

MINUTES

The City of Douglas Mayor and Council met in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the City Hall Council Chamber, 425 10th Street. The Honorable former Mayor Huish called the meeting to order.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** 6:00 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** By Council.
3. **INVOCATION.** Pastor Fernando Betancourt, Ministerios Tierra De Bendición.
4. **ROLL CALL.**

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
MAYOR, DONALD C. HUISH	X	
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE, MARGARET MORALES	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, JOSE MONTANO	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, DANYA ACOSTA	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RAY SHELTON	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, MICHAEL BALDENEGRO	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RICHARD C. ACOSTA	X	
CITY MANAGER, ANA URQUIJO	X	
CITY ATTORNEY, DENIS FITZGIBBONS	X	
CITY TREASURER, LUIS PEDROZA	X	
CITY CLERK, ALMA ANDRADE	X	

5. PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL IN WRITING OR VERBALLY ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

Ida Ann Pedrego of 1815 5th Street, commented on the following:

- Expressed gratitude to Mayor Huish for his contributions, attention to community needs, and efforts to address the delay in city staff conducting inspections; and acknowledged the importance of jobs in the community and the G Avenue Revitalization project.

Frank Ambriz of 2154 12th Street, commented on:

- Extended congratulations to the newly elected officials.
- Highlighted that cattle pens in Arizona are now closed, emphasizing the importance of city support as they contribute to employment opportunities. Discussed the need for road construction and collaboration between the city and county.

6. COMMENTS BY OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Council Member Morales expressed gratitude to her Ward 1 constituents for their support and for electing her to serve Ward 1 over the past 14 and a half years. She also thanked the mayor, stating it has been an honor to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. She wished the council continued success and expressed confidence that her successor, Melissa Rodriguez, will excel in the role. She extended her best wishes to everyone.

7. OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS.

A. **OATH of OFFICE** administered by **JUSTICE** of the **PEACE ALMA VILDOSOLA** to **COUNCIL MEMBERS MELISSA A. RODRIGUEZ, DANYA ACOSTA** and **MICHAEL BALDENEGRO**.

Justice of the Peace Alma Vildosola administered the oath to the new Council Members Melissa A. Rodriguez, Danya Acosta and Michael Baldenegro.

8. COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Council Member Rodriguez expressed: "First and foremost I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the residents of Ward 1 for your trust, your support and your votes. It is an honor to represent you and I look forward to working together to make a positive impact in our community. I would also like to take a moment to thank Mayor Huish and outgoing Council Member Margaret Morales for their dedication and service to the City of Douglas. Your hard work and commitment have laid a strong foundation for us to build on and I am excited to continue that progress. As I look ahead to the next four years my goals as a Council Member are clear and focused, first off, I'd like to bring life to Ward 1 by improving services, creating opportunities and addressing the needs of our community. I want to continue the revitalization of Dougals, ensuring our city remains vibrant, welcoming and full of opportunity for residents and visitors alike. I want to promote our Dougals community through tourism, showcasing our history, our culture and local businesses to attract visitors and boost our economy. I want to provide more options and opportunities for grocery shopping, I know that's a big thing and comment in our community so our families can have convenient affordable and quality choices close to home and something that is very near to my heart and lies with my values as an educator, the youth in my opinion are the most important so I want to grow opportunities for youth activities whether through city-led events are by working to bring businesses to provide engaging options for our youth. I also hope to involve youth in planning these events and activities and giving them voice and ownership in our community's growth. I definitely look forward to the new Port of Entry project which will bring more opportunities for our community, supporting economic development and strengthening our connection to the region. I am excited about what lies ahead for Ward 1 and more importantly the entire Dougals community. Together we can achieve these goals and continue to make Dougals a place we are all proud to call home."

Council Member Acosta made the following statement: thanked everyone for re-electing her for this position. Looks forward to continuing to serve the Douglas community to the best of her ability, just as she has over the past four years. Remains committed to bringing the same drive and focus to this role. Council Member Acosta also expressed excitement to work alongside the new members of the council, as it seems they share many common goals. That's when real progress happens—when they come together, aligned in purpose, to achieve great things.

Council Member Acosta thanked her family, especially her number one supporter—her husband. Thank you for always supporting her and her ambitious ideas as they continue moving forward. She expressed in being optimistic about the future of Douglas. There's a sense of momentum, a shining light guiding in the right direction, and believes the community will see many positive changes in the next four years.

Council Member Baldenegro made the following statement: thanked his constituents of Ward 5 for entrusting him with reelection, as well as all the residents of Douglas. While he represents his ward, his service extends to the entire Douglas community. Council Member Baldenegro expressed that as his fellow council members mentioned, they are in a time of transition with a new council, new administration, and a new president on the horizon. His hope is that the council see increased support and funding for border towns like Douglas. If President Trump is reelected, he is optimistic that he will assist small communities like Douglas.

Council Member Baldenegro shared that he has medical matters that he will address in the future, but he is committed to serving his term and continuing to work for the betterment of Douglas.

9. COMMENTS BY MAYOR HUISH.

Mayor Huish commented the following: "I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past 4 and a half years not focus on the outward accomplishments as they speak for themselves but about the many individuals that have made a difference in our community. First, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our outstanding council that started four years ago, Mitch Lindemann, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro, Jose Grijalva and Mayor Pro Tempore Margaret Morales, without their dedication and leadership we would not be where we are today. Each of them has made invaluable contributions to our progress and I am sincerely thankful for their unwavering support. When we began our serves, we were immediately faced with the challenges of a global pandemic thanks to the resilience and unity of our community we navigated this crisis with minimal impact. Shortly after, we were tasked with hiring a city clerk, we were fortunate to find someone who not only understood the importance of public service but also brought exceptional skills to the role Ms. Alma Andrade. At the same time Mr. Luis Pedroza did an outstanding job as interim city manager but we knew we needed a permanent leader. We were blessed when Mrs. Urquijo, a Douglas native and seasoned professional, agreed to return home and serve the community where she grew up in the council manager form of government. It is crucial to hire a

professional staff that take the vision of the council into reality. We have found that in Mrs. Urquijo and our entire leadership team and our entire employees of Douglas city who have worked tirelessly to serve the best interest of Douglas. Together we focused our efforts creating a vision for Douglas under Mrs. Urquijo's direction and with the guidance of our leadership, staff, the council develop Douglas vision 2032, this plan has been the blue print for our decisions helping to prioritize long term benefits over short term gratifications. The ultimate goal has always been to lay a solid foundation for our community's growth and success. I am pleased to say that with the leadership of this council which now includes Jose Montañó and Richard Acosta. Douglas is now posed for excellence simply stated the community is ready to reach its full potential. I would also like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the support I received during challenging personal times in late 2021 and much of 2022, I faced significant health issues that limited my physical abilities. During this difficult period the council and leadership staff stepped up and performed exceptionally mayor pro tempore Morales along with the entire council graciously filled in for me at various events and meetings when I was unable to attend. I am deeply grateful to all of them for their understanding and continuing to implement Douglas Vision 2032 during my recovery. I cannot overstate my appreciation for the many prayers and support I received from this community, your kindness and faith help me heal and through the grace of God, I am here today with you. I also thank you for the trust you placed in this council to make the right decision for the right reasons, it has been an honor to serve, and it would not have been possible without the collective strength of this community, Douglas is a city build on values of strong families, hard work and faith in God. I firmly believe that as long as we continue to put our faith in God, our community will thrive with God's light guiding us. We will continue to be a beacon for others to find peace and hope in our Savior Jesus Christ. As I pass the Vuitton to incoming Mayor Jose Grijalva, I wish him all the best as he continues to move our beloved community forward. I also wish continued success to incoming Council Member Melissa Rodriguez and my fellow Council Members Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro and Richard Acosta. May God Bless you and your families for your dedicated service to our community. Finally, I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my dear wife Sherry and my family, without their unwavering support and encouragement I would not have been able to serve my hometown, their love and dedication make it possible for me to persevere through the most difficult times. I am truly blessed by my eternal family; may God continue to bless each and every member of this community and bless us as a whole that we may be able to continue to be the city that I've grown up in and I love deeply. Thank you."

10. OATH of OFFICE administered by JUSTICE of the PEACE ALMA VILDOSOLA to MAYOR JOSE GRIJALVA.

Justice of the Peace Alma Vildosola administered the Oath of Office to incoming Mayor Jose Grijalva.

11. COMMENTS by MAYOR JOSE GRIJALVA.

Mayor Grijalva expressed his gratitude to his brothers for attending this special occasion and extended heartfelt thanks to his constituents for their trust and to the council for their dedication to the community. He shared that he had not prepared a formal speech but emphasized the importance of family support, echoing sentiments shared by former Mayor Huish.

He acknowledged that serving on the council is more than attending meetings—it involves time away from family and special moments, all in the pursuit of advancing the community. Mayor Grijalva complimented the commitment of both the current and past councils and emphasized the council's readiness to get to work. Priorities include creating jobs, securing a grocery store, and tackling pressing issues from day one.

He concluded with optimism, stating, "Thank you. I can't wait to move the city forward."

12. DESIGNATION of MAYOR PRO TEMPORE.

A. DESIGNATION of MAYOR PRO TEMPORE.

In accordance with the City Charter, Mayor Grijalva designated Council Member Danya Acosta as Mayor Pro Tempore. He explained that in the event of the mayor's absence, Mayor Pro Tempore would assume his duties to represent the city.

Mayor Grijalva commended Council Member Acosta for her dedication to advancing the community, noting that her efforts have been instrumental in drawing significant attention to the downtown area and the city.

He congratulated Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta on her designation and presented her with a Certificate of Appointment.

13. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS.

A. **RECOGNITION** to the **DOUGLAS SPECIAL OLYMPICS** for the **INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS** and **DEDICATION** of the **SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES** in the **DOUGLAS COMMUNITY**.

Mayor Grijalva expressed his desire to extend special recognition to the group representing the city during tournaments, highlighting them as true ambassadors of the community. He acknowledged their role in showcasing the city's excellence through their character and commitment.

Mayor Grijalva thanked the group for their efforts and encouraged them to reach out to the council if there is any way the city can support them.

B. CHRISTMAS LIGHT PARADE WINNERS.

3RD PLACE: COCHISE COLLEGE - ABRAHAM VILLAREAL

2ND PLACE: OMEGA ALPHA ACADEMY - KAREN FRISBY

1ST PLACE: CENTER FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS (CAS) - MARTHA DOMINGUEZ

Mayor Grijalva expressed his gratitude to everyone who participated, noting that he had the honor of serving as one of the judges. He remarked on the exceptional quality of the entries, with so many impressive floats that it made selecting the winners a difficult task.

He then proudly presented the trophies to each of the winners.

14. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVAL of CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A. **EXPENDITURES** for the month of **NOVEMBER 2024** totaling **\$1,966,025.76**

B. **MINUTES** for **OCTOBER 30** and **NOVEMBER 13, 2024**.

C. **FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR APPOINTMENT** of **JOSE GRIJALVA**.

Motion by Council Member Shelton, second by Council Member R. Acosta to approve consent agenda items as presented.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

15. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVALS.

A. **RESOLUTION NO. 24-1647**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **GRANTING** a **NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT** to the **UNITED STATES** acting through the **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION** for ingress, egress, and construction access on, over, and across the southern 60 (sixty) feet of city owned parcel 408-34-008B, for the **CONSTRUCTION** of the **NEW COMMERCIAL PORT OF ENTRY** and authorizing the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

Mr. Pedroza provided background information, explaining that the General Services Administration (GSA), under the design/build contract for the construction of the new commercial Port of Entry (POE), requires an easement access to the donated 80-acre parcel via City-owned parcel 408-34-008B.

The construction company plans to access the 80-acre parcel from Kings Highway, proceeding east on International Avenue. This avenue runs through the 5-acre City-owned parcel bordering the U.S./Mexico

international border. GSA has requested a 60-foot-wide easement across the southern portion of this property to facilitate ingress, egress, and construction access.

Staff recommend authorizing the City Manager to execute and record a non-exclusive easement for GSA, allowing access for these purposes on the designated portion of parcel 408-34-008B.

Motion by Council Member Baldenegro, second by Council Member D. Acosta to approve Resolution No. 24-1647.

Council Member Baldenegro asked whether the construction companies working for GSA would make improvements to the city lots, such as adding asphalt or gravel, to prevent deterioration of the city's parcels.

Mr. Pedroza responded that the construction companies would maintain the lots due to the constant traffic, ensuring dust control and upkeep as agreed upon by the parties involved.

Council Member Acosta inquired if there was any update on this, as her understanding was that GSA's contract with the general contractor for the construction of the Port of Entry included a clause requiring the hiring of local workers. She asked how the community, especially those in the construction industry, would be informed about this opportunity. She also suggested reaching out to local services that could benefit from working on the project. Mr. Pedroza confirmed that staff had already met with the contractor, who expressed interest in connecting with local resources to hire local employees. Staff plans to assist with marketing job positions and ensure the hiring of local workers.

Council Member Acosta added that there is significant talent among local youth and graduating seniors who may not want to pursue further education but are eager to enter the workforce. She suggested collaborating with local schools to provide these opportunities.

Council Member R. Acosta commented that the California contractor was supposed to reach out to local contractors, such as plumbers and electricians, but he had found that none had been contacted. He asked for this to be looked into.

Mr. Pedroza stated that staff would investigate the matter.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

B. BENEFITS CONSULTANT/BROKER SERVICES.

Ms. Pedroza provided background information, explaining that every five years, the city issues a request for proposals for benefits from broker services. The most recent request was published in October of this year, and four responses were received. After evaluating the bids, GBS Benefits, the current broker, was found to offer the highest proposal. As a result, staff is recommending the continuation of GBS of Arizona as the city's benefits consultant broker, with the condition that they integrate an additional network in Mexico for employees as an optional benefit. This addition could provide employees with a lower deductible, while all other services would remain unchanged.

Motion by Council Member D. Acosta, second by Council Member Baldenegro to approve GBS Arizona as the City of Douglas' Benefits Consultant/Broker.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None

C. APPROVAL of the UPDATED City of Douglas Administrative Policy 4.01, POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT.

Mr. Fitzgibbons provided an update on the city's 1996 harassment policy. He explained that the updated policy is more comprehensive, with added definitions and examples, reflecting the fact that 28 years have passed since

its last revision. The update is necessary, especially as the city has applied for and received numerous federal grants, which require the city's harassment policy to be current and in compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's recommendations.

Motion by Council Member D. Acosta, second by Council Member Baldenegro to approve the Updated City of Douglas Administrative Policy 4.01, Policy Against Harassment.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montaña, Danya Acosta, Ray Shelton, Michael Baldenegro and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None

16. CITY MANAGER REPORTS.

Ms. Urquijo extended a warm welcome to the new mayor and Ward 1 council member and congratulated Mayor Pro Tempore. She expressed appreciation for today's discussions, noting the excitement, passion, and enthusiasm for promoting the community. Ms. Urquijo emphasized that the city is guided by the strong vision of the mayor and council and reiterated her congratulations. She highlighted that the city has a dedicated team ready to help move the mayor's vision forward, collaborate on priorities, and recognize the council's efforts.

Ms. Urquijo provided the following report:

Community Calendar

Inauguration Celebration

- December 12, 4:00 – 6:00 PM – Inaugural Block Party

Celebrate the inauguration of our new Mayor, Jose Grijalva, at the Inaugural Block Party on Thursday, December 12th, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. The event will take place at 18th Street & Bonita Avenue and will feature food, entertainment, and a chance to connect with the community.

Library

- December 13, 5:00 PM – Library Christmas-Themed Paint Party for Adults

Come paint with us! Tutorials will be provided, but you can paint whatever you'd like! All supplies, food, and drinks are included at no charge. Ages 18 and up. Please pre-register at the front desk.

- December 17, 5:00 – 7:00 PM – Children's Christmas Party @ the Library – with Santa!

Come take a picture with Santa, decorate cookies, make Christmas ornaments, and enjoy a free, fun time for the whole family! The library will close at 2:00 PM to prepare for the party and will reopen at 5:00 PM when the festivities begin.

Recreation

- December 13, 5:30 PM – Drive-In Movie: *The Santa Clause*

Enjoy a festive drive-in movie night featuring *The Santa Clause* on Friday, December 13th, starting at 5:30 PM. Bring your popcorn, hot cocoa, and blankets for a cozy movie experience. Location: Ministerios Tierra de Bendicion, 50 E. Highway 80.

- December 14, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM – Photos with Santa at the Park

Join our Recreation Department and Douglas Fire Department for a festive holiday event on Saturday, December 14th, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Raul Castro Park. Families can enjoy photos with Santa and a fun time celebrating the season.

- Aquatic Center Closed for Renovations

Please note that the Aquatic Center is temporarily closed due to ongoing renovations. Updates on the reopening date will be provided as soon as possible.

Fire

Annual Food, Jacket and Toy drives are underway. Donations can be dropped at the Douglas Fire Dept.

Warming shelter will be available at the fire station as needed based on weather conditions.

17. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND REPORTS FROM COUNCIL AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS.

Council Member Baldenegro invited Ms. Baldenegro to come to receive flowers, marking four years of shared service in the city. He shared that he has been diagnosed with thyroid cancer and will undergo testing, including a nuclear scan, to determine its origin. He expressed his hope that Ms. Baldenegro would continue in his place during his recovery, joking that after 41 years, what's another four years.

Mayor Grijalva commented that a person's strength is reflected in their partner, and while Council Member Baldenegro is strong, Ms. Baldenegro is even stronger.

Mayor Grijalva mentioned he would like to revisit both the alley clean-up ordinance and the entertainment tax to the next council meeting.

Council Member Baldenegro suggested exploring ways for the city to assist local churches impacted by hate crimes, such as waiving permit fees for rebuilding. Ms. Urquijo noted this could be addressed in the fee portion of the permitting ordinance.

Council Member Acosta recommended exploring potential partnerships with local colleges and high schools to identify construction-related job opportunities for young adults seeking employment experience.

Mayor Grijalva expressed gratitude to his constituents and a close friend, Noreen Ogata, for presenting him with a custom-made lei for the occasion. He invited everyone to attend the upcoming block party, offering free food, entertainment, a photo booth, face painting, balloon animals, and informational booths from Chiricahua Clinic and Cricket. Mayor Grijalva emphasized that he plans to host similar events in all wards to engage the community and bring people together for fun.

18. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Council Member Baldenegro, second by Council Member Shelton to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Prepared by:



Alma Andrade, City Clerk