

***Valencia Association of Local Elected Officials  
(VALEO)***

***Tuesday September 15, 2020 6:00 P.M.***

***Via Microsoft Teams and Facebook Live ( <https://www.facebook.com/riocommunities>)  
City of Rio Communities Hosting***

**1. Call to Order**

City of Rio Communities Mayor Pro tem Peggy Gutjahr called to order the meeting at 6:23 pm.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilor Winters led the pledge of the Allegiance.

**3. Introductions**

Belen Mayor Jerah Cordova, Valencia County Sheriff Deputy Juan Sandoval, Ralph Mims Los Lunas Economic Development Manager, Los Lunas Administrator Gregory Martin, Rio Communities Councilor Jim Winters, Rio Communities Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Gutjahr, Rio Communities Councilor Bill Brown, Rio Communities Municipal Clerk Lisa Adair, Valencia County Human Resource Director Orland Montoya, Valencia County Commissioners Tom Mraz, Gerard Saiz and Charles Eaton, Valencia County Projects and Grants Jeremias Silva, Valencia County Nancy Gonzales with Human Development, Los Lunas Pat Jaramillo and Los Lunas Erin Callahan.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

No minutes to approve

**5. New Business**

**a. CARES ACT update – 15 minutes**

Jeremias Silva said Valencia County did receive \$579,000 in CARES Act money for businesses within Valencia County. He explained the process:

- Application will be submitted with all small business requests and business redesign
- County will review applications and enter into agreements
- Businesses will be required to submit a reimbursement request to the County based upon eligible expenses,
- County would then ask for disbursement request from DFA

Jeremias Silva continued to explain the disbursement of grant monies and that the County will be presenting this to the County commission tomorrow. Nancy Gonzalez would be giving further details.

**i. Valencia County- Nancy Gonzales and Jeremias Silva**

Nancy Gonzales stated that to inform the public, she will send the News Bulletin an ad, use social media, and send out a flyer in the mail. This flyer will include a phone number, and a hard copy will be available at the County courthouse.

Mayor Cordova asked if Belen businesses would be able to apply for funds.

Orlando Montoya stated Belen would be administrating their funds.



Mayor Cordova said to be clear the other Municipalities chose to have funds distributed by the County and said it would be best if the County did distribute funds to the whole County.

**ii. Los Lunas**

Administrator Martin said Los Lunas had applied for funds themselves. It was understood that the County would not include the Village of Los Lunas. In their application Erin Callahan or Ralph Mims will explain how we are administering the funds.

Ralph Mims explained the criteria to receive the funds that Los Lunas received from the CARES Act.

Erin Callahan explained the difficult process of setting funding levels. The program appears to be well received. She found one thing missing from the State's application, a question regarding the business amount requested. It was added to the application for the Village of Los Lunas. She suggested to add a section to explain the expenses.

**iii. Other municipalities**

Mayor Pro Tem Gutjahr asked the Mayor from Belen if they have already applied. Mayor Cordova said that they have applied. The processes that the County and Los Lunas are following are going to be the same for Belen. We intend to release it as soon as we are provided training for the appropriate processes. Our goals are to support businesses that were shut down the longest and, provide support for continuing costs with businesses that are going to be opened. We plan on capping it at \$5,000 as we have 600-800 businesses to support.

Administrator Martin said the Village is fine running the grant program. It's currently unknown how to distribute the money per guidelines. He agrees that when the initial wave of applications come in and there is somehow money left over and there is a useful way to be redistributed, we are willing to cooperate that way. The collective interest should be helping as many businesses as possible.

Nancy Gonzales agrees with Administrator Martin and Mayor Cordova that we don't want to leave anything on the table that could help a business in need. They do not have a huge staff to review the applications so we will have to see what happens with the first wave of applications and maybe we will have to re-evaluate if there is anything left over. We will be taking some direction from the Commission.

Mayor Cordova said it looks like we will have 3 kinds of different application processes within the County and we might get applications for businesses outside of our cities. We need to be in communication to keep each other informed about those interested businesses.

**b. ATVs and the Bosque /River – 35 minutes**

**i. VC Sheriff – Denise Vigil**



Deputy Sandoval explained that the Sheriff 's department has been conducting operations all along the Rio Grande Bosque and will continue to have them to crack down on ATVs and UTVs. We are trying to tow some ATVs, but officers are not allowed to pursue ATVs. I have stopped some in the City and have given warnings. We are asking for signs to be put up on paved areas.

Mayor Pro Tem Gutjahr asked what the restrictions are.

Deputy Sandoval said there is some restrictions on ATVs, one is 16 years of age and younger require the use of helmets. Another is that they are not to be on the streets because they are not street legal with normal tires and blinkers. He explained that there are Statutes. He gives out citations and will tow the ATV if it is a repeated offense. We will be conducting more operations on the weekend. He will be changing his hours and going out in the evenings.

Mayor Cordova said the City limits does not include a lot of bosque, so they don't get a lot of complaints in town. We do see them on the roads sometimes. We see them in the rural parts of town. They do have enforcement and are trying to enforce, but the ATVs do speed out of the area and you cannot pursue them. If we do see them in town and do catch them, we cite them. He explained the complaints that do come in are from in town and not near the bosque or on the ditch banks.

Pat Jaramillo with Los Lunas open space explained what these laws are: they can be ridden on public roadways if the County and Cities within the County have passed the New Mexico State law into their ordinances. The State law has a minimum, but you can further restrict the law by making them have blinkers and mirrors. But no one in the County has gone through the process to make it legal. It is only allowed in the areas that have passed New Mexico State law into their ordinances. NMDOT does not allow riding on a State Highway. The biggest problem we have in the county is there are no public areas for them to ride so there is no reason for these things to be on public roadways. There is an exception for farming, but they do have to have proof and under 16 needs a helmet and eye protection.

Deputy Sandoval said he noticed on River Road that they keep breaking down a fence to get down there we have to keep telling them.

Mr. Jaramillo said as long as everyone is on board, enforcing the law is eventually going to wear them down and they start to understand they cannot be on the roadways and private property.

Jason Duran, Park Director said he thinks it is key to work with the police departments. If there was an area that we can come together on and create a riding area that helps keep them get off the street and out of the bosque. If there was a riding area, then when ATVs are stopped they can be educated that there is a place to ride.

Mr. Martin asked if there is an ideal size of land.

Mr. Duran said looking at about 200 acres. We have looked at some areas on the east side of the County, and if we can come together and purchase some land we can set up different trails, from beginner trails to advance trails. We have ideas on where it can be and what it can be.

Deputy Sandoval said these are good ideas, is there any way to have different sites because some of the people do not have ways of moving the ATVs to different places and began a discussion.



Mr. Duran said the hardest part is getting the land and there are a ton of grants for infrastructure, but we have to have the land first.

Mayor Pro Tem Gutjahr said we have had conversations about the land in the past and if we could work together, we would appreciate having something for people to do in the area.

Deputy Sandoval said he tries to educate riders on safety issues and tries to make them understand.

Councilor Brown said one of the concerns we have had for a long time is the ATVs on the bosque. Also, other problems are people meeting on the dry bed on the Rio Grande. There were deaths while they were having picnics down there with cars and trucks. Access to the riverbed needs to be tightened up to be denied to cars.

**ii. Los Lunas Parks and Rangers – See discussion above**

**iii. Others**

Commissioner Mraz said he would like a county wide parks and recreation department for the whole county to have something in their neighborhoods. We want to do a series of pocket parks starting with county owned property. We could have some shade structures and a few amenities for about \$15,000 per pocket park. We want to put an RV park in. We would like to have these parks legal to ride and explained his proposal and how the county could work together.

Mayor Pro Tem Gutjahr agreed that it is a struggle. Having parks is a struggle and working together would be the best way to make it happen. Having information for all over the County is very helpful so that we are not reinventing the wheel.

Mr. Duran said he is looking at moving forward with any type of partnership.

Mr. Martin definably agrees that quality of life initiatives are needed throughout the county, and we are willing to help out where we can. We are certainly interested in making sure opportunities are throughout the County. One of the big things we heard is the need for an aquatic center and maybe we could do that as a partnership opportunity as well.

**6. Next Meetings: November 17, 2020 (Los Lunas)**

**7. Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 7:28 pm.