CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 PM, DONALD E. CARROLL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
July 8, 2025

SUSAN PAYNE, MAYOR
SHARON MCDONALD, MAYOR PRO-TEM
CRYSTAL GUTHRIE, COMMISSIONER
STEPHEN BURNETT, COMMISSIONER
WARREN ROBINSON, COMMISSIONER
JOSHUA RARDIN, COMMISSIONER
MARK TAPLEY, COMMISSIONER
STEPHANIE HERNANDEZ, ACTING CITY MANAGER
DARREL MORI, CITY ATTORNEY
RACHEL HUGHS, CITY CLERK

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Payne called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM. Roll Call was taken by the Deputy City Clerk. Deputy City Clerk Aleshire announced there was a quorum present.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Invocation was given by Mayor Payne, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Tapley.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Acting City Manager Hernandez said that Alamogordo MainStreet had requested that the presentation be pulled from the Agenda.

Commissioner Robinson moved to approve the Agenda as amended.
Commissioner Tapley seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation to recap FY25 and explain work to be done in FY26 by Alamogordo MainStreet. ***(Nolan Ojeda, Executive Director of Alamogordo MainStreet)***

The item was pulled from the Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Acting City Manager Hernandez made the following remarks:
1. There is major flooding in Ruidoso. Our Fire Department is on standby to help with evacuations if needed. The Civic Center is also on standby.
2. July 18th will be the Grand Opening for the Fun Center. The Ribbon Cutting will be at 5 PM on that day, and then it will be open to the public.

REMARKS AND INQUIRIES BY THE CITY COMMISSION

Commissioner Rardin said he wanted to note the passing of Larry D. Riordan, our former Mayor from 1989 to 1990. Acting City Manager Hernandez said we would send flowers or a card to the family.

Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald said she participated in the 4th of July Parade and wanted to acknowledge the people who helped her with the float or flyers. There are many things going on in District 5, like Alamogordo MainStreet getting everything together to open up in October, the Dudley Community Center and Park reaching the final stages, the F-4 Project, the Sacramento Family Park, sidewalks being put in from 2nd to 8th Street, and lastly, opening the Inkwell Building. The Alamogordo District 5 Citywide Cleanup will be on July 19th from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM. People being signed up for cleanup must be elderly and in need of services.

Commissioner Burnett said French Brothers gave us a presentation about setbacks. What happened with that? Acting City Manager Hernandez said it was approved. Commissioner Burnett said there are weeds on the sidewalks of the Scenic Extension.

Mayor Payne said there have been twenty-two changes of command this season at Holloman Air Force Base.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Approve the minutes for the Joint City & County Commission meeting on June 23, 2025, and the Regular Commission Meeting on June 24, 2025. *(Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)*

3. Consider, and act upon, approval of the Annual Reports from City Boards and Committees for Fiscal Year 2025. *(Rachel Hughs, City Clerk and Stephanie Hernandez, Acting City Manager)*

4. Consider and act upon contract #26-624-4000-0014 between the City of Alamogordo and the State of New Mexico Aging and Long-Term services Department for the FY26 Senior Companion, Care Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs Grants. Senior Companion Program $49,532.50; Care Companion Program $27,000.00; Foster Grandparent Program $69,525.00. *(Magdalena Morales, ASC Manager and Veronica Ortega, Community Services Director)*

5. Consider, and act upon, the approval of an agreement with the New Mexico Economic Development District, Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging for the Nutrition Service Incentive Program (NSIP). The total amount budgeted is $25,107.00. *(Magdalena Morales, ASC Manager, and Veronica Ortega, Community Services Director)*

6. Consider, and act upon, grant funding from the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging FY26 contract for Direct Purchase of Services for senior programs. The total amount budgeted is $547,563.60. (*Magdalena Morales, ASC Manager and Veronica Ortega, Community Services Director*)

7. Consider and act upon the award of RFP 2025-005 On-Call Well and Pump Services to Statewide Drilling, Inc. *(David Nunnelley, Utilities Director)*

8. Consider, and act upon, Resolution 2025-20 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 June 30, 2025. *(Evelyn Huff, Finance Director)* (Roll Call Vote Required)

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

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

None.

NEW BUSINESS

9. Consider, and act upon, an appeal by Lindmark for two billboard signs located at 821 US Hwy 70 W and 200 US Hwy 54. *(Erik Fortenberry, Acting City Planner, James Spence, Regional President; Angie Duncan, Regional Vice President)*

Acting City Planner Fortenberry said a correction needs to be made. This item says 200 US Highway 54, but it should be 2200 US Highway 54. This is an appeal from Lindmark for two double-decker billboard signs that were submitted to us and denied in 2024 by Acting City Manager Hernandez.

Mr. Spence said we provided the information in this item for you as background. The moratorium that was in place expired on September 26, 2024. We placed an application for the billboards in two locations on September 27, 2024.

We were denied, with correspondence stating that the City was in the process of establishing a new moratorium. That new moratorium went into place on October 8, 2024. The locations we applied for were properly zoned, and the ordinance allows billboards, yet we were denied for a moratorium that was not in place.

Commissioner Rardin asked if the moratorium was currently in place or if it had expired. Acting City Manager Hernandez said she believed former City Planner Rael brought it back in March, so there is one currently for six months. I believe it expires in September. Acting City Planner Fortenberry has the sign ordinance on his desk for review. Some changes needed to be made, and we are working on the final version of the ordinance.

Mayor Payne asked where these two locations were. Acting City Planner Fortenberry said if you review the map, one is across the street from the new Allsup's on Highway 70, and the other is in front of the Stay Cool Storage Unit on Highway 54.

Acting City Manager Hernandez said I was not Acting City Manager when this was denied; former City Manager Holden was still here at that time. The reason this was denied was that back when the double-decker billboard sign went up on Indian Wells, many citizens called both us and the Commission and had complaints. Lindmark's application did come in when the moratorium was expired, and it was denied based on beautification. City Attorney Mori said it was denied solely on the backlash we received from the public. As Mr. Spence mentioned, the moratorium was lifted, so they were fully right to submit their permit and request. As it was denied administratively, we wanted to let them present their case to the Commission and go this appeal route. That way, the elected body makes the decision. Mayor Payne said if billboards are out of town, I do not really have an issue with them. Commissioner Rardin said he felt these were more on the outskirts of town, so it is not as big a deal as the one on Indian Wells. These are not really blocking anything. There may be issues with our ordinances and the Airport, though. How tall are these? Mr. Spence said that if there is ever an issue with the Airport, we have to get FAA clearance for that. Commissioner Rardin said the sign on US Highway 54 may be a problem with our runway, as you would be in line with how the planes take off. Mr. Spence said that was something we always check in our due diligence process as we move into construction. Mayor Payne asked if that sign would be a double-decker sign. Mr. Spence said yes. With airports, you would be surprised. They may have us put a light on top, but we do the study and everything needed. We followed the City's ordinances, and I can tell you there was a huge demand for the billboard on Indian Wells. Mayor Payne said that one obstructs views of the mountains, and it may have received less backlash if it were just a single billboard. Speaking for myself, I do not like it. Acting City Manager Hernandez said to address Commissioner Rardin, our Delta consultant with the Airport, and said that the signs, heights, and everything were okay. Commissioner Rardin asked if any other ordinances were being violated. Acting City Manager Hernandez said no. Mayor Payne asked if the moratorium would still be in place if this were approved. Acting City Manager Hernandez said yes.

Mr. Spence said Lindmark could help draft an ordinance in an advisory role. Mayor Payne said that back around 2018, we tried to draft an ordinance. Another billboard company had said we were silencing their free speech on White Sands Boulevard. So that is why we have the moratorium and why it gets renewed every six months. That we could legally do. Commissioner Rardin said this goes back further. Another ordinance was drafted back in 2013, and that was very difficult. Everyone's idea of what looks good is different, and we could not come to a general consensus. Just driving down White Sands Boulevard, I see that a lot of it is road signs. Two other double-deckers were built at that time, one by Bluestone and the other by Walmart, which riled everybody up.

Commissioner Burnett moved to approve the appeal at both locations.
Commissioner Robinson seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.

10. Consider, and act upon, Resolution No. 2025-19, adopting an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) and identifying the top five (5) recommended capital outlay projects for Fiscal Years 2027-2031. *(Evelyn Huff, Finance Director)* (Roll Call Vote Required)

Finance Director Huff said the ICIP is something we bring before the Commission every year. We ask the departments to submit their projects to us, and from there, we determine the top five capital outlay projects to submit to the State. These need to be submitted by Friday, July 11, 2025, and these are the ones submitted to the State legislature in the session they have at the beginning of next year. The top five projects for this year are:

1. Bonito Lake Park Fishing Access and Day Use Re-Opening
2. Plan, Design, Repair, Construct, and Purchase Items to Maintain and Beautify the Exterior of City Buildings
3. Procurement of Police Department Vehicles & Equipment
4. Plan, Design, and Construct Zoo Perimeter Fencing, Runs, and Gates as Needed
5. Dry Canyon Arroyo Improvements Phase 1

Finance Director Huff continued that the largest of these is the Dry Canyon Arroyo Improvements Phase 1, which is at $3,000,000 and is fully designed. The Zoo Project is at $1,000,000, and pieces of that project have been done, but additional fencing is needed. We request additional vehicles for the Police Department every year. The City Buildings project would cover, at the least, the Library, the Senior Center, and the Rec Center, which all need exterior repairs. The Bonito Lake Fishing access is just to improve access up there. There are a substantial number of people who fish up there, and we want to continue improving for safety purposes.

Commissioner Rardin said regarding the State legislators, is there an amount, typically between $500,000 and $750,000, that they would like to see projects at? Finance Director Huff said that is where they were a couple of years ago. With the influx of oil and gas money, we have been seeing larger rewards. He asked if those were closer to $1,000,000. She said yes, and we have been putting larger items on there. Sometimes we do not get fully funded for those items. For example, we had a $1,000,000 item on there around two years ago, and we received $695,000. It allowed us to start doing a phase of it, and we can put the next phase on the next ICIP. He said in the past, with larger projects, you could not save up the money. She said yes, that is now a rule. Whatever project you ask for, that phase has to be completed with the amount you are asking for. You cannot ask three years in a row and then complete one whole project. You have to be able to complete with the money you have. He asked what the Dry Canyon Arroyo Improvements Phase 1 project would entail. Is that just the lower portion of the channel off Canal Street? She said yes, it is to get that fully shaped and concrete. He said so from Canal Street to Fairgrounds Road. That is well-needed. Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald asked how much more was needed for the Dry Canyon Arroyo project. It is a lot more than just $3,000,000. Finance Director Huff said that the project was designed in three phases. Phase 2 is estimated at $3,800,000, and Phase 3 is estimated at $2,500,000. If the phases get funded, we will know more about how much they cost when we get through the bid phase. Those numbers may have to be adjusted. Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald said she had heard that the State legislature wanted to fund anything related to water. This is a water project. Finance Director Huff said it is a drainage project. Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald said that there was still water. Could we not ask for this next year? Finance Director Huff said we could if Phase 1 is approved this year. We could turn around and ask for Phase 2 next year. We could also ask for federal funds if there are federal infrastructure funds. We could say we have State funding for this phase. Could we get federal funding for the next one? If it is on the ICIP list, there are options. We are in the process of revamping our capital process and our ICIP list. It will look vastly different when we bring it before the Commission next year. We can then treat it as a capital improvement plan instead of a one-time do-it of the legislature, which will open more funding for us. Commissioner Rardin asked if any water projects, like the Parallel Pipeline, were considered to be put on the list. Finance Director Huff said that projects were discussed. We are working on closing a $12,000,000 Water Trust Board Loan to do the next section of pipe. Acting City Manager Hernandez said we are calling the Parallel Pipeline project the Well Transmission Line project. Finance Director Huff said yes, that project has had many names, and we are trying to standardize it. Commissioner Rardin asked how many miles of pipeline $12,000,000 would pay for. Would it get us all the way there? Finance Director Huff said no. Utilities Director Nunnelley said five miles. Acting City Manager Hernandez said there are eleven miles after that. Mayor Payne asked what the Well Transmission Line project would do once completed. Finance Director Huff said it would move water wherever we chose to have the Reverse Osmosis Plant, also known as the Desalination Plant. Acting City Manager Hernandez said we are closing on the $12,000,000 loan and are in design for the next phase. We are working on it, but this is a lot of money, so it is in phases. Mayor Payne asked if we knew how much money in total. Acting City Manager Hernandez said probably $50,000,000. Finance Director Huff said at least $25,000,000 based on current construction. Eventually, a decision will have to be made. Do we want to leave the current reverse osmosis technology at the plant built at Lavelle Road, or do we want to relocate it somewhere that makes more sense in terms of water movement? That is a conversation to be had another day with Utilities Director Nunnelley.

Commissioner Robinson moved to approve.
Commissioner Guthrie seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

11. Adjourn into Executive Closed Session in compliance with 10-15-1(H)(7)NMSA (as amended) to discuss: Current Litigation Nelson v. City of Alamogordo. *(Kimberly Martinez and Jared Najjar, Virtue & Najjar PC: Darrell Mori, City Attorney)*

Commissioner Burnett moved to adjourn into Executive Session at 7:14 PM.
Mayor Pro-Tem McDonald seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.

ADJOURNMENT

Susan Payne
Mayor Susan Payne

ATTEST:

Rachel Hughs
City Clerk Rachel Hughs

(Prepared by Dylan Aleshire, Deputy Clerk)
Approved at the Regular Meeting held on July 22, 2025.

CITY OF ALAMOGORDO N.M. SEAL