

VALENCIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS (VALEO)
QUARTERLY MEETING
City of Belen-Council Chambers
11/19/24
MINUTES

1. Call to Order

City of Belen Mayor Robert Noblin called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

2. Introduction City of Belen Mayor Robert Noblin invited all present to introduce themselves.

The following individuals were present:

1. Robert Noblin, Mayor, Belen
2. Frank Ortega, City Councilor, Belen
3. Rudy M. Espinoza, City Councilor, Belen
4. Steven Holdman, City Councilor, Belen
5. Tracy Armijo, City Councilor, Belen
6. Joseph Bizzell, Valencia County
7. Dante Berry, Valencia County
8. Gerard Saiz, Valencia County
9. Jeremias Silva, Valencia County
10. Jonathan Aragon, Valencia County
11. Gregory Martin, Village Administrator, Los Lunas
12. Charles Griego, Mayor Village of Los Lunas
13. Erin Callahan, Village of Los Lunas
14. Art Apodaca, City Councilor, Rio Communities
15. Lawrence R. Gordon, City Councilor, Rio Communities
16. Marty Moore, City Manager, Rio Communities
17. Matthew Marquez, Rio Communities
18. Summer Ludwig, City of Belen Grants Coordinator

3. Review of Past Minutes

City of Belen Mayor Robert Noblin referenced copies of minutes from the last VALEO meeting on **August 20, 2024**, which are posted on the Village of Los Lunas.

4. New Business

• Homelessness in Valencia County

Mayor Robert Noblin gave a short introduction regarding homelessness throughout our communities. What are the local elected officials doing about this? Social media seems to indicate that we as elected officials are not doing anything. He then introduced

Jeremias Silva, Valencia County Grants Director who has a very important role and the initiative that he was working on.

Jeremias Silva spoke of what has taken place; in December of 2022 he was asked to conduct a round table and met quarterly in which various departments within the county. The discussion revolved had this issue has impacted the communities. At the last meeting there were some limitations of what we can and cannot do within law enforcement. Ultimately the round table did stop in 2024 due to conflicts in scheduling and workloads.

The overall takeaway is to have a unified approach from each entity. Los Lunas Erin Callahan and Summer Ludwig continued to have meetings. In April of 2024, Congressional funding submitted to conduct a landscape analysis on the homelessness issue that could help with a comprehensive approach. There were some groups who could help to find out more information and so on to focus on the needs. The County was notified in August by Senator Lujan's office and was selected to be considered for funding; however, the Appropriations committee did not recommend funding for this project. This study would have a cost of \$180K.

Last week there was a Capital Outlay training, and the top priority is for affordable housing, and healthcare and human services. So, with hopes this will include homelessness. This issue is almost out of control. In Albuquerque they do have resources, and it is still not curving the issues. Here in Valencia County, we have limited resources. So, the question is, do we want to do everything we can, so we do not end up like our neighbors in the North. We here in Valencia County need a unified approach. The ICIP is a critical avenue to consider that this is an area that should be addressed.

The Department of Public Safety did put him in connection with a new agency that is knowledgeable in this area to utilize them in assisting us with a process in a manner that could result in real dollars to curve this issue. If the consensus in this group submits for funding it is very important that this gets on the ICIP from each municipality. We need to remain in a dialog with MRGCD, as they play a key role in this situation. Keep our local representatives aware of the goals that we want to achieve. He thanked everyone for their time and introduced Summer and Erin to hear their process.

Summer Ludwig spoke regarding some of the work she has done. She has worked with a Community Advocacy team regarding homelessness. From this meeting we formed a resource list now. We also went to Las Cruces to see their resources to learn how they did it. This was a very positive experience.

Erin Callahan spoke to add a few more things; she wanted to really highlight the work that the Community Advocacy did. If we do a study, there is some other potential funding as well. Many communities may not know where to go to. The State Finance

Authority has a program with possible potential funding to do this study. The Local Government planning fund has more potential to get funding. If we can at least get a \$100K as a county funding. There are a few things we are talking about: the homelessness issue we may need immediate help and other cases where there is housing that is needed. Getting people into shelters works but getting families into housing is harder to do. We should all pass an affordable housing ordinance in place so when funding comes through it won't interfere with the anti-donation issue. We hope to have some workshops going forward.

Jeremias Silva spoke a bit about how kids need further education regarding the homelessness issue so we can instill core values as they grow up. What are the strategic things we can move forward with to help them with their mindset. There was further discussion from some of the councilors regarding children and homelessness. More discussion regarding the funding and the importance of getting this in place to try and address all the issues at hand with homelessness, drug addiction, etc.

5. Future VALEO Meeting Schedule

February 18, 2025 – Bosque Farms

May 20, 2025 - Valencia County

August 19, 2025 – Los Lunas

November 18, 2025 – Belen

6. Adjourned 7:07pm

Minutes prepared by Dorothy Flores, CMC, City of Belen