

## **Regular Meeting Minutes–November 20, 2024**

The Mayor and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Tularosa met in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 6:00 P. M. in the Court Conference Room of the Public Safety Facility located at 609 St. Francis Drive, Tularosa, New Mexico.

**Present:** Mayor Deborah Cooksey  
Trustee Patrick Garcia  
Trustee Robert Sainz  
Trustee Manuel Brusuelas  
Trustee Mark Garwood

Also present was Rebekah Bryant Village Clerk  
Attorney Jeff Rhodes-Absent

At 6:00 P. M. Mayor Deborah Cooksey called the meeting to order asking that all rise and join her in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Salute to the Flag of the State of New Mexico.

**1.** Trustee Garcia made a motion accept the agenda, Trustee Garwood seconded the motion. All members voted aye; motion carried.

**2.** Unscheduled Correspondence and public comments.

Chris Rupp-Wanting to give an update on the Christmas Festival and stated that everything is still going well. So far there has been a good turnout for vendors, so far about 20 have said they would be coming out and he is expecting 20 more. Business owners on Granado St. have been advised about what they are doing regarding the festival on Granado St. He stated that everything is slowly coming together and lots of local vendors will be in attendance.

Joan Price-Stated that she is willing to give her time in water research and educational outreach to form a Rio Tularosa River Commission. It would be an advisory committee with one village representative, one ditch corporation representative and an experienced mediator. They could put out an informational newsletter and give advice. She will give more detailed information on the agenda at the next meeting.

James Vepley-Recognized Chief Candelaria for all his help during the fires. He also wanted to recognize the board and especially the mayor for letting the Chief help out Mescalero day and night evacuate homes, look for people that were missing, helped respond to calls.

**3.** Deborah Cooksey, Mayor asked for approval of Angel Voorbach as Utility Supervisor at a pay rate of \$22.00hr. Trustee Sainz made a motion, Trustee Brusuelas seconded the motion. All members vote Aye; motion carried.

**4.** Deborah Cooksey, Mayor asked for approval of Jonathan Salazar as Assistant Supervisor at a pay rate of \$19.50hr. Trustee Garcia made a motion, Trustee Garwood seconded the motion. All members voted Aye; motion carried.

**5.** Anna Fresquez, Senior Center Director asked for approval of Rueben Contreras as a part-time SEP Driver at a pay rate of \$12.00hr. Trustee Garcia made a motion, Trustee Brusuelas seconded the motion. All members voted Aye; motion carried.

**6.** Rebekah Bryant, Village Clerk asked for closure of all village offices on November 29, 2024, and December 26, 2024, leave will be taken by employees. Trustee Sainz made a motion, Trustee Garcia seconded the motion. All members voted Aye; motion carried.

**7.** Rebekah Bryant, Village Clerk requested approval of Resolution #2024-2025-8 Participation in Que Linda Program Administered by the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Grant amount is \$200,000 and is with the purpose of conducting a permanent and continuous program to control and remove litter. Trustee Garwood made a motion, Trustee Brusuelas seconded the motion. All members voted Aye; motion carried.

Roll call: Brusuelas-Aye, Garcia-Aye, Garwood-Aye, Sainz-Aye

**8.** Stephanie Dubois, Individual asked about tarps for the playground equipment. Stephanie stated that she is concerned with the playground equipment getting too hot for the kids in the summer and was wanting to see if the village can look into getting a grant to acquire the tarps. Discussion only no decision made.

**9.** Chris Rupp, Planning and Zoning asked for approval for a building site permit for a new structure at lot 13 Ambercrombie Lane for Andrew Perea. Rebekah Bryant, Village Clerk, swore Chris Rupp in stating he will tell the truth about any details regarding planning and zoning. Trustee Garcia made a motion, Trustee Sainz seconded the motion. All member voted Aye; motion carried.

**10.** Eric Holland, Individual from Renew Health asked to discuss drug addiction and alcohol behavior. He stated that they help out with drug addiction and medicated solutions that actually help prevent people from wanting to do drugs or getting back on drugs. He stated that they are working with bridge programs with the hospital, the jail systems from both counties. He also wanted to ask the community what they can do to help with support and any sponsorship they may need. He just wants people to know that they are here for them and there is some sort of resolution.

**11.** Deborah Cooksey, Mayor wanted to give the residents an update on the villages water situation regarding the project done by the Tularosa Community Ditch Corp. The mayor stated that it is scary right now and she doesn't even know how to describe it. She said that they sent a letter to the village dated October 8, 2024, stating that they were going to do some work at the intake, and they wanted us to remove our EPA fencing that is required for us to have in order to be in compliance. Also, they wanted us to take our locks off and put their own locks on and the mayordomo was going to run the creek and that Tularosa didn't have the right to run it because we as a village do not have water rights. She also stated that she and Trustee Garcia wanted to have a meeting with the Ditch Corp to try and work these things out because the Ditch Corp. did not want an open meeting for obvious reasons. They agreed to that, and the village was willing to let them do their work and work with them regarding having the water off for a few days. She and Trustee Garcia waited on the day of the meeting and nobody from the Ditch Corporation showed up to the meeting. Instead, they were cutting our locks and replacing them with their own locks and locking our water plant operator out of the intake water. They turned the water off for three days which we were going to allow, but they made the situation hostile and have taken over the water. The mayor stated that the village has received a letter from the EPA stating that the Ditch Corporation did not have authority to cut our locks or take down the fence. She also stated that they have contacted the FBI, the core of Army Engineers, so everyone has been contacted that needs to know what is going on. She also stated that the Ditch Corp sent a letter back stating that the water belongs to the Ditch Corp and they are going to drop a meter and start charging the village for water because they want full control of the water. This is why she wanted to inform the community about what is going on because this is their water.

**12.** Old Business: Dave Shields of Bohannon Huston gave some updates on projects active in the village. He stated that as far as this water situation that the village is about two years away from having a supplemental ground water source to supplement the surface water we now have. The project that we have going on right now is the Montezuma well that produces about 400 gallons per minute so they will rehab that well and run it up to the tank site and treat it at the tank site

and fill the tanks with ground water. Right now we have about 4 days of water in our tanks if they cut our water off but if there was a fire or something that would shorten that time. So, the village is diligently pursuing these projects so that we have a redundant water supply and we are not just depending on Tulie Creek and we will have ground water as well. This project is about two years away and is in the works and will take a little while to get there. As far as water rights, all the documents that he has seen from the judge's decree state that the village has first rights to the water. The wastewater treatment plant is underway with the headworks to be done by Morrow Enterprises with a start date of 11/4/2024 they are in the process of ordering equipment but will actually be in site in March 2025.

**13.** New Business: Trustee Sainz stated that he was not aware of the Veterans Day Assembly at the Veterans Park and would have attended if he had known as he was aware of the one at the high school.

**13.** Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.

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Deborah Cooksey, Mayor

ATTEST: (seal)

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Rebekah Bryant, Village Clerk