



MICHAEL NEALEIGH
Mayor

ROBERT WILSON
Mayor Pro Tem

VILLAGE OF JEMEZ SPRINGS Municipal Office

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JUDY BOYD
Trustee
JAMES MCCUE
Trustee
MANOLITO SANCHEZ
Trustee

Jemez Springs Village Council Meeting Minutes Tuesday, February 25, 2025. 6:00 PM Governing Body Conference Room

1. Call to Order

Mayor Mike Nealeigh called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

- a) **Council Members Present:** Mayor Mike Nealeigh, Trustee Judy Boyd, Trustee Robert Wilson, Trustee James McCue (via telephone), and Trustee Manolito Sanchez.
- b) **Council Members Absent:** None.
- c) **Also in Attendance:** Interim Clerk Heather Gutierrez, Finance Director Consultant Jim Cox, Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton, Librarian Janet Phillips, IT Consultant Fred Simmank, Police Chief Joe Moreno, Library Board Chair Barb Stone and community members Talia Michele, Olympia Holliday, and Cliff Elliott.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Nealeigh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Nealeigh explained a change to the agenda approval process, following recommendations from the New Mexico Municipal League and Robert's Rules of Order. Instead of requesting a formal motion and second, the Mayor will now simply ask for objections or additions to the agenda. If none are raised, the agenda will be considered approved. He then asked for objections or additions, and hearing none, the agenda was approved as presented.

4. Approval of Minutes

The Council reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Trustee Robert Wilson pointed out a typo in the Mayor's Report section. Trustee Judy Boyd clarified that under Approval of Minutes the word "moved" was omitted. Trustee Wilson moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Trustee Sanchez.. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Public Input**

Mayor Nealeigh opened the floor for public comment on items not on the agenda. No community members wished to speak.

6. **Court Report**

Mayor Nealeigh presented the January Court Report to the Council pointing out that the report is for informational purposes only.

7. **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Nealeigh presented his report, which included updates on the following:

- a) **Code Enforcement:** No code enforcement actions were taken in the past month.
- b) **Administration**
 - i. **General**
 - ii. **AmeriGas Propane Tanks on Village Property:** Mayor Nealeigh stated that there had been no communication from Amerigas, and the Village continues to receive propane service from Canon Via, as previously arranged. The Village will not take further action until Amerigas provides proof of ownership of the tanks. Mayor Nealeigh indicated that this item would likely be removed from future agendas until there are further developments.
 - iii. **Open Meetings Act (OMA)/Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) Claim:** There were no new updates on outstanding OMA or IPRA claims. The Village sent a final response to Stephen Anderson's IPRA request indicating that all available information had been provided and the Village considers the matter closed. No further communication has been received from Mr. Anderson.

Interim Clerk Heather Gutierrez distributed documents related to the Open Meetings Act. Mayor Nealeigh emphasized that everyone involved in Village government should be familiar with these rules and suggested discussing them at a future meeting.
 - iv. **Project Updates**
 1. **Modular Building at Community Park:** Mayor Nealeigh confirmed that both the sewer and water connections to the building were now complete. He revisited a previously reported issue with the sewer connection, explaining that a pre-existing in-line turn-off valve, which was installed in the line but served no practical purpose, was removed. New turn-off valves were installed before and after the connection to the

existing line in order to provide greater flexibility and control over the water system. Mayor Nealeigh praised the contractor, TLC, for completing the corrective work promptly and well. He confirmed that the invoice for this work was processed.

He also confirmed that 16 fluorescent lighting fixtures were replaced with energy-efficient LED lighting.

Trustee Robert Wilson asked if the newly installed shut-off valves would help pinpoint the precise location of a long-term leak. Mayor Nealeigh explained that the new valve arrangement made such testing possible and committed to initiating a work order with the Public Works Director to investigate the leak.

- 2. Dark Sky Lighting:** Mayor Nealeigh stated that a recent field survey conducted with community member Roger Sweet revealed that 31 fixtures require replacement, rather than the 29 originally estimated. The survey also assessed which existing street light arms need replacement due to damage or incompatibility with new fixtures.

Mayor Nealeigh has obtained all seven certifications required by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), making the Village eligible to receive the allocated funding. Notices of Obligation (NOOs) will be submitted on February 26 as the first formal step in securing expenditure approval.

The Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative (JMEC) has submitted a bid to install the fixtures. The bid amount falls below the threshold that requires competitive bidding.

- 3. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station at Jemez Springs Plaza:** Mayor Nealeigh introduced a potential new project to install Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at Jemez Springs Plaza. He explained that a contractor working with NMDOT contacted him about installing high-speed EV chargers along a designated transportation corridor after another entity declined participation.

Under the proposed terms, NMDOT would cover the full cost of two "fast chargers" from ChargePoint, including installation at a Village-determined location. The site requirements include proximity to an existing electrical line and internet access. NMDOT would also cover grid connection and service activation costs. However, the Village would be responsible for ongoing operational costs:

1. Internet service and transaction processing fees (due to the point-of-sale nature of the chargers).

2. Mandatory five-year service contracts for each of the two chargers.

These ongoing costs total **\$38,100** for the initial five-year period, paid upfront. Mayor Nealeigh confirmed that the agreement would be structured as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with NMDOT. Mayor Nealeigh had requested a revenue projection from ChargePoint based on the Village's average daily traffic count (5,364 vehicles) but had not yet received it. He emphasized that this was currently an informational item only. If logistics and revenue projections were favorable, it could be brought back as a formal action item.

Trustee James McCue expressed support for the idea. Trustee Wilson asked about potential locations and whether there were other chargers in the corridor. Mayor Nealeigh replied that locations had not been determined, though the contractor had suggested a location near the bathhouse. He also stated that the chargers at the Jemez Mountain Co-op were being removed. Fred Simmank suggested locating the station near the main office building to simplify internet access. Mayor Nealeigh noted that the space in front of the governing body and conference room at the bath house is valuable and emphasized the importance of choosing a location that wouldn't interfere with existing parking.

c) **Personnel Matters**

- i. **Job Listings for Library Director and Clerk/Finance Director Positions:** Mayor Nealeigh reported that job listings for Library Director and Clerk/Finance Director positions are being widely circulated, with seven and three applications received respectively. Applicants can apply online through the Village website. He also informed the Council that Alicia Weiss has resigned as Clerk Aide effective February 28.
- ii. **Search Committees Formed:** Search committees have been formed for both positions. They include:
 - **Clerk/Finance Director Search Committee:** Mayor Nealeigh, Trustee Wilson, Resident John Merhege, Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton, resident Talia Michele, and Finance Director Consultant Jim Cox.
 - **Library Director Search Committee:** Mayor Nealeigh, Trustee Sanchez, Library Board Members Barb Stone and Kelly Primm, Friends of the Library President Suzanne Swetnam, Resident Judith Isaacs, IT Consultant Fred Simmank, and a possible expert from a neighboring library yet to be named..

d) **Community Relations**

- i. **Meeting with the New Pueblo of Jemez Administration:** Mayor Nealeigh met with the new Pueblo of Jemez administration, including Governor George Shendo, Jr., 1st Lt. Governor Carnell Chosa, 2nd. Lt. Governor Matthew Gachupin, Jr., and Tribal Administrator Vinbcent Toya. They discussed the possibility of the Village rescinding its federal appeal on the matter of the Pueblo owned land in Jemez Springs being placed in Trust status if a mutually satisfactory MOU could be reached. The Pueblo administration stated that they will seek authority from the Tribal Council to negotiate a possible MOU.
 - ii. **Meeting with USFS District Ranger Jeremy Golston:** Mayor Nealeigh and Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton met with USFS District Ranger Golston regarding access to USFS lands for the upcoming sewer line rehabilitation project. They also explored potential collaboration on USFS signage on Village property and fire fuel reduction assistance, including possible participation in the Village's spring clean, trim, and chip events.
- e) **Boards & Commissions**
- i. **Library Board:** Minutes from the Library Board's January 14 meeting were provided to the Council. The Library Board approved changes to the conference room use policy.
 - ii. **Lodger's Tax Board:** Board Chair James McCue reported on the February 13 meeting where they had discussed revamping the outdated Jemez Springs tourism website and allocated \$1,000 to support Fred Simmank's efforts to update it. They emphasized that a functional website is a priority before pursuing further advertising. No other actions were taken, and no future meeting is scheduled. Chair McCue noted a potential new resident member under consideration and plans to discuss this with Mayor Nealeigh.
 - iii. **Planning & Zoning Commission:** The Council received minutes from the Planning & Zoning Commission's January 23 meeting.
- f) **Department Reports**
- i. **Bath House:** The Council received the January Bath House report for review.
 - ii. **Fire Department - Incident Report:** Mayor Nealeigh noted that there was no written Fire Department report and invited Trustee Sanchez to provide a verbal update as Assistant Fire Chief. Trustee Sanchez reported that 11 members attended the February 1st meeting. In January, the department responded to one fire call and two EMS calls. Training focused on Hazardous Materials, covering identification of Hazmat symbols, potential hazards, and materials commonly found in the valley.

Dr. Greg Mertz reported that he has inspected all Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and found several with expired batteries and pads. He

repaired several AEDs immediately, and replacement pads and batteries are now available at the station. Some AEDs still require installation of new components.

Trustee Sanchez reported on security system improvements following a recent pipe freezing incident at the Valles Caldera offices. The department identified gaps in their current systems, which include separate video surveillance, break-in alarm, and smoke alarm systems that aren't interconnected. The department has ordered equipment to add flood monitors and link all systems to central monitoring. Once installed, the system will provide 24/7 monitoring with alerts to police or fire departments as needed, plus smartphone access for both chiefs.

Mayor Nealeigh then addressed a serious incident that occurred on February 12th when a possible structure fire was reported on Mooney Boulevard. Sandoval County Fire and Rescue dispatched seven personnel from La Cueva with two engines and two water tenders. The full-time crew from Highway 4 and Zia Pueblo responded with an engine, water tenders, and an off-duty battalion chief. Jemez Pueblo EMS also responded.

Mayor Nealeigh emphasized that the Jemez Springs Volunteer Fire Department did not respond, despite being contacted by dispatch three times.

A Sandoval County Sheriff's Deputy arrived at 2:01 AM and determined it was a false alarm.

Trustee Boyd asked for further details about the lack of response, and Mayor Nealeigh explained that he met with Fire Chief Francois and Assistant Fire Chief Sanchez, who described the situation as "fundamentally a communication failure." The Mayor had subsequently written a position paper on the matter, which he shared with the Trustees.

Mayor Nealeigh stressed the potential severity of the situation, noting that what turned out to be a false alarm could have been a genuine structure fire, and the 20-30 minutes for other units to respond could have been "crucial" to the safety of property and people. He emphasized the need to address the situation dispassionately and quickly, stating they should not wait for another incident as the next one "might be substantially worse." He indicated there would "probably be an action item on the next agenda" regarding steps to ensure proper emergency response.

Dr. Greg Mertz, a community resident and Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) member, expressed concerns shared by other VFD members about the lack of response to the event. He noted that the initial "I Am Responding" app text notification contained only the abbreviation "SF" (structure fire), which was widely misunderstood within the VFD. Dr. Mertz said he contacted Sandoval

County Dispatch following the incident to request a list of standard abbreviations but was told none existed.

Dr. Mertz also highlighted a discrepancy in the information provided, stating that the internal dispatch record included a resident's report of visible flames, but he noted that this detail was omitted from the text message sent to VFD volunteers. Instead, the notification they received only mentioned a possible cat inside the residence. Dr. Mertz stated that he discussed this issue with the dispatch supervisor, who acknowledged the concern but noted that resolving the issue could take time.

Mayor Nealeigh emphasized that there would be extensive communication with the volunteer fire department, Sandoval County, and dispatch to resolve these issues.

IT Consultant Simmank asked about the cause of the false alarm, but Mayor Nealeigh stated that that information was not available.

Trustee Boyd asked if other responding agencies received the same information as the Jemez Springs VFD. Trustee Sanchez clarified that while all agencies are dispatched from the same center, others receive audible (verbal/radio) dispatches, while the VFD receives only non-verbal notifications due to coverage limitations.

Mayor Nealeigh concluded by noting that there is substantial room for questions, investigation, and, hopefully, solutions. He emphasized, "These are problems to be solved, not mysteries to be endured."

- iii. **Information Technology:** IT Consultant Fred Simmank reported on progress upgrading the conference room to function as an emergency response center. A 65-inch television was installed and that research is underway to identify optimal camera systems, with a focus on higher-end models to improve functionality in emergency response situations. He noted that the room is available to all personnel and is currently in use for some meetings.
- iv. **Library:** Library Director Janet. Phillips stated that her focus is on preparing the library for a smooth transition to a new director, and thanked Finance Director Jim Cox and Mayor Nealeigh for their assistance. She also reported on several upcoming author talks, including Christie Green on March 8th, Tom Swetnam on April 5th, and Kate Niles on April 12th..
- v. **Police Department:** Mayor Nealeigh introduced the Police Department Report, noting the written report was available and Police Chief Joe Moreno was present.

Chief Moreno reported he has been updating the Village Police Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) since January 16th. He is working with Lexipol, a third-party organization hired by the New Mexico Municipal League,

to help develop these procedures. He outlined his proposed approval process, where he would provide marked copies of policy updates to the Mayor for review and approval, which would then be brought before the Council for review and approval. He noted there will be approximately 99 policies of varying lengths.

Mayor Nealeigh explained that this would be a staggered process with updates brought forth as action items in upcoming meetings. He asked if the Trustees were comfortable with the proposed review and approval process. All expressed support for the approach.

Mayor Nealeigh then clarified that the approval process could not be a formal action item at the current meeting because it was not on the agenda. He directed Chief Moreno to proceed with the outlined process, bringing the SOP updates forward as action items in future meetings.

- vi. **Public Works:** The Public Works report was submitted to the Council. No questions or comments were raised.
- vii. **Streets:** Mayor Nealeigh summerized ongoing street projects.

Lucero Road Adjustments: The Mayor reported that the gravel to create an off-street parking space for 28 Lucero will be delivered on February 28 and pointed out that it was not paid from Village funds. The new parking space will allow the resident to park off the street and Lucero to function as a throughway.

Shoulder Encroachment (Highway 4): NMDOT has completed shoulder pulling (scraping) on the south side of Highway 4 within the Village. Mayor Nealeigh said he will follow up with NMDOT about similar work promised for Fred Simmank's property and the American Legion's property, as these portions have not yet been addressed.

Meeting with NMDOT Traffic Engineer: Mayor Nealeigh, Street Superintendent Scott Johnson, and Police Chief Moreno met with NMDOT Traffic Engineer Jayson Grover to discuss Village traffic concerns.

Road Safety Audit and Access Management Plan: Mr. Grover suggested that a Road Safety Audit and an Access Management Plan would be more beneficial than additional signage, noting there might already be excessive signage causing "sign blindness."

Signage Considerations: Mr. Grover recommended reviewing existing signage to determine which signs might need to be removed to reduce sign overload.

Speed Corridor: Mr. Grover also suggested establishing a well-defined 25 mph speed corridor between the existing flashing caution signs.

New Signage Purchases: The Village has purchased new signage, including a yield sign to replace the stop sign at Luciano and Mooney, speed limit signs, and

a street sign for Armenta Road. The removed stop sign at Luciano will be relocated to Armenta Road. Chevrons are being replaced on the North Mooney Bridge, and 15-mph speed limit signs at the North Mooney Bridge and Luciano are also being replaced.

Bridge Funding Applications: Mayor Nealeigh updated the Council on bridge funding applications, with **\$1 million** sought for the North Bridge study and **\$2.5 million** requested for the South Mooney Bridge replacement. The applications will be submitted by February 28, with funding decisions expected by the end of summer.

- viii. **Wastewater:** Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton reported a sanitary sewer overflow that occurred earlier in the day. The overflow occurred at the same location as a previous incident. Pro Pipe contractors were on-site and cleared the line. Approximately 20-30 gallons of wastewater entered the river, but none reached the hot springs pools. Required reports will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and the New Mexico Environmental Department. Ms. Fenton noted that the ongoing scoping and cleaning project by Pro-Pipe began on February 24 and has been extended from the initial estimate of eight weeks to approximately 12 weeks.

In addition, she reported that six exemptions (rate caps) applications were approved, to date.

8. **Trustee's Report**

- a) Trustee Boyd had nothing to report.
- b) Trustee McCue had nothing to report. Mayor Nealeigh acknowledged his presence by phone..
- c) Trustee Sanchez had nothing to report.
- d) Trustee Wilson had nothing to report.

9. **Finance Board**

Trustee Boyd moved to convene the Finance Board, seconded by Trustee Wilson. The motion passed unanimously and the Finance Board convened at 7:08 p.m..

- a) **Interim Clerk's Report:** Mayor Nealeigh presented Interim Clerk Heather Gutierrez's written report. There were no questions.
- b) **Finance Director Report:** Finance Director Consultant Jim Cox reported on both prior and current fiscal years.
 - i. **Prior Fiscal Year(s) –2022, 2023, 2024:** Mr. Cox reported **\$59,974.02** remains outstanding, owed to the City of Albuquerque and the New Mexico Self-Insurers

Fund. All other past-due invoices have been paid. Mr. Cox anticipates incoming cash flow will cover most of the **\$32,426** owed to the Self-Insurers Fund. Mr. Cox also provided an update on the FY22 audit, stating that the balance sheets will be delivered to the auditors within the week. The goal for the FY22 audit is to achieve a “modified opinion,” focusing solely on the balance sheet. For FY23, the objective is to conduct a full audit (including both balance sheets and income statements), with the aim of securing a “clean opinion” for FY24.

- ii. **Current Fiscal Year –2025:** Mr. Cox plans to apply an anticipated **\$25,000** GRO Fund reimbursement toward outstanding obligations. The DFA has approved the second-quarter financial report with no issues. Resident Talia Michele requested a debt comparison from a year ago to now. Mayor Nealeigh reported the operating deficit had decreased from approximately **\$368,000** in April of last year to approximately **\$59,000** currently.

Mr. Cox reported strong GRT revenues and noted the **\$90,000** Small Cities Assistance payment received in February has significantly improved the Village's cash flow. Department budget meetings for FY26 have begun, with the initial state submission due June 1st.

A motion was made by Trustee Sanchez and seconded by Trustee Boyd to adjourn the Finance Board. The motion passed and the Finance Board adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

10. **Old Business**

No old business appeared on the agenda.

11. **New Business**

- a) **Consideration of EV charger installation by NMDOT:** Mayor Nealeigh explained this item required additional information before action could be taken.
- b) **Ordinance 203 Amending Ordinance 200 to increase the amount of OSG 002 funding:** Trustee Wilson moved to adopt Ordinance 203 amending Ordinance 200, seconded by Trustee Boyd. Mayor Nealeigh confirmed the ordinance met all notification requirements, having been advertised for two weeks in the local newspaper and posted on the Village website. He explained the ordinance increases New Mexico Environment Department Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant funding from **\$230,370** to **\$1,032,636**, adding **\$802,266** under the same terms as the original agreement. The Council unanimously approved Ordinance 203 by roll call vote.
- c) **Ordinance 204 Amending the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Sections 130-5 and 130-28:** Trustee Wilson moved to adopt Ordinance 204, seconded by Trustee Sanchez. Mayor Nealeigh summarized the key amendments: adding a definition for "Tiny House" to Section 130-5 as a dwelling of 400 square feet or less, excluding lofts, and clarifying that tiny houses on permanent chassis with axles are considered recreational vehicles. The ordinance also amends Section 130-28 to include tiny houses in permit

requirements and clarifies the Planning and Zoning Commission's role in application reviews. Mayor Nealeigh confirmed the ordinance met all notification requirements, having been advertised for two weeks in the local newspaper and posted on the Village website. The Council unanimously approved Ordinance 204 by roll call vote.

12. **Adjourn**

Mayor Nealeigh stated that all advertised business had been conducted, and, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, no further business could be discussed. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

DRAFT