

TOWN OF LA JARA

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Regular Meeting
Date: May 14, 2019

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

The Regular Meeting of the La Jara Town Board of Trustees was called to order by Mayor Zaragoza at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Zaragoza

Roll Call

Present were Trustees: Valdez, Gallegos, Espinoza, Cummings, Mayor Pro Tem Medina, and Mayor Zaragoza.

Absent: Trustee Salazar

A quorum was present.

Also present were: Town Manager Dennis Koenig, 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 Cummings.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Approval of Consent Calendar

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Medina moved to approve the Consent Calendar; seconded by Trustee Valdez.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Recognition of Scheduled Public Comment

Conejos County Commissioners – Nick Sarmiento, County Attorney, along with County Commissioner Steve McCarroll, County Administrator Tressesa Martinez, and EMS Director Ernest Abeyta asked the Board of Trustees for support of a proposed 2.75% County Sales Tax that will appear on the 2019 ballot. Mr. Sarmiento stated that revenue generated from the sales tax would be put into the County General Fund. He explained the need for imposing a county sales tax by stating that the revenue stream has fluctuated very little with their primary source of revenue coming from property taxes and Payment in Lieu of Taxes. He went on to say that the expenditures have continued to rise due to inflation and the

need to meet the cost of living requirements for the employees. Sarmiento explained the services provided by EMS and the Sheriff's Office and noted that the sales tax could be used to help continue with these services. Trustee Espinoza explained her concerns of the mismanagement of money and feels that there needs to be more transparency for the shortfall the county is currently facing. She went on to say that she feels the county would have a hard time getting a sales tax to pass on the ballot. Trustee Espinoza stated that one reason there is economic development here is because there are less taxes. County Administrator Tressesa Martinez interjected that it was really unfair of Trustee Espinoza to make those comments. County Administrator Martinez stated that in 2017 they had two deputies working in the sheriff's department because the salaries were so low that they couldn't retain anyone. Therefore, they had to increase the salaries and dip into their reserves in order to cover those costs. Trustee Espinoza stated more concerns she had and suggested that the county look at a lower tax to begin with. Mayor Zaragoza interjected and asked that County Attorney Sarmiento be given the opportunity to finish with his presentation.

EMS Director Ernest Abeyta addressed the board and spoke about their response time after they have been able to operate on a full-time basis. Sheriff Garth Crowther also addressed the board and explained the services that are being provided and explained that they are in need of basic equipment. He explained what he is doing with his staff and explained that most of the expenses they incur is from the jail. He stated they are trying to bring more revenue into the jail and sheriff's office.

County Attorney Sarmiento stated that the expenditures have exceeded the revenues and explained what the general fund expenditures are and concluded his presentation asking for a resolution in support of the sales tax ballot issue. Mayor Zaragoza asked if the county conducts yearly financial audits and if the raises that were given were thoughtfully planned out. Sheriff Crowther explained that raises were given so that employees could be retained. Mayor Zaragoza asked if the sales tax issue failed what the plan would be. County Attorney Sarmiento explained that services would have to be cut and that they would likely only provide the services that are statutorily required. Trustee Gallegos suggested imposing a business license. Town Manager Koenig asked if they had thought about imposing a marijuana tax. La Jara citizen Larry Sisneros stated that the school is also proposing a mill levy increase in order to build a new school. He stated that he didn't think they would both be approved. Mayor Pro Tem Medina stated that she would like to see the county be more involved and get ideas on how to improve and grow the county. Town Manager Koenig suggested the county look at setting an initial 1% sales tax rather than going to a 2.75% tax right off the bat. Trustee Espinoza stated that the county should start supporting businesses in order to create growth in the county. Mayor Zaragoza thanked the Conejos County representatives that came and welcomed the new sheriff. Mayor Zaragoza also recognized the late Sheriff Howard Galvez and thanked him for his service. Mayor Zaragoza thought that everyone understood the importance of the sales tax proposal and felt that the board would be in support of a resolution. He also stated that he would love to be a part of any committee that is needed to spread the word about the sales tax proposal, but is already serving on 8 different boards. Trustee Gallegos volunteered to serve on a committee

Lori Laske, Director of Alumni and Donor Relations from Adams State University presented a handout to the trustees and explained that the goal for the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative(COSI) is to increase post-secondary credential completion and the preparedness of Colorado students to earn a livable wage, graduate with less debt, and positively contribute to the growth of the state's economy. She stated the program proposes to allocate \$32,194 in scholarships to students in Conejos County. She stated that every dollar committed by the county will be matched dollar for dollar by the state of Colorado up to the max allocation of \$32,194. She stated that \$13,597 is still needed to reach the matching funds and asked for the Town's support and contribution. Laske went on to provide the requirements of the students that receive the scholarship. She stated if the Town made a commitment to contribute funds, she would bring the students back to meet with the trustees and report on what they are doing. Additionally, she stated that if there was a commitment of funds from the town, they would send an invoice on July 1 and Adams State

would serve as the fiscal agent for the program. She stated that she foresees this program continuing on an annual basis and would hope for a continued partnership to support students. Mayor Zaragoza stated that Trustee Salazar had proposed a scholarship that would be rewarded from the town and he stated that this program would fall in line with that proposal. Mayor Zaragoza stated that the board would need some time to discuss it.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Koenig presented Ordinance 2006-1 that explains citizens would be responsible for maintaining the weeds in the alleys and along the frontages of their properties. It was stated that the ordinance has been in place since 2006 but has not been enforced. Town Manager Koenig stated that the town has taken care of the weeds for years and felt that there would be some resistance from citizens. Town Manager Koenig stated that a letter will be mailed out to all citizens informing them of the enforcement of this ordinance.

Town Manager Koenig reported on the CIRSA meeting that was held in Monte Vista and stated that Tami Tanoue did a great presentation on harassment. He stated that CIRSA will be developing a more comprehensive harassment policy geared toward elected officials. He also reported that there will be a CML meeting in Alamosa on May 20 that he and Town Clerk Pagnotta would be attending.

Town Manager Koenig reported that the parking line painting scheduled for last week was rained out. He reported that they will reschedule for another time.

Approval of Town Managers Report:

Motion: Trustee Valdez moved to approve the Town Managers Report; seconded by Trustee Cummings.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Town Attorney's Report:

Town Attorney Valdez was not present for the meeting.

Trustee Comments

Trustee Valdez: Asked for some nuts and bolts to put up the neighborhood watch signs. Trustee Valdez stated that the Easter Egg Hunt went well and was very well attended.

Trustee Espinoza: Asked about the trash and junk on Broadway. Chief Lujan replied that he had talked to the owner and they are cleaning the mess up.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina: Felt that the retreat was really good. She asked if the town was going to do anything for Deputy Clerk Ross since she is moving away. Town Clerk Pagnotta replied that she had something planned.

Trustee Cummings: Stated that crime seemed to be down.

Trustee Gallegos: Had more complaints about the hemp building and stated that she had tires stolen off a trailer behind their liquor store. She asked to have more patrolling around the property that is in the city

limits. She stated that she had a lot of complaints about day time speeding through town and trucks parking along the highway. She stated her complaints about kids living in the hemp building and asked if they have water hooked up to the building. Town Manager Koenig stated that they had water connected several months ago. She had numerous other complaints about activity in the building, Mayor Zaragoza asked if she had personally witnessed that activities that she mentioned. Trustee Gallegos felt that the crime has not gone down and asked for more patrolling.

Mayor Zaragoza: Reported on the grand opening for the new addition at Conejos County Hospital. He stated that he would like to have someone from the town attend. The event will be held on June 22 from 11am to 4 pm. Mayor Zaragoza received a letter and flyer that June is "Bike to Work" month and asked that the flyer be put up in Town Hall.

Mayor Zaragoza had some concerns about the lead and cooper pipe survey that was mailed out with the water bills. He stated that he met with Town Manager Koenig and Town Clerk Pagnotta about his concerns. It was explained to him that the letter was from the state and was not mandated. Mayor Zaragoza thought that it should have been conveyed to the citizens that the survey was voluntary. Town Clerk Pagnotta stated that the town had received a large portion of the surveys back. Mayor Zaragoza was reassured that the water is tested every year for lead and cooper. Maintenance Supervisor Matthew Herrera explained the requirements from the state regarding the lead and cooper rule.

New Business

No new business.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina wanted to discuss the resolution in support of the county sales tax ballot issue. Trustee Espinoza stated that she would completely support a 1% county sales tax, but is completely against the 2.75% county sales tax, Mayor Pro Tem Medina agreed with Trustee Espinoza. Mayor Pro Tem Medina understands the need for a county sales tax, but felt that they were not transparent. Trustee Espinoza feels that that the county needs to run the county like a business and be more accountable for their spending before they ask for more money. Mayor Zaragoza asked how a resolution could be worded to show that the board of trustees are in favor of supporting a county sales tax, but not show a figure on a specific percentage. It was decided to table any decisions on drafting a resolution.

Old Business

Trustee Gallegos asked about any further discussion on putting in a skate park. Mayor Zaragoza stated that they had talked about this at the retreat and the old playground equipment needed to be removed because it was old and outdated. Town Manager Koenig stated that the town is seeking grants for the construction of the skate park for next year's budget.

Mayor Zaragoza recapped what was discussed at the retreat for Trustee Gallegos since she was not in attendance. He stated that he had spoken with Sarah Stoeber who is going to speak with DOLA about getting a small grant for a plaque for the Pete Martinez Veteran's Memorial.

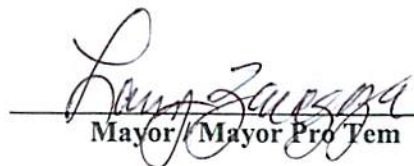
Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Medina moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Espinoza. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by


Town Clerk - Shawn Pagnotta, CMC




Mayor / Mayor Pro Tem