

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M., DONALD E. CARROLL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
March 26, 2024**

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

**MARK TAPLEY, COMMISSIONER
WARREN ROBINSON, COMMISSIONER
RICK HOLDEN, 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 Deputy City Clerk. Deputy City Clerk Aleshire announced there was a quorum present. The Invocation was given by Pastor Joe Bryant of Grace Baptist Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Tapley.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald moved to approve the agenda.
Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion.
Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Swearing in of the Alamogordo Fire Department Staff: Chief Jerry Ramirez, Deputy Chief Liam Lashley, Fire Inspector Michael Lucas, Lt. Thomas Ontiveros, Firefighters Gage Lawhorn, Kylen Mathias, Marcus Murray, Billie Byun (Moore), Juan Flores, Liam Arnold, Seth Murillo and Jacob Lawrence. (David Overstreet, Municipal Court Judge)

Judge Overstreet swore in Chief Jerry Ramirez, Deputy Chief Liam Lashley, Fire Inspector Michael Lucas, Lt. Thomas Ontiveros, Firefighters Gage Lawhorn, Kylen Mathias, Marcus Murray, Billie Byun (Moore), Juan Flores, Liam Arnold, Seth Murillo and Jacob Lawrence.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Scott Frederick said that a year and a half ago, the City supported us with an Honor Flight return from El Paso. Older veterans from the Vietnam War and other wars did not have the best welcome home. Honor Flight tries to fix that. The nonprofit Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico and West Texas partnered with our nonprofit, the US Veterans Motorcycle Club. Together, we support local members here and escort them back from El Paso. So, we get to ride on motorcycles and are led by a truck. The Base will provide a van. We hope to get an escort from either the Sheriff's Department or the Alamogordo Police Department back into town. We have already worked with Patron's Hall to have a small reception there at no cost. The goal is to bring veterans home through their hometowns and welcome them back. Many of them are seventy to eighty years old at this point. We are picking them up on Saturday, April 27, 2024, at El Paso, and then at 1900 hours, we will be back at New York Avenue at Patron's Hall. They go out at about 2 AM on Thursday, spend all day Friday in Washington DC, and then fly back to El Paso. The El Paso reception is impressive, with thousands of people.

Mayor Payne said the last Honor Flight was exciting, and our community came together with military partners from Holloman. We need that community support. If you can make it, please come and join us.

Ms. Diana Saxon said she was a resident of Alamogordo, and she would like to address an issue. I looked at the city ordinances regarding business licensing. How can you allow a business with no state or city license to advertise a business name or telephone number on their company trucks and online? The city has consumer complaints of hundreds of thousands of dollars about this company. My loss is \$30,000. The City received a short version of complaints filed with the state of 10 pages. The State is beginning a criminal investigation because of this false advertising, which the City is aware of. The City needs to amend the ordinances to allow a similar action. Advertising is the intent to sell.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Holden made the following remarks:

1. I visited with Senator Burt, who had questions about Bonito Lake. We are still a long way from the lake being open to the public as a camping area, but we are near agreeing with the State Fish and Game to get fish there. We have to determine whether or not the lake will support fish. We may potentially be able to get people fishing there in the summer. The State will provide the signage and game wardens. We would probably need an employee out there to keep the trash picked up. It will likely be two years until we are back into camping.
2. We are getting closer to the pickleball courts. The lights and nets are up. However, as long as the weather stays below fifty degrees, they cannot put the surface down. We are probably looking at somewhere near the end of April or May. When it is ready, we will have some kind of grand opening.
3. The big pool at the REC Center will open somewhere around Memorial Day.
4. We will soon share additional information about the Natatorium regarding the different structures asked about in a prior meeting. We have been spending a lot of time with bond counsel and looking at financing options.

REMARKS AND INQUIRIES BY THE CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Payne made the following comments:

A few of us attended a Housing Summit last Thursday. One of the first speakers said a special committee was being put together to address the housing shortage. My impression from that meeting was that they only included low-income people in defining the housing shortage. I believe that missed the mark. The Mortgage Finance Authority was also there, and they gave us statistics I found questionable. I think affordable housing needs to be redefined. People still think affordable housing is \$400-\$500 monthly for rent, but those days are long gone.

On Thursday, I will present a proclamation for Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day. There will be a celebration at the Space Center.

At our next meeting on April 9th, remember to wear purple. I will be presenting a proclamation for the Month of the Military Child.

Commissioner Robinson made the following comments:

The Mayor of Ruidoso said they had fires last year where many people lost their housing, but the community came together. They were living in trailers and hotels. Ruidoso worked on the housing problem with the governor, their county, and the other agencies in the state. The Mayor of Ruidoso's message to the community was that there is a housing shortage everywhere, but if we work together,

many effective decisions can be made. They are slowly but surely solving many of the housing problems there. It was inspiring. Mayor Payne said it was inspiring, but the Village of Ruidoso is in a private-public partnership and bringing in modular homes for rent for people with income. Those homes are not available to people without jobs or with low incomes, so a certain income requirement must be met. They were renting them out for \$1,200 a month. Is that affordable housing? It may meet some needs, but not all of them.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Approve the minutes for the Regular Commission meeting on March 12, 2024. (Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)

3. Consider, and act upon, Resolution 2024-20 establishing a six-month moratorium on new off-premise billboards for the City of Alamogordo. (Rick Holden, City Manager). (Roll Call Vote Required)

Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote was taken.

Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

NEW BUSINESS

4. Consider, and act upon, approval of the Annual Reports from City Boards and Committees for Fiscal Year 2024. (Rachel Hughs, City Clerk and Stephanie Hernandez, Assistant City Manager)

Deputy City Clerk Aleshire said the staff liaisons for each board and committee were present tonight and they would present their annual written reports.

Executive Assistant Tony Gonzalez said he was the staff liaison for the Airport Advisory Board and Airport Zoning Board. The Airport Zoning Board has not met in some time, at least for the last two years, yet we need to keep that Board. The Airport Advisory Board meets on the first Thursday of every month. The Airport Advisory Board makes recommendations and advice about the airport's daily operations. The given report details what went on in the year.

City Planner Stella Rael said she was the staff liaison for the Alamogordo Disability Council. This Council was created by resolution in 1988. Its purpose is to advise regarding the review of city projects and ADA compliance. It consists of five members with a term of two years. No more than two members may live outside City limits. Currently, there are three members. I became the liaison in 2022, and there were four members at that time. We had a meeting in May 2022, but there were no meetings in June, July, or August due to a lack of participation. There have been no meetings since May 2022, so I have no activities for this annual report. Mayor Payne said she remembered that everybody wanted the Alamogordo Disability Council previously. There was a lot of discussion. I guess they found that they did not have as much authority as they thought, and that is why there is a lack of participation. Do we have to keep this? City Manager Holden said he did not think we do. Mayor Payne said if we are not doing anything and no one is participating, I do not think this is necessary. Commissioner Rardin said we could have staff look at these boards and committees and, within the next couple of meetings, tell us if we have to have them or not. If we do not have to have them, we can suspend or disband them. City Manager Holden said we could do that. We could give the Commission a list. Advisory committees may sometimes not understand that they are in an advisory capacity. They do not establish hours, budgets, or any of those things. At the staff level, we need to do some training

and share that with them; we need to help those boards and committees because we value their time and effort. We want to maximize the opportunities for those committees so the Commission can make decisions based on their advice. The biggest advisory committee of all is City staff. We have well-trained, qualified people. Mayor Payne said her biggest concern is that boards and committees need to understand they are advisory.

Librarian Missy Garcia said she was the staff liaison for the Alamogordo Public Library Board. The Board has seven members, met seven times within the last eight months, and the included report lists topics we hit.

Executive Assistant Sven Sears said he was the staff liaison for the Cemetery Board and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The Cemetery Board has been suspended for a few years, and I have nothing to report on that other than it is to have three members. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board advises the Commission and Parks and Recreation Department on matters related to parks and open spaces within the city. It has five members appointed by the Mayor, and two additional members appointed by Alamogordo Public Schools. We are full and have been so since March 2023.

Grants Coordinator Debbie Osborne said she was the staff liaison for the Community Development Advisory Committee. The Committee was originally formed to identify funding needs for the City and to provide citizen participation in the CDBG grant program. The Committee was to help determine funding request priorities, attend public hearings to discuss funding needs and assist in door-to-door surveys to determine neighborhood income and funding eligibility. There are supposed to be seven members on the committee. The last meeting was held in 2013. When we were applying for our current CDBG grant, I called the Department of Finance Administration and the Southern New Mexico Economic Development to see if this committee was necessary. They said we were the only applicant with this committee, and they do not mandate it. However, they do mandate public hearings, which we have. There is really no need for the Committee anymore. City Manager Holden said he wholeheartedly agrees. There are sufficient public hearings to receive input. Both staff and the Commission have a role in helping determine and pick those projects. I do not think we need this committee. Mayor Payne said she agreed.

Administrative Assistant Britney Ybarra said she was the staff liaison for the Mayor's Committee on Aging. The Committee meets once a month, and members typically work on larger items that would require the City Commission's approval. The last thing they were working on was a senior respite at the Senior Center, which is really not feasible. My recommendation would be to disband the Committee. Mayor Payne said that one could be added to the disband list.

Mayor Payne said next is the Mayor's Youth Advisory Board. This is not an active board, and there is nothing to report with that. Deputy City Clerk Aleshire said that was correct. Commissioner Rardin said he remembered the last time a group became active at the high school, which is why we kept this, but I guess they never did. Mayor Payne said that never panned out. Add it to the list of things to review. City Manager Holden said we will review these from a staff perspective and give you a list of recommendations.

Senior Volunteer Program Specialist Renee Reynolds said she was the staff liaison for the Senior Volunteer Programs Advisory Council. Grants for senior companions and foster grandparents mandate the Council. We meet quarterly and have a full board with eight members, plus one of the foster grandparents is a liaison between them.

Commissioner Burnett moved to approve.

Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald seconded the motion.

Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

5. Adjourn into Executive Closed Session in compliance with 10-15-1(H)(7) NMSA (as amended) to discuss Pending Litigation: Downtown Ventures. (Roll Call Vote Required)

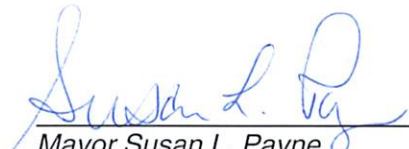
Commissioner Burnett moved to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner Tapley seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote was taken.

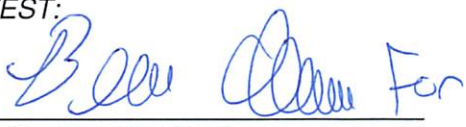
Motion carried with a vote of 7-0-0.

ADJOURNMENT



Mayor Susan L. Payne

ATTEST:



City Clerk Rachel Hughs

(Prepared by Dylan Aleshire, Deputy City Clerk)

Approved at the Regular Meeting held on April 9, 2024.