



**City of Rio Communities Council Special Workshop**  
**City Council Chambers - 360 Rio Communities Blvd**  
**Rio Communities, NM 87002**  
**Thursday, January 13, 2022 6:00 PM**  
**Minutes**

*Please silence all electronic devices.*

**Call to Order**

- Mayor Joshua Ramsell called to order the special workshop at 6:06 pm.

**Attendees:**

- PRESENT: Mayor Joshua Ramsell, Mayor Pro tem Peggy Gutjahr, Councilor Arthur Apodaca, Councilor Lawrence Gordon, Councilor Jim Winters.
- Fire Chief Andrew Tabet, Scott Adair, Robert Chavez, Sheriff Dennis Vigil, Under Sheriff Jeff Noah.

Present: City Manager Dr. Martin Moore, Municipal Clerk Lisa Adair, Valencia County News-Bulletin Editor Clara Garcia, and Deputy Juan Sandoval.

**Crime/Public Safety Task Force**

- Manager Dr. Moore began a discussion on the Crime/Public Safety Task Force: Statement on paper is: The Statement of Purpose to Improve the Public Safety of Rio Communities.
- Manager Dr. Moore asked everyone to state what they felt the statement meant to them.
- Fire Chief Tabet explained being able to have more lite up crosswalks, sidewalks and streets, more police presence we have an officer who does a great job but this would help more.
- Mr. Adair said infrastructure of our City, sidewalks, traffic, lighting, as well as public awareness informing the community on how not to be a victim.
- Mr. Chavez said when he thinks of public safety he thinks of it as a whole network, such as taking care of eyesores, this will reduce crime related incidences.
- Sheriff Vigil said I agree with keeping the City clean, not working on this makes vagrants not wanting to be part of Rio Communities, community outreach is very important on safety matters a well but to have meetings with the community will make in impact.
- Under Sheriff Noah explained improving public safety, communication between the entities and the community.
- Councilor Winters said bus stops for children to catch the buses, well maintained roads during weather.
- Councilor Gordon said just like Sheriff Vigil said the outreach to the residents and businesses in the community.
- Mayor Ramsell said the involvement of the school's safety awareness and outside of academic education, I know the fire department has a lot of outreaches during the year for the community maybe more involvement about fire safety.
- Mr. Chavez said graffiti was a big deal, but targeted stuff goes along with change.
- Councilor Gutjahr explained we need to involve the churches and senior centers, find resources due to the amount of homelessness we have, plus we have resources for alcoholism but nothing for mental health issues and they need some safety net ideas as well.
- Councilor Apodaca said would speed limit signs be involved with City infrastructure as well.
- Manager Dr. Moore explained when we have a discussion, there is no wrong answer, we all pretty much know what we got and what we need to do. He then said what we are thinking of

doing is steps of having a plan in place and right now we are going to be focusing on, our heard problems and have them recorded, problems recorded becomes problems we can focus on.

- Councilor Apodaca stated theft to property, and break ins are a key priority and tie into law enforcement.
- Councilor Gutjahr said, drugs of all kinds, casual/hardcore of using/dealing maybe manufacturing is a problem.
- Councilor Apodaca stated to look at homelessness they are in abandoned private and public areas.
- Mayor Ramsell said squatters on properties and homes and its not just homeless, blight due to no upkeep of their properties.
- Mayor Ramsell explained people not obeying traffic laws or animal code violations (dogs), including ATV or ORV.
- Councilor Gordon explained underage operators of the ATV's and not wearing proper gear.
- Under Sheriff Noah said he does not think a law exists about how old but does state what you must wear to ride an ATV.
- Officer Sandoval said that they do have to take a class on ATV's for the Game and Fish Department.
- Councilor Winters said children and adults walking in streets.
- Manager Dr. Moore said in many cases this is out of necessity due to school or transportation.
- Officer Sandoval asked when would signs be put up for ATV's.
- Manager Dr. Moore said we would definitely look at that as solutions but will also look to see if we can move it to an act now instead of waiting.
- Mayor Ramsell stated a big one is property awareness, also open desert illegally dumping trash or using an ATV and gets hurt.
- Sheriff Vigil said people in the community, more resent, the vacancy housing is a safety issue, and homeowners need to check them periodically and due to squatters' rights can lose their property.
- Manager Dr. Moore asked do you think apathy amongst property owners or more lack of education.
- Sheriff Vigil said its more of a lack of education, them being aware of the situation might change things, especially the people who don't live in the neighborhood, then said no sidewalks to walk safely, with opening trails there can be eyes when walking trails and watching out for the criminals.
- Manager Dr. Moore asked is manpower a problem that hinders the ability to do more.
- Sheriff Vigil said you do have watch pages, but we don't monitor them as much and residents are not reporting to police when they should.
- Mayor Ramsell agreed and normally its property and they don't report it.
- Sheriff Vigil continued no matter how big or small of the crime always report to the police no matter what.
- Mr. Adair said you need to have some type of data to have as back up.
- Councilor Winter said it's a good idea to report due to not knowing if they will come back and take more of what you have and having documents to back it up always helps.
- Mr. Chavez said we do have a drug problem that causes the theft and the problems I see is problem properties, not necessarily junk, but unclear they don't understand that

neighborhoods have rules and maybe they've never been in a neighborhood before but it starts to move into this situation that people move in and here starts the illegal activity.

- Manager Dr. Moore said did I catch that correct, lack of education for effective safe public response.
- Officer Sandoval stated more lighting in resident's properties and people keeping properties clean can reduce criminal activities because they will take anything of value.
- Chief Tabet said would like to shift to roadways initially River road/47 intersection poorly lite and need to figure out a solution to reduce vehicle accidents.
- Officer Sandoval said when he gets the opportunity he sits in that area and gets complaints that he is not doing anything but doesn't know that he's doing reports and playing catch up.
- Mayor Ramsell said he understands and appreciates how much he does for the community and with call volumes high its amazing with how much you handle for us.
- Manager Dr. Moore said he will pull call statistics and says he thinks we will see more safety issues.
- Manager Dr. Moore said the next steps are to categorizing the problems at hand and start talking about solutions. Is this realistic with the resources we have, is it something other groups need to be brought in to take care of the problem, does probation/prole need it be brought in, do the state police need to be brought in.
- Manager Dr. Moore said he recommends a steering group and then come back and reevaluate the problems. With the state holders we show them what is needed and see what funding we need and have them get back to us. Think of the problems we can do right now as low hanging fruit, lets pick them and putting them in the basket and get to work on them right now and continued with the discussion.
- Manager Dr. Moore said this will be eventually will be an all-inclusive and at some point in time residents and business owners will be sitting here giving us feedback, if not then we will have to do some outreaching.
- Manager Dr. Moore said there are 2 things that he would like to have is number one: schedule the meetings for a core group to start moving forward, tentatively before the budget work is done.
- Manager Dr. Moore said the second would be: steering groups meeting hopefully weekly or every two weeks and continued the discussion.
- Councilor Gutjahr said Robert Chavez said he can't come in on Tuesday.
- Fire Chief Tabet said Tuesday evenings are best for him.
- Manager Dr. Moore said I'll talk to the mayor and go from there and continued with the discussion.
- Mayor Ramsell said he would like to thank everyone for being here, and for working on solutions for the community.
- Councilor Winters said recording problems in some cases is a solution, at least you know what can be done.
- Councilor Gutjahr said being in the community a long time and is key to lay everything out gives more of a visual of what can be done now.
- Councilor Apodaca said as the public see that we are trying to make a difference and if can address the things we can do now it will change everything.
- Councilor Gordon said the more we do what the citizens want us to do the more we build that trust and then they will start wanting to help our community.

- Manager Dr. Moore said how many of us have dealt with projects such as this one but not in the matter we are purposing.
- Sheriff Vigil said thanks for inviting us, think the start with the things that you can deal with now is a good idea.
- Manager Dr. Moore said just a word of caution when we hit the finish line it is just the beginning and is really building the culture here in Rio Communities.

### **Adjourn**

- The special workshop was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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

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

Approved:

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Joshua Ramsell,  
Mayor

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Margaret (Peggy) Gutjahr,  
Mayor Pro-tem/Councilor

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Arthur (Art) Apodaca,  
Councilor

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Lawrence R. Gordon,  
Councilor

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Jim Winters,  
Councilor