



City of Rio Communities Council Special Workshop
City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd
Rio Communities, NM 87002
Saturday, August 27, 2022 7:00 PM
Minutes

Please silence all electronic devices.

Call to Order

- Mayor Joshua Ramsell called the special workshop to order at 7:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

- Councilor Apodaca led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

- PRESENT: Mayor Joshua Ramsell, Mayor Pro-tem Margaret R. Gutjahr, Councilor Arthur Apodaca, Councilor Lawrence Gordon, Councilor Jimmie Winters.
- Present: City Manager Dr. Martin Moore, Municipal Clerk Elizabeth Adair, Deputy Clerk Trainee Lalena Aragon, Finance Officer (virtual) Stephanie Finch, Fire Chief Andrew Tabet, Valencia County News-Bulletin Editor Clara Garcia.

Approval of Agenda

- Motion made by Councilor Gordon to approve the agenda as written. Seconded by Councilor Apodaca. With a unanimous vote the agenda for the special workshop was approved as presented.

Agenda Items

Resolution 2022-XX NMFA Loan Agreement (Police Vehicles) (Manager/Council)

- Manager Dr. Moore explained in front of Council Resolution 2022-23 and said this resolution is for the purchase of police vehicles and utilizing the New Mexico Finance Authority and looking into purchasing used state police vehicles but have talked to other who have received used state police vehicles, but they do have high hours as well as high miles and continued to explain that we are moving forward with the application but not committing at this time. He continued by saying with newer vehicles he has had a conversation with a car dealership that has the vehicles on order, two of them have not been assigned to a law enforcement agency in New Mexico and are anticipated to be 2022 model year delivery in October., which would be very good for us but talking about a third vehicle would have to be ordered for the 2023 model year and wouldn't be here until sometime next year.
- Councilor Apodaca asked what type of vehicles are in question.
- Manager Dr. Moore said they are SUV (interceptor vehicles) with heavier chassis and heavier transmission as well as engines and 4-wheel drive.
- Motion made by Mayor Pro-tem Gutjahr to approved Resolution 2022-23 NMFA Loan agreement on the police vehicle. Seconded by Councilor Gordon. Voting Yea: Mayor Pro-tem Gutjahr, Councilor Apodaca, Councilor Gordon, Councilor Winters. With a 4-0 vote Resolution 2022-23 was passed, approved, adopted, and signed.
- Finance Officer Finch said there will be some changes on the application depending on how you vote on the next item but will have it updated and give it to council to resign.

Resolution 2022 – XX, Rescinding Resolution 2022-18 “Imposing a Mil Levy Tax for the benefit of Public Safety”

- Manager Dr. Moore read what our finance director received from DFA, dated August 24, 2022, which states the language is inconsistent with statute. He then further explained they immediately called, and they stated this was an oversight on DFA part and this was from the Bureau chief of administration. He further explained that they talked with staff based on conversation they had at the state level, we recommend the structure of tax rates in the resolutions. He stated that we had made it clear with the non-residential that the mil levy will not increase but will increase the mil levy for residential tax all for the purpose of starting up a police department and operating a police department. He said because of that they asked DFA what are our options, and they said you have two options, option one will be to leave it along and the tax rate will go up for both non-residents and residents or option two would be to resend the property tax increase which will mean the tax levels will stay at 2.75. He continued to explain the consequences which is not being able to have a 3-person police department with an evidence technician.
- Manager Dr. Moore continued to explain he received good news this morning about the estimates on repairs in the space for our temporary police department and the cost is coming out significantly lower than we anticipated. He further explained what we can do to help the situation is proposing a police chief and one officer initially recommending that in mid-year budget and also at the beginning of the 2023-2024 we can reevaluate bringing in a second officer. He then said we will further recommend these at a later date but will let you know what we have been discussing as staff starting with the entire budget for the Chief would be cut in half and looking to hire in January, next thing would be looking at Code Enforcement trim \$34,277 which leaves \$31,200 to utilize as well as the process will become slower with only 2 individuals instead of 4, and the last one is to the 3rd member in the clerk's office and to cut the stand alone librarian position for the fiscal year and also recommend street repairs and streetlights be cut in half, and finally we are recommending to trim \$15k out of the police department startup cost.
- Manager Dr. Moore said we also have an expiring contract with the Sheriff's office in June 2023. He said with a positive note that our GRT in both July and August have exceeded last year's as well as this year's expectations for far. He then said he wants to be very notable with Council and that's with the city-wide cleanup we do not want to trim the budget for that.
- Councilor Gordon said we would cut the police budget by \$150k, what would that take away.
- Manager Dr. Moore explained this is just the startup costs that will be trimmed down.
- Councilor Apodaca said it doesn't sound like there was a consideration for the increase for the businesses taxes and said he would like to know the negative involving with looking at increasing the tax.
- Manager Dr. Moore said he is giving a recommendation and he further said there was concern about economic activity if we raised the taxes for commercial properties and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Apodaca said for all of the business in our city, if the mil levy was going into effect and increased, how much in additional revenue in total.
- Manager Dr. Moore explained with looking at the increasing at 3.5 it will be \$3.50 per thousand dollars of taxable assessed value. He continued by saying there is about \$12 million of taxable assessed value on the non-residential or commercial side. He continued by explaining to

council that if they do not change everything that leaving it the way it is there is a chance, we can have a decrease in business for the city and continued the discussion.

- Councilor Apodaca asked what is the rate for business in Belen.
- Mayor Ramsell explained it is at 9% but they have a mil levy but also have a city debt which has to be approved by the voters and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Gutjahr said where we are is where we are right now and then said as a council we can revisit mil levy, and further said when you promise something then go ahead and do it, it does not look good to the businesses. She continued with that there are a lot of items that we can talk to public safety that can help, but also has a concern of having a librarian that a lot of funding comes to have a certified librarian even if it was just a part-time person. She finished by explaining her last concern is letting the public know how important funding is to us as a city.
- Councilor Apodaca said from his prospective he doesn't like the idea about having to raise taxes but there are promises on both ends as well as promises on having the law enforcement present. He then asked if there was an idea of the old Al's mini mart under new ownership
- Mayor Ramsell said original we were talking about a chief and 2 officers, and now we are talking about having a working chief and one officer and prolonging the hire of another officer. He continued by saying when starting this whole thing we only looked at the residential side since that's where majority of the tax comes from and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Gordon said a person is as good as their word and with promising both not raising taxes as well as a police department, we are still doing both and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Gutjahr said it doesn't mean there will only be 2 police officers forever, and it is unfortunate we were led to believe we can have it one way but with other resources we can find away.
- Councilor Apodaca said he is comfortable that we will be having a working police chief as long as he it is communicated to him about the hiring process.
- Councilor Winters said we have been talking to the neighborhood about \$15k as startup and if budget allows, we can try having a part-time officer, but we might find other solutions that would enable us to do so.
- Mayor Ramsell said people have in mind that we are kicking out the sheriff office which isn't true they still will be present.
- Councilor Gutjahr said technically the contract ends June of 2023 for the sheriff's office but maybe there will be options for overtime, if possible, but that would be left with the police chief in the future.
- Motion made by Mayor Pro-tem Gutjahr to approve resolution 2022-25 Rescinding Resolution 2022-18 Imposing a Mil levy tax for the benefit of public safety. Seconded by Councilor Winters. Voting Yea: Mayor Pro-tem Gutjahr, Councilor Apodaca, Councilor Gordon, Councilor Winters. With a 4-0 vote Resolution 2022-25 Rescinding Resolution 2022-18 Imposing a Mil Levy Tax for the benefit of Public Safety was passed, approved, adopted, and signed.

Public Comment

- There was no public comments.

Adjourn

- Motion made by Councilor Apodaca to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Gordon. With a unanimous vote the special workshop was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth (Lisa) Adair, Municipal Clerk
(Transcribed by Cheyenne Sullivan, Assistant Clerk)

Date: _____

Approved:

Joshua Ramsell,
Mayor

Margaret R. Gutjahr,
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor

Arthur Apodaca,
Councilor

Lawrence R. Gordon,
Councilor

Jimmie Winters,
Councilor