

TOWN OF LA JARA

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Special Meeting
Date: April 16, 2020

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/townofajara

Call to Order

A Special Meeting of the La Jara Town Board of Trustees was called to order by Mayor Zaragoza at 6:00 p.m. Meeting was held at Northerner's Senior Center (413 Main Street)

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Zaragoza.

Roll Call

Present were Trustees: Gallegos, Espinoza, Cummings, Mayor Pro Tem Medina and Mayor Zaragoza. Trustee Valdez arrived at 6:12 pm.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

Also present were: Police Chief Jerry Lujan, Maintenance Supervisor Matthew Herrera and Town Clerk Shawn Pagnotta.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Medina moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Trustee Espinoza.

Vote Results: Ayes: Trustees Gallegos, Espinoza, Cummings, Mayor Pro Tem Medina and Mayor Zaragoza

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Guests

Julian Espinoza – Was not present.

Citizen Comments

Earl Haslett addressed the board regarding the Town Manager position and inquired about the qualifications. He discussed his concerns about the former manager and the lack of supervision from the mayor. He also had questions about the legalities of how the election was run. Mayor Zaragoza addressed each of Mr. Hazlett's concerns and expressed to Mr. Hazlett that the Mayor is one of a board of seven and does not have the authority to act on his own.

Larry Sisneros addressed the board stating that the board is here to serve the citizens. He reacted to Mr. Hazlett's comments stating that Mr. Hazlett was also a board member where he could have made a difference when he served on the board. He expressed his support of hiring Larry Zaragoza as the Town Manager.

Approval of Consent Calendar

Town Clerk Pagnotta explained that the minutes from the last two special meetings were not included as she has not had time to finish them.

Motion: Trustee Gallegos moved to approve the Consent Calendar excluding the minutes from the last two special meetings; seconded by Trustee Espinoza.

Vote Result: Ayes: Trustees Valdez, Gallegos, Cummings, Espinoza, Mayor Pro Tem Medina and Mayor Zaragoza

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem moved to go into executive session of a personnel matter under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(2)(f) and not involving: any specific employees who have requested discussion of the matter in open session; any member of this body or any elected official; the appointment of any person to fill an office of this body or of an elected official; or personnel policies that do not require the discussion of matters personal to particular employees. Trustee Gallegos seconded the motion. The newly elected officials were asked to participate in the executive session. Mayor Zaragoza was asked to leave the executive session so that the Town Manager agreement could be discussed.

Vote Result: Ayes: Trustees Valdez, Gallegos, Espinoza, Cummings, Mayor Pro Tem Medina and Mayor Zaragoza

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina announced "The time is now 7:34 pm, and the executive session has been concluded. The participants in the executive session were: MaryAnn Gallegos, Dee Espinoza, Annette Chavez, Austin Valdez, Robert Cummings, Shawn Pagnotta, Margie Wagoner, Rocky Villagomez, and Paula Medina. For the record, if any person who participated in the executive session believes that any substantial discussion any matters not included in the motion to go into the executive session occurred during the executive session, or that any improper action occurred during the executive session in violation of the Open Meetings Law, I would ask that you state your concerns for the record. Trustee Valdez asked that everyone remember the Sunshine Law, stating that what was discussed in executive session should be kept in executive session. Mayor Pro Tem Medina stated "Seeing no other concerns, the next agenda item is Old Business."

Old Business

Negotiation of Town Manager Contract – Mayor Pro Tem Medina stated that there was some good discussion on the agreement. She stated that a few things needed to be added to the job description, such as keeping a daily log sheet of activities, being available by the town issued phone, and having approval on expenditures.

Motion: Trustee Valdez moved to approve the town manger employment agreement with an annual salary of \$56,000 with the above-mentioned changes; seconded by Trustee Espinoza.

Vote Result: Ayes: Trustees Valdez, Espinoza, Cummings, and Mayor Pro Tem Medina.

Nays: None

Abstain: Trustee Gallegos and Mayor Zaragoza

Motion Carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina stated that Zaragoza had been acting in the capacity of the Town Manager for the past few weeks and suggested compensating him for one week worth of pay. Trustee Espinoza objected stating that he was not under contract to perform those services, nor was he asked to do so; furthermore, some of those duties were done under the provisions as mayor. Zaragoza stated he was ok with Trustee Espinoza's objection and stated he was happy to jump in and help when needed. He also thanked those trustees that supported the decision to hire him as the Town Manager.

Town Attorney Contract was tabled until the next meeting. Zaragoza mentioned that he would be meeting with Ray Valdez and Ben Pacyga to review the attorney contract. Trustee Espinoza also asked that they look at extending Ray Valdez's contract if he is still providing legal services for the town during the interim.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina presented plaques to Trustee Robert Cummings and Mayor Larry Zaragoza for their dedication and service to the town.

Swearing in New Officers

Town Clerk Pagnotta administered the oath of office and swore in Austin Valdez, Margie Wagoner, Anette Chavez, and Rocky Villagomez as trustees. Valdez, Wagoner, and Chavez will serve a four-year term; Villagomez will serve a two-year term. Paula Medina was sworn in as Mayor and will serve a four-year term.

New Business

Appointment of Mayor Pro Tem – Mayor Medina appointed Austin Valdez as Mayor Pro Tem.

Designating authority for banking privileges (ie; credit card limits, online banking, signatures, etc.) Town Clerk Pagnotta stated with the retirement of the former town manager, Larry Zaragoza and Paula Medina are the only two people that have banking privileges currently. Clerk Pagnotta suggested authorizing another person.

Motion: Trustee Gallegos moved to authorize Rocky Villagomez to have banking privileges including credit card transactions, signature authority and online banking privileges; seconded by Trustee Margie Wagoner.

Vote Result: Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Gallegos, Villagomez, Wagoner, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Grievance Committee – Mayor Medina suggested tabling discussion on this topic to give the new trustees, manager and attorney some time to settle in. Trustee Espinoza stated that she would hate to see it tabled as it has been put off for 8 to 6 months. She suggested advertising for committee members and have two board members and three community members. Trustee Gallegos and Trustee Wagoner volunteered to serve on the committee. Robert Cummings volunteered to serve on this committee as a community member. Trustee Espinoza stated that the first thing that would need to be done is to establish a grievance policy. It was expressed that the policy must support the supervisors and any complaints would need to follow the chain of command.

Trustee Gallegos mentioned that the Planning and Zoning Committee would need to be restructured. The committee is as follows: Chairman – Julian Espinoza, Jim Hoogendorn, Robert Cummings, Anette Chavez and Larry Zaragoza.

Mayor Medina provided the board with an Elected Officials Code of Conduct and asked that they read through it and sign the acknowledgement that they understand it and are willing to live by it.

Trustee Comments

Trustee Villagomez: He stated that there is always room to learn, no matter how long one has served or worked. He encouraged everyone to use your mind, wisdom, knowledge and skills to keep moving forward. He suggested ways to save some money and stated that the everyone needed to put their heads together to work for the town.

Trustee Wagoner: Stated that she is excited about being a trustee and enjoys La Jara and wants to be a part of making La Jara better. She would like to utilize her grant writing skills to help the Town of La Jara.

Trustee Valdez: Expressed his dreams of one day having a community center. He also stated that he would like try and get some grants to build a maintenance shop so that department has a nice facility to work in. He welcomed the new board members.

Trustee Chavez: Expressed her desire to also have a community center and would like to help in writing a grant for the center. She also would like to work on updating the personnel policy manual.

Trustee Espinoza: Reported that she reached out to local businesses in regards to COVID relief. She explained that the Payroll Protection Program hit it's max and there is no more money available. She is still reaching out the local businesses to help them with funding issues due to COVID-19. She spoke about the number of loans First Southwest Bank in Alamosa has written. She stated these loans were written for this community, Pagosa and Durango area.

Trustee Espinoza stated that she has also tried to bring funding back into the community by writing a Help Colorado Now Grant. She explained that she prepared the grant and asked if the Town could be a fiscal agent. She stated that the board would need to address the issue with the town being a fiscal agent so that funding opportunities are available to businesses for economic development and growth to our town. She explained that there are costs involved when awarded grants, such as a single audit. She feels that money needs to be budgeted so that when grants are available the town can act as the fiscal agent and have the funds to cover these costs. Manager Zaragoza explained that grants should have a purpose, meaning that grants cannot just be written because funds are available. He stated that he would like to be able to work through this so that grants could pass through the Town. He spoke about the grants that he has helped facilitate.

Trustee Gallegos: She asked if the new manager could provide the trustees with better reports that were more detailed. She stated that the town needed to focus on building funds so that projects can be completed. She stated that there are areas around town that needed to be cleaned up. She stated that the ordinances needed to be more aggressively enforced.

Mayor Medina: Welcomed the new trustees. She is excited to be the new mayor and is always open for suggestions and feedback. She stated that the election had a great voter turnout.

Larry Zaragoza reported on the water testing at the old gas station. He stated that the ground is saturated with gas that leaked out of the old storage tanks; there was no issue with the water wells. He was contacted by Clint Wagoner from Geological Services who wanted copies of SOC and BOC reports.

Maintenance Supervisor Herrera informed the board of the issues with the water pressure pump stating that the bearing was worn out and needed to be replaced. Herrera stated the bearing was going to be about \$3500 including parts and labor. Herrera stated that the bearing for the other pressure pump had just as many hours and was also getting weak. Herrera asked for permission to purchase the bearing. Larry Zaragoza stated that he may be able to negotiate on the price. Trustee Valdez suggested negotiating on the price of two pumps since water is a necessity for the public.

Motion: Trustee Valdez moved to purchase two bearings for the pressure pumps and Manager Zaragoza negotiate on the price; seconded by Trustee Wagoner.

Vote Result: Ayes: Trustees Chavez, Espinoza, Gallegos, Villagomez, Wagoner, Mayor Pro Tem Valdez and Mayor Medina.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Larry Zaragoza read the letter written to Paul Faucette by Attorney Ray Valdez in regards to the water main break.

A special meeting was scheduled for April 22 at 6 pm to be held at Northerner's Senior Center. Items to be discussed will be Town Attorney Contract and Town Manager Contract.


Adjournment:

Mayor Pro Tem Valdez moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by


Town Clerk – Shawn Pagnotta




Mayor / Mayor Pro Tem