

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M., DONALD E. CARROLL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
March 14, 2023**

**SUSAN PAYNE, MAYOR
SHARON McDONALD, COMMISSIONER
JOSH RARDIN, COMMISSIONER
STEPHEN BURNETT, COMMISSIONER
NICHOLAS PAUL, COMMISSIONER**

**DUSTY WRIGHT, MAYOR PRO-TEM
KARL MELTON, COMMISSIONER
BRIAN CESAR, CITY MANAGER
ASHLEY SMITH, CITY ATTORNEY
RACHEL HUGHS, CITY CLERK**

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Payne called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Roll Call was taken by the City Clerk. Mayor Pro-Tem Wright was absent. City Clerk Hughs announced there was a quorum present. Invocation was given by Mayor Payne and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Sharon McDonald.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Paul moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion.
Motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Cesar made the following remarks:

1. He said he will not be here next week.

REMARKS AND INQUIRIES BY THE CITY COMMISSION

Commissioner Rardin made the following comments:

He said there was another accident by the stoplight at 1st and the Bypass on Friday afternoon. He asked City Manager Cesar if we finally got the letters out. City Manager Cesar said those are signed and out. The District Engineer of NMDOT for our area will come in at one of the next Commission Meetings, give a short presentation, and then be available for questions concerning that signal or lack thereof. Commissioner Rardin asked if we could get a traffic count at that intersection done before the District Engineer arrived. City Manager Cesar said we don't have the capability to do that, no. Commissioner Rardin asked if we could do one for the amount coming from 1st Street onto it. City Manager Cesar said he needed to check. Commissioner Rardin asked how we did not have the capability. City Manager Cesar asked if he was referring to across the Bypass, and Commissioner Rardin said yes. City Manager Cesar said there are four lanes and a median; we don't have that type of counter or equipment. Mayor Payne said it is encouraging that they are coming and answering questions. Commissioner Rardin said it is just blowing smoke and mirrors; we have them on the record saying they would put one in. How many people have to die before we put one in there?

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the minutes for the February 28, 2023, Regular Commission meeting. (Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)

2. Consider, and act upon, the adoption and final publication of Ordinance 1671 Case Z-2023-0001(A), a map amendment to change the zoning of the property located at 451 Michel St. from MH-2 Manufactured Housing Park to MH-1 Manufactured Housing Subdivision. (Stella Rael, City Planner) (Roll Call Vote Required)

3. Consider, and act upon, the adoption and final publication of Ordinance 1672 amending Chapter 32, Article 32-01 concerning the disposition of Real Property. (Ashley Smith, City Attorney) (Roll Call Vote Required)

4. Consider, and act upon the adoption and final publication of Ordinance 1673 amending Chapter 32, Article 32-02 concerning the disposition of Personal Property. (Ashley Smith, City Attorney) (Roll Call Vote Required)

5. Consider, and act upon, Resolution 2023-12 requesting written approval from the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance and Administration, State of NM for the revised budget numbers computed as of March 14, 2023. (Evelyn Huff, Finance Director) (Roll Call Vote Required)

6. Consider, and act upon, Resolution No. 2023-11 requesting approval of an application in the amount of \$600,000, and a match of \$30,000, to the New Mexico Department of Transportation, 2024 Transportation Project Fund, for repairs to the concrete box culvert located on 10th Street and Washington Avenue. (Nancy Beshaler, Public Works Director) (Roll Call Vote Required)

Commissioner Rardin removed item 3 from the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Burnett moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

Commissioner Melton seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

3. Consider, and act upon, the adoption and final publication of Ordinance 1672 amending Chapter 32, Article 32-01 concerning the disposition of Real Property. (Ashley Smith, City Attorney) (Roll Call Vote Required)

Commissioner Rardin said he voted no on this last time and wanted to be able to vote no this time.

Commissioner Paul moved to approve.

Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion carried with a vote of 5-1-0. Commissioner Rardin voted nay.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

7. Consider, and act upon, the question of whether or not the Alcohol Beverage Control Division should grant a Restaurant Liquor License with On-Premises Consumption to Rizo's Mexican Restaurant, located at 1480 N. White Sands Blvd. (Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)

City Clerk Hughs said Rizo's Mexican Restaurant is seeking a Restaurant Liquor License with On-Premises Consumption. The applicant meets the zoning requirements. The applicant is present if you have any questions.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve.
Commissioner Rardin seconded the motion.
Motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

8. Consider and act upon the presentation from Learn New Mexico, requesting support from the City Commission. (Brian Cesar, City Manager and Michelle Perry, Owner)

Michelle Perry explained the Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program. The award amount is between \$500,000 to \$2,000,000, with a required twenty percent match that will need to be applied to each activity within the proposal. Her recommended proposed goals include a focus on four sectors: Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and lastly, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. She said the grant could be used for an innovation center and elaborated on what activities the proposed Otero County Innovation Center may do. She listed nine potential partners. The Alamogordo Center of Commerce would be the applicant and asked that the City of Alamogordo be the matching partner.

Commissioner McDonald asked if this would come with a commitment for people participating in this program. Michelle Perry said correct; we would hope that we would serve as a training center. Many small groups must have a location to train. People inside and outside of Otero County would be opportunities for a revenue stream.

Commissioner Melton asked who would be operating the innovation center. Would that be the Chamber? Michelle Perry said yes. Commissioner Melton said if the City went along with this, they would be responsible for the match. So what happens after 2027 when that grant money runs out? Michelle Perry said the first thing would be to apply for more grants, so we would always keep that cycle going and use this opportunity as leverage for other opportunities. The second and more important thing is to generate revenue. The Center of Commerce operates as its own entity, it would continue in that type of model, but with the support of the City, it would continue to generate a larger capacity in these larger missions and efforts that would hopefully generate the amount of money anticipated and therefore sustain it beyond 2027. Commissioner Melton said the grant's award amount is a huge range; what determines that twenty percent? Michelle Perry said she recommends we apply for the full \$2,000,000, equating to a \$400,000 match. Commissioner Melton asked City Manager Cesar if we had that in our budget. City Manager Cesar said yes.

Mayor Payne asked how people would qualify for this training because you say it generates revenue. Michelle Perry said we would charge people. Part of our program would be to take an innovation center and put it together. We would stand up programs that we felt were of the most interest in supporting our economic footprint. Mayor Payne asked how they would pay for that. Michelle Perry said that organizations would come and pay for those trainings, and gave examples. Mayor Payne said it would be based on individual participation, but they would have to be part of an organization. Michelle Perry said they wouldn't have to be and gave examples.

Commissioner Melton asked if the location would be in Alamogordo or Otero County. Michelle Perry said anywhere in Otero County, but Alamogordo would be the preference. Commissioner Melton said

if we are going to do the match, that is pretty important. City Manager Cesar said it would have to be in Alamogordo for funding. Commissioner Melton asked if Michelle Perry would consider going to the County Commission and asking for a split. Michelle Perry said they could do that, but she is here to present on behalf of the Center of Commerce, and these are initial ideas.

Commissioner McDonald asked if this training center would compete with other training organizations throughout the State. Michelle Perry said the nation. Writing Federal grants is a highly competitive process, and that is why they are already behind the ball on this. The Center of Commerce is hoping to submit it on April 20th. Commissioner McDonald asked if this could be used for virtual training. Michelle Perry said absolutely; the possibilities are endless. We could be on the Metaverse or Zoom. The proposal itself is still developing, and we need a lot of input from stakeholders. Stop one is to see if the City would like to be a considerable stakeholder. If you do, you have a voice and can mold this as you see fit.

Commissioner Rardin asked if the \$2,000,000 maximum was yearly or for the whole period. Michelle Perry said it was for the whole period. He asked if we would be on the hook for \$400,000 for four years until 2027, and Michelle Perry said yes.

Mayor Payne said so you still need to apply. Michelle Perry said right. Mayor Payne asked if we were making a commitment tonight. City Manager Cesar said staff could help to process this application, but we need the authorization to do that. Tonight, the Commission is not committing \$400,000 or \$100,000 a year for the next four years. At a staff level, we would have to come to the Commission to obtain the approvals to expend those funds. So tonight, it is for the Commission to determine if they want staff to pursue this.

Commissioner Rardin said it says for the purchase or construction of an innovation center. Are you going to buy or build? Michelle Perry said the initial idea is to buy. Commissioner Rardin asked when we would know if we were on the hook for that money. Michelle Perry said the award would come prior to September. Since it is due in April, she guessed they would have the awards announced sometime in August. What happens is we get a letter from says you got this reward, and then we have a few weeks. The Program Director from the Department of Agriculture would contact the applicant and schedule the first meeting, and then we would go from there. You aren't on the hook until the ink is dry. Commissioner Rardin asked if Alamogordo would be the fiscal agent for this since it is federal money. Michelle Perry said the Center of Commerce would be the fiscal agent.

Commissioner McDonald said when you submit the grant, do you have to have some type of plan or development for the healthcare, social assistance, and technical services? Michelle Perry said no; we have to address certain job sectors. We can say that we will develop that with these fellow partners and gave examples. Then that would come within the actual grant development over the four years.

Commissioner Burnett asked how the training worked as far as individuals. Michelle Perry said they would probably offer classes. There would have to be some kind of structure like that.

Mayor Payne asked how many grants were awarded. Michelle Perry said at \$2,000,000, they would provide fifteen nationwide. Mayor Payne said it would be a tough one. Michelle Perry said yes.

Commissioner Rardin asked if Chamber would be in control of the expenditure. Michelle Perry said the eighty percent that the federal government gives. If you chose to match, the City would control its twenty percent. Commissioner Rardin asked if we would have any say or oversight. Michelle Perry said the twenty percent match would certainly be your say and oversight.

Commissioner McDonald said regarding the accommodations, arts, and healthcare; you outlined what will be a part of that program. So are we just agreeing to your stats and these proposed goals, or is there something else? Michelle Perry said it would develop over the next four weeks. Should you want to move forward together, we would want to join efforts to develop those proposed goals. We could do that electronically and through meetings. Commissioner McDonald said so these are just things you are looking at. Michelle Perry said those are just recommendations based on the generalized data we can observe.

Mayor Payne said it sounds like tonight we are just giving our blessing to have staff work with the Center of Commerce to move forward. We are not committing any money yet. We are saying we are interested and would entertain the idea. Michelle Perry said for clarity on the deadline, to submit it, we would need a letter of support stating that you would match the twenty percent should we be awarded this proposal. You would read the proposal before we submit it. You would say, "Should we be awarded this, we will match." That has to go in before the deadline on April 20th. City Manager Cesar said this is here tonight for your consideration. It would be like any other grant you all are familiar with. You don't have to accept the money; that would be during the award phase. Between now and submitting the grant, assuming it is awarded, that is the time we are putting together the agreements and everything you are asking about tonight. When the time comes to accept the award, you will have all the information, and those questions will have been answered. We will be bringing agreements to the Commission well prior. Mayor Payne said so we can make sure nothing is changed, right.

Commissioner Melton asked how long this program had been in existence. Michelle Perry said that the RISE project was published last year, but beyond that, she didn't know. This is the second year she has been aware of it. Commissioner Burnett asked if they had been in contact with any other communities that have been awarded. Michelle Perry said she had not, this has all come very quickly. Commissioner Burnett said he asked because he wanted to know how beneficial this had been towards those communities. Michelle Perry said a large webpage on the Department of Agriculture website is dedicated to this project. If you were so inclined, you could Google this title, and it will pop up with ample information. She said it was well established from what she could gather. She has written lots of federal grants, and you just don't see many of them that say construction and purchase of property. That is what really sparked the interest of the Center of Commerce.

Mayor Payne said the poverty numbers were spot on. We have to remember Otero County is higher than the State average for poverty. She said she liked the idea of being able to do something to change that. Michelle Perry said that education is a step forward to changing that.

Commissioner Rardin said if we agree to do this, will we be on the hook for the full \$400,000 in the first year, or is it something we can spread out? Michelle Perry said as we spend down on each activity, it will be twenty percent on this or that activity so that it will be spelled out. We will do the four years, and you will see how that breaks down in the budget. Commissioner Rardin said if we went ahead and budgeted \$100,000 a year, we would be okay? Michelle Perry said it could potentially work out, but here is the thing. We still have to develop that in the coming weeks, so it that could look many different ways. We may have zero in the first year because it is all planning, then it hits doubly in the second year. It just depends on how the planning comes together. City Manager Cesar said from the City's side, we would set aside the full \$400,000 to be placed in the project. That way, we can carry it forward from fiscal year to fiscal year. We would budget it totally upfront.

Commissioner Rardin said he was in the construction trade and noticed those trades weren't on any of these. There is a huge demand in the industry. Are you going to focus on any of that? Michelle Perry said why not, anything is possible at this point. The beautiful thing about a project like this is that the innovation center can look at a lot of different ways through the years. We are looking at these sectors

right now with the first run out of the gate, but who knows what sectors we will be looking at next and what that would mean for our economy? We can be very innovative. Mayor Payne said it was a good idea to focus on construction eventually.

Commissioner Rardin asked City Manager Cesar if he had their direction or if they needed to make a motion. City Manager Cesar said he thought there was a consensus where you would like staff to move forward and work to apply for the grant, correct? Commissioner Rardin asked if everyone was on board with that. Commissioner McDonald said yes. Mayor Payne said she thought so. She asked the other Commissioners if they were okay with her signing a letter. Commissioner Melton asked if that was committing the money. City Manager Cesar said if the grant is awarded, and the federal money is accepted. Commissioner Rardin said then we would have an item come forward that we vote on. Mayor Payne said that Michelle Perry said we have to include a letter while she is applying for the grant. City Manager Cesar said that is standard for any grant, and that is why we came before Commission. Mayor Payne asked if the Commission understood that and were okay with her signing a letter. Commissioner Melton said that the letter was just our intention. He said he is comfortable with staff moving forward but is not comfortable with the price tag and hoped the County could chip in. He said he thought we could move ahead because we had a consensus there. Mayor Payne said we are all on the same page then, so we don't need to vote on anything. City Manager Cesar said by giving that direction, you have acted upon it.

The Commission gave staff the direction to move forward with the letter of support.

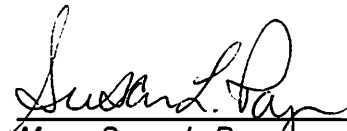
Commissioner McDonald moved to adjourn at 7:23 p.m.

Commissioner Rardin seconded the motion.

Motion carried with a vote of 6-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT





Mayor Susan L. Payne



City Clerk Rachel Hughes

(Prepared by Dylan Aleshire, Deputy City Clerk)

Approved at the Regular Meeting held on March 28, 2023.