a few.

Town Attorney Walker mentioned the short-term rental ordinance that other communities have been working on and how comprehensive it can be. He appreciated the list of accomplishments from Town Manager Zaragoza as it provided a great history of the last year. He reported that they spent time working on a few issues such as the Sales Tax License fee as well as the abandoned building issue.

***Motion:*** Mayor Pro Tem Valdez moved to approve the Town Attorneys reports; seconded by Trustee Chavez.

***Vote Results:*** Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Villagomez, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

**Police Report**

Police Chief Lujan presented a written report and offered to answer any questions.

**Maintenance Report**

Maintenance Supervisor Jimmy Hinojos submitted a written report and offered to answer questions. It was mentioned that Jimmy Hinojos and Thomas Dufresne would be attending CRWA conference in Denver in March.

**Clerk Report**

Town Clerk Pagnotta submitted a written report and offered to answer any questions.

**Inspector Report**

Building Inspector Darrin Rodriguez reported that there was nothing new happening with buildings. He stated that he is waiting on Dollar General to start construction of the new store.

**Trustee Comments**

Trustee Chavez – Thanked the maintenance department for cleaning the driveways and going above and beyond to help others out.

Mayor Pro Tem Valdez – Asked about the liquor license for Scotty’s Restaurant; Town Clerk Pagnotta explained that the license was submitted to the state liquor enforcement division and went on to say that licenses are being delayed at the state level.

Trustee Villagomez – Thanked the maintenance department for the snow removal and for assisting him.

Trustee Espinoza – Stated that Rio Grande County was offering compensation for serving on committees and suggested that an incentive might help with community engagement. She reminded the Board that when the Town is applying for grants, she does have a 501-C-3 to help with grant funding. She also mentioned that they will be needing help with the BMX track. She stressed the importance of increasing communication to draw more community engagement. She suggested looking into various ways to improve the line of communication to citizens and businesses.

Mayor Medina – Reported that they will be having a retreat with some strategic planning when the new board members take office.

**Adjournment:**

**Mayor Pro Tem Valdez moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted by**

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**Town Clerk – Shawn Pagnotta Mayor / Mayor Pro Tem**