



**City of Rio Communities Council Special Workshop**  
**City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd**  
**Rio Communities, NM 87002**  
**Monday, July 18, 2022 6:00 PM**  
**Minutes**

*Please silence all electronic devices.*

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**Call to Order**

- Mayor Joshua Ramsell called the special workshop to order at 6:05 pm

**Attendees**

- 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, Finance Officer Stephanie Finch, Fire Chief Andrew Tabet, and Code enforcement Greg Gallegos.

**Law Enforcement**

- Manager Dr. Moore stated he added phase 2 on the critical path. He then said in the State of New Mexico if your new officer is already certified it makes things a lot shorter of a process.
- Councilor Gordon asked how long the academy is.
- Finance Officer Finch said about 3 months.
- Manager Dr. Moore said he believes the time frame is 3 months.
- Councilor Apodaca asked if there is a training happening now.
- Manager Dr. Moore said yes, and they have one every July as well as in the spring sometime but hope to have someone hired with the training already.
- Finance Officer Finch said she believes they can work up to a year while they are getting certified.
- Manager Dr. Moore continued with the introduction as well as mentioned as long as they go through field training, they have a while before having to get certified and continued with the timeline of phase 1 which would indicate on what areas the consultant would have to be involved in and then moving on to backgrounds and psychological analysis.
- Manager Dr. Moore began the presentation with currently we have an active 2.75 mil levy limit and with fluctuation due to property values we are asking for an increase in the mil levy anywhere from 3.0 to 3.50 for residential.
- Councilor Apodaca asked about the increases from the previous slide if they were from new properties or reassessed properties or a combination of both.
- Manager Dr. Moore said it was a combination of both and explained talking with the appraiser every 15 to 30 days they update the numbers and continued with the presentation.
- Finance Officer Finch explained the percentage of increase to the resident's overall tax bill, and she explained that the residential tax bill would go up anywhere from 12% to 14% depending on which mil levy you choose.
- Mayor Ramsell asked if the hundred thousand increments are the assessed values.
- Finance Officer Finch said yes, it is.
- Manager Dr. Moore said one of the things they looked at was the budgetary expense side of things on the operating side which there are different if looking at the 3.00 and 3.50 and what they would hypothetically pay for. He continued by stating while going over documentation as well as talking to police chiefs there would be 3 available positions, 1 full time police chief, 1 full

time police officer and 1 full time administrative assistant/evidence technician as well as other important things they would need.

- Finance Officer Finch explained the 3.50 would be the total package id they did not have to pay for a contract with the sheriff's department.
- Manager Dr. Moore continued to explain the one-time capital costs as well which include Remodel Municipal Complex for Police Department at \$150k; Desks, computers, office furnishings at \$50k; Guns, ammunition, tasers, body cameras, uniforms at \$75k, and Outfitting Police Cruisers at \$75k. He continued by explaining the impact to the budget which includes a consultant at \$50k; a police chief at \$103,158.62 and including the one-time start-up cost at \$350k.
- Finance Officer Finch said going back to the one time start up costs outfitting the police cruisers it is very possible we can get it included in the NMFA loan which means the price can decrease.
- Fire Chief Tabet said they can get the cruisers just like they got the tanker.
- Mayor Ramsell asked if we could you USDA grants and loans.
- Finance Officer Finch said she thinks that it is used for infrastructure and continued the presentation.
- Manager Dr. Moore said hopefully we can get low numbers just as we did for the public works truck as well as the tanker, but we will be looking for those things.
- Finance Officer Finch explained she knows you can not use USDA loans with general fund money it has to be a proprietary or a fire protection or law enforcement protection fund. She continued by explaining you can not pledge your GRT money or property tax to pay a loan. She finished by stating the \$103,158.62 is the salary of the police chief for the whole year so if they hire one say January it would be half the amount and continued the presentation.
- Councilor Gutjahr asked if they have received the GRT for July.
- Finance Officer Finch explained the amount for last year was \$37,906.24 and this year is \$49,565.17 and explained what was brought in for 20-21 was \$494,818.18 and for 21-22 was \$663,351.69, this led into a discussion.
- Manager Dr. Moore said the online sales have positively affected the City of Rio Communities.
- Councilor Gutjahr said what is the process and when will we make a decision.
- Mayor Ramsell explained if we enacted it before July 31st, we can receive funds before July of 2023 but if it is after July 31<sup>st</sup> then we will see funds in September of 2023.
- Finance Officer Finch explained the process, and which would be submitting this with the final budget as well and continued the discussion.
- Municipal Clerk Adair asked how would this be on the next agenda.
- Finance Officer Finch said we would need to know if they want to see this in the final budget.
- Council continued with the discussion on how much to raise the mil levy to.
- Manager Dr. Moore stated his understanding of the procedures were voting for the increase at the time of the vote for resolution.
- Mayor Ramsell said what he is hearing is that everyone is in favor of the Mil levy increase and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Apodaca said giving a lot of thought and explained that when he was out campaigning, the residents he was able to talk to said they would be willing to pay for law enforcement, and then said he feels going for the maximum of 3.5% because if we under fund then we would have to come back in a short amount of time and ask for more money to fund more officers.

- Councilor Gutjahr is in agreement with Councilor Apodaca with all the reasoning. Then said sometimes it is better to ask now and not keep going back to the residents over and over again as well as having a plan they can understand.
- Councilor Apodaca said another thought he had was with inflation as well as everything is going up and doing so, we can plan for the future due to talks about 2023 being an inflationary year.
- Councilor Gordon said he could go with the 3.5 also and then said the evidence tech can be an officer and wouldn't need this position due to if the evidence tech is not there when the officers need them to be as well as training all the officers to do so would be better.
- Councilor Gutjahr asked Councilor Gordon if he was against an evidence tech and continued with the discussion.
- Councilor Gordon said the evidence tech is a bonus from my point of view, where I came from the officers were all trained to be evidence techs.
- Councilor Apodaca asked if the New Mexico Police Academy teach the officers about the evidence tech position.
- Councilor Winters said he would eliminate the 3.25 and does not think the 3.0 is not a good approach as well as cutting off the effectiveness of the officers and then said the 3.5 is the only workable one and continued the discussion.
- Mayor Ramsell said he agrees with the Councilors to go as well as it's a go one time and next year look into expanding and then said USDA will help fund police gear and equipment, but vehicles are not, but this is only if you apply for the grant and are approved.
- Councilor Apodaca said having a police department will help with economic development and bringing businesses in as well as the tax base for the city.
- Fire Chief said for himself, and the Assistant Chief are in the field everyday and in the past, we have had to have police assist us and without them we can not do critical care and due to the uptick in calls this would be very beneficial to have for the city.
- Councilor Apodaca said having this conversation in front of the community is a great thing, as well as letting them know if your vehicle would have been broken into how much would the insurance deductible be or if you had law enforcement covering your street would you even have to use that deductible.
- Councilor Gutjahr said remember 24-hour coverage will be difficult and will still have some break ins as well, but I think response time will be faster.
- Councilor Gordon asked about the wages for the evidence tech.
- Manager Dr. Moore said it would be comparable to the Deputy Clerks salary. He then stated this month they will be pursuing fire protection grant.

#### **Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) ranking**

- Manager Dr. Moore said he would like to recommend putting for number 1 making a design, planning for a police space improvement. He continues with keep moving down the list what was number 1 is number 4, number 2 stays, then number 3, and then your old number 1 turns into number 4.
- Councilor Gutjahr said when you look at public safety and since you are talking about funding within it you are talking about all the phases that are in the public safety categories.
- Municipal Clerk Adair explained this will be a brand-new number 1 and continued the discussion.
- Councilor Gutjahr asked if they are still pursuing other ways for the stormwater drainage.

- Manager Dr. Moore said yes.
- Mayor Ramsell said currently streetlight is number 8 and not to forget about the street light study done by HDR and due to inflation, he is not sure if there will be any funds left over.
- Councilor Winters said the parks you can't mess with too much because we do have to spend some money.
- Councilor Gordon said he feels storm water should move up because the bad sewers are affecting everyone and continued with the discussion.
- Mayor Ramsell said the current number placeholder 4 we have is for the fire department and looking at adding more trucks in the future but moving streetlights up and keeping stormwater at number 4 would be a great thing.
- Finance Officer Finch said to change fire equipment to say fire apparatus and began the discussion.
- Municipal Clerk Adair explained that if you would want to go for grants and other things besides the capital outlay, they would want it all in detail.
- Finance Officer Finch said if the legislators go off of the capital outlay request, then the verbiage is an important thing.
- Mayor Ramsell asked would it make sense to close out the current public safety equipment and open a new one, this continued the discussion.
- Fire Chief Tabet explained the reason to go after a new tender is due to the water capacity the current tender is holding is not enough and since we do what to expand our wildlife portion of the fire department this is beneficial.
- Councilor Gutjahr said she understands the needs for the Fire Department, but we need an overall plan for concerning other areas.
- Manager Dr. Moore said the ICIP is much broader set of funding sources than the capital outlay. He continued by saying they go through a state agency where if it's a federal grant pass through or state-funded grant they won't even look at it.
- Councilor Gutjahr said she does know that she gets constant calls for parks and streetlights, so we need to make sure all the needs are being met and continued with the discussion.
- Mayor Ramsell said do we want to put streetlights as number 5 or 6 and continued with the discussion.
- Manager Dr. Moore said the legislative appropriation that included land acquisition for parks, we are waiting for the grant agreement.
- Councilor Winters said we are looking at 3 types of priorities, the ICIP priorities, and doesn't think the priority isn't so important on the list just as long as it is on the list is all that matters.

### **Adjourn**

- The special workshop was adjourned at 7:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved:

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Joshua Ramsell,  
Mayor

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Margaret R. Gutjahr,  
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor

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Arthur Apodaca,  
Councilor

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Lawrence R. Gordon,  
Councilor

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Jimmie Winters,  
Councilor