



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 June 24, 2025, 6:00 PM Governing Body Conference Room

1. Call to Order

Mayor Nealeigh called the meeting to order 6:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor Michael Nealeigh, Trustees: Judy Boyd, James McCue, Manolito Sanchez and Robert Wilson (by telephone)

Also in Attendance: Interim Clerk Heather Gutierrez, IT Consultant Fred Simmank, Planning & Zoning Commissioner Betsy Daub, Library Board Chair Barbara Stone, Police Chief Joe Moreno, Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton, Library Director Andrew Adaryukov and community member Janet Phillips.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Nealeigh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Certification of Agenda

Mayor Nealeigh certified that the agenda was advertised and published at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, in compliance with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mayor Nealeigh presented the minutes from the May 20, 2025, regular meeting for approval. Trustee Boyd requested a correction on page 12, line 15, to remove the word "needed" from the phrase "Mayor needed suggested." Mayor Nealeigh acknowledged the correction would be made. Trustee Boyd moved to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Trustee McCue. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. Public Input

Prior to opening the floor for public comment, Mayor Nealeigh announced that AJ Pacheco, a constituency relations representative for Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez, had

conducted a mobile office session at the Village offices earlier in the day, meeting with approximately six constituents.

Mayor Nealeigh then opened the floor for public input on items not on the agenda.

AJ Pacheco introduced himself as a field representative for Congresswoman Leger Fernandez, covering the geographic northwest region and a portfolio of 12 to 15 district-wide issues. He confirmed he had held mobile office hours earlier and expressed his willingness to return to the Village to assist residents with federal issues. Mr. Pacheco reported that as of that day, provisions concerning a public land sell-off had been successfully removed from a major federal budget bill. He noted, however, that Senator Lee of Utah would likely continue efforts to reintroduce those provisions, despite the Senate parliamentary ruling that the sale of public lands is not a budget-related matter. Mr. Pacheco concluded by offering his contact information and availability to serve the community.

6. Court Report

Mayor Nealeigh directed the Council's attention to the monthly court report submitted by Judge Ana Patterson. He reminded the Council and public that the court operates independently of the Mayor and the Village Council but provides a report of its activities, including information on citations and collected fees, for the public record.

7. Mayor's Report

a. Code Enforcement

Mayor Nealeigh reported on two pending code enforcement issues. The first involves a violation of the comprehensive zoning ordinance on Canyon Court related to a mobile home installation and an accessory dwelling unit, which is scheduled for mitigation at the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The second issue is a short-term occupancy rental violation on Mooney Boulevard, where a property owner began operating a short-term rental without the required conditional use permit. Mayor Nealeigh confirmed the operation has ceased, and the owner is now proceeding through the proper application process. He noted this matter would not be on the next Planning and Zoning agenda due to procedural timelines.

b. Administration

Mayor Nealeigh stated that the Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act claims remain on the agenda as they have not yet been formally vacated by the state. He also noted that the request for expressions of interest for the lease of 080 Jemez Springs Plaza remains active, with a deadline of September 1, and that no formal applications have been received to date.

c. Project Update

i. Community Park Building

Mayor Nealeigh reported that remodeling of the building at the Community Park is on hold, but it remains on the agenda as grant funds are still allocated.

ii. Dark Sky Project

He described the Dark Sky Lighting Project as extremely active, with three Jemez Mountain Electrical Coop (JMEC) crews installing lights that morning. Following a report of damaged light units, Mayor Nealeigh inspected all the fixtures and found two with minor damage that were later installed and two with significant damage that were later repaired and installed. He confirmed that 14 of the 31 streetlights have been installed at locations including the sewer plant, Sandoval Road, and the plaza, with the remaining installations north of the plaza and on Mooney Boulevard pending. Despite weather challenges, the Coop is committed to completing the project. The Village anticipates processing the final paperwork to seek reimbursement from the New Mexico Department of Transportation by the end of the week. Mayor Nealeigh clarified that the Village has already paid for the fixtures and requested reimbursement for those and other prior costs, with only the installation cost outstanding. The project is expected to be completed under budget. In response to an inquiry from Trustee Boyd, Mayor Nealeigh explained that an earlier proposal to allow residents to purchase lights was not feasible due to state procurement rules, which mandate that items purchased with state funds must belong to a government entity.

iii. Mooney Bridges

Mayor Nealeigh also reported that the funding applications for the Mooney Boulevard Bridge projects have been submitted and accepted. The Village is now awaiting a funding decision, which could provide up to **\$1,000,000** for the planning and design work for one or both bridges.

iv. Trim and Chip Day

Mayor Nealeigh praised the chipping crew from the US Forest Service who chipped more than 40 loads of branches. Volunteers cleared branches and saplings from village streets, Highway 4, and properties across the Village.

Mayor Nealeigh also announced that trees along Highway 4 and Jemez Springs Plaza and in front of the building at the Community Park have been trimmed at a cost of **\$3,600**, which was fully covered by a private donor.

c. Upcoming Events

Mayor Nealeigh announced that the surplus auction scheduled for June 28 will likely be postponed due to the lack of personnel to organize the event. He confirmed the July 4th Independence Day Celebration will proceed as planned with both morning and evening events. Chief Moreno added that the Department of Transportation permit for the event has been approved. Banners recognizing the event's sponsors, the Jemez Valley Credit Union and Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church, have arrived. Mayor Nealeigh described a new "Cool Place" feature for the celebration, which will include canopies, misters, and fans located in the driveway west of the municipal building. This area will host the ice cream competition and provide watermelon. In response to a question from Trustee McCue, Mayor Nealeigh confirmed the watermelon would be free for attendees.

d. Personnel

Mayor Nealeigh provided an update on the search for a new Clerk/Finance Director. He explained that after the initial application period, the candidate pool was reduced to three

individuals whose qualifications were ultimately determined not to align with the job description. The search has been reactivated, and he has worked with Arlene Thomas from the Department of Workforce Solutions to post the position statewide. In response to a question from Trustee Sanchez, Mayor Nealeigh confirmed there were two local applicants, but they did not possess the required municipal, management, and financial experience. He stated that while hiring and training a local candidate is a consideration, his priority is to first seek a candidate with direct municipal experience.

Mayor Nealeigh recognized former bathhouse employee Frances “Kika” Trujillo, who passed away on March 18. Ms. Trujillo was born in Jemez Springs in 1944 and was employed by the Village from 2003 to 2012. He also shared that former employee Emili Zapata is in need of financial assistance and that anyone wishing to help can contact the Village office to have funds conveyed to her.

e. Community Relations

Mayor Nealeigh reported on several recent community relations activities. He spoke with Chris Toya, an archeologist with the Pueblo of Jemez, regarding the demolition permit requested by the Servants of the Paraclete for the Mary Mother of Priests Chapel. The permit is currently on hold by the Planning and Zoning Commission pending state and Pueblo involvement.

Through the assistance of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez's office, Mayor Nealeigh had a conversation with Department of Workforce Solutions Secretary Sarita Nair regarding municipal housing and is awaiting further information. Another discussion was held with Paulina Jaramillo from the Congresswoman's office and Andrew Gonzalez from the New Mexico Department of Transportation concerning roadblocks to installing electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in the Village. Mayor Nealeigh expressed his opinion that federal-level policy changes are necessary before such a project becomes feasible for a small community and noted he has asked AJ Pacheco to follow up on both the housing and EV station matters. He also reported that the town hall meeting with Representative Christine Chandler held the previous Saturday was well-attended and covered a wide range of topics. He concluded by acknowledging the visit from AJ Pacheco earlier in the day.

f. Boards & Commissions

i. Library Board - Mayor Nealeigh presented the Library Board minutes from its April 8 meeting and introduced Board Chair Barb Stone. Ms. Stone noted that the board's next meeting is not until August.

ii. Planning and Zoning Commission - The Planning and Zoning Commission report from its June 3 meeting was presented. Betsy Daud, P&Z Chair reported that approximately 22 people attended the meeting in person or via Zoom. She summarized that a discussion on short-term occupancy rentals resulted in a consensus on the need to balance them with community life, though no clear path forward was identified. It was noted that the number of active rentals has remained stable at around 11. Chair Daub stated there was a clear message from attendees to prohibit outdoor fire pits at all short-term rentals due to fire safety concerns. There was also a strong sentiment against allowing RV occupancy, with attendees expressing that it would not solve affordable housing issues. Chair Daub also reported that it was brought to her attention that

some property owners may be housing livestock in a manner non-compliant with Village code. She has been discussing the matter with Mayor Nealeigh and Chief Moreno. Mayor Nealeigh clarified that the relevant ordinance is Chapter 12 and is not part of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.

g. Department Reports

i. Bath House - The Bath House report was presented. Mayor Nealeigh announced that beginning the following Thursday, the Bathhouse will be open six days a week from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with Wednesdays as its day of closure.

ii. **Fire Department** - The minutes from the Volunteer Fire Department's June 7 meeting were presented. Chief Sanchez stated he would submit his full report separately. He added that training for new members is progressing well and that they have one new viable recruit who works from home and would be available for daytime calls.

iii. **IT** - The Information Technology report was presented. IT consultant Fred Simmack had nothing to add to his written report.

iv. **Library** - The Library report was presented, and Library Director Adaryukov had no additions. In response to an inquiry from Trustee Sanchez Director Adaryudov stated that he loves being in Jemez Springs. Mayor Nealeigh added that he has received many positive comments from the community about Director Adaryukov, as well.

v. **Police Department** - The Jemez Springs Police Department report was presented. Chief Moreno noted that he has a court date in Cuba on Thursday related to the felony charges listed at the top of his report.

vi. **Public Works** - The Public Works report was presented.

vii. **Streets** – The Street report was presented with Mayor Nealeigh adding that significant widening of Mooney Boulevard was accomplished during the recent community trim and chip day. Trustee McCue mentioned that the walkway between Sandoval Road and the Valle Caldra office is overgrown with trees. Mayor Nealeigh said that he would address the issue.

viii. **Wastewater** - The monthly report from the Wastewater Department was presented. Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton added that ProPipe is nearly finished with the cleaning and inspection of the collection line. The process took longer than anticipated due to weather delays and backflow issues at two residences, which she reported ProPipe corrected to the owners' satisfaction. Ms. Fenton also reported that she is working with FEMA on a flood claim and with the University of New Mexico to develop an asset and maintenance management program for the department. In response to a question from Trustee Boyd about a substance found in the collection line, Ms. Fenton stated it is believed to be tar. She also reported several instances of manhole tampering since April, including one incident where rocks were placed inside a manhole, and noted that the chief of police is monitoring the situation. Mayor Nealeigh added that since lab testing was not feasible, the department is referring to the substances as "tar-

like.” He stated that he will initiate a multifaceted approach to address the problem which will include education and enforcement.

8. Trustee's Report

Mayor Nealeigh invited reports from the Trustees. Trustee Wilson stated he had nothing to report. Trustee Boyd and Trustee McCue also had nothing to report.

Trustee Sanchez raised concerns about the planned relocation of the Village office to the Community Park. He recalled that the Council had approved the move based on a study suggesting it was a viable option to support local businesses. However, he pointed out that the Council had never received a copy of that study. Sanchez also mentioned that residents he had spoken with were not in favor of the move. He asked if the decision could be revisited or if the building could be repurposed. Mayor Nealeigh responded that he preferred not to rely solely on anecdotal information. Instead, he suggested conducting a formal study of the available options and their potential consequences. Mayor Nealeigh explained that the current request for expressions of interest for leasing the existing Village office space was part of an effort to gather relevant data. Trustee Sanchez formally requested that the topic be revisited. Mayor Nealeigh agreed to place the item on the next meeting’s agenda for formal discussion and a possible action. The Trustees gave their consensus.

9. Finance Board

Trustee Sanchez moved to convene the Finance Board, seconded by Trustee McCue. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

a. Interim Clerk Report

Interim Clerk Gutierrez presented her report, adding that the wastewater department plans to move forward with transitioning to a new billing system in the near future.

b. Lodgers' Tax Board Report

Lodgers Tax Board Chair Jim McCue reported that the Lodgers' Tax Board did not meet and therefore had taken no action.

c. Finance Director Report (in absentia)

Mayor Nealeigh presented the report from Finance Director consultant Jim Cox, who was unable to attend.

i. Prior Fiscal Years) - 2022, 2023, 2024: there has been progress with the 2022 audit since the last report to the Council. On Wednesday June 18 we received the auditors' comments regarding the draft financial statements that I had drafted. I'm currently working to review the comments and make necessary changes. The auditors are finishing up their findings which they'll send to me for response. Once included within the statements, as well as the associated auditor opinions, we'll be able to schedule the exit conference and submit FY22 to the State Auditor. Subsequently, we'll start right on 2023 and 2024.

ii. Current Fiscal Year - 2025: we are continuing to finish strong. Balances have been reconciled and reported to departments as of May. We continue to work hard on grants which

have period of performance ending June 30, 2025. This includes timely submission to the various funding agencies for reimbursement. GRT collections for June were under budget by 5.69% (\$1,477.52). Overall, collections ended strongly with \$104,692.95 collected in excess of budget. This aided in cash flow throughout the year as well as getting the reserve balance back to where it needs to be. I have included the final GRT report summarizing the entire fiscal year for your reference. June continues to be a very busy month in preparation of fiscal year end.

iii. Coming Fiscal Year - 2026: we are continuing to wait for the Department of Finance and Administration to approve the FY26 interim budget. After closing of the fiscal year, July will be very busy in preparation to submit to Council the following: FY25 final budget adjustment,

Trustee McCue moved to adjourn the Finance Board, seconded by Trustee Sanchez. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

10. Old Business

Mayor Nealeigh stated there was no old business to come before the Council.

11. New Business

a. Selection of 2025 Volunteer of the Year

Mayor Nealeigh presented seven individuals and organization nominated for the 2025 Volunteer of the Year. After discussing the nominees, Trustee Boyd nominated Peg Froelich for this year's recognition. seconded by Trustee McCue. Trustee Wilson spoke in support of the nomination, highlighting Ms. Froelich's extensive work over several years to improve the recycling center. Trustee Boyd added that Ms. Froelich also serves on the board of the Jemez Valley Credit Union. Mayor Nealeigh noted Ms. Froelich's leadership and determination to keep the recycling center operational during a time when the county was not able to pick up materials. The Council by unanimous voice vote selected Peg Froelich as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year.

b. Proclamation of July 12, 2025 as Charlie Montoya Day in Jemez Springs

Mayor Nealeigh proposed a proclamation to honor former mayor Charlie Montoya, who recently passed away. He stated he had received permission from the Montoya family. Trustee Boyd moved to recognize July 12th as Charlie Montoya Day in Jemez Springs. Trustee McCue seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

c. Approval of section 200 of Police Department Standard Operating Procedures

Trustee Wilson moved to approve Section 200 of the Police Department's Standard Operating Procedures, seconded by Trustee McCue. Chief Moreno explained that the policies are derived from federal and state standards, have been approved by the New Mexico Municipal League, Mayor Nealeigh, and were adjusted to reflect local titles and departmental needs. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

d. Adoption of US Forest Service Fire Restrictions for the Village

Mayor Nealeigh introduced a proposal for the Village to adopt the fire restrictions set by the U.S. Forest Service to create clarity and consistency for residents. Trustee Sanchez moved to adopt the restrictions, seconded by Trustee Boyd. A roll call vote was taken Trustee Boyd, aye; Trustee McCue, aye; Trustee Sanchez, aye; Trustee Wilson, aye. The motion passed unanimously.

e. Ordinance #205--Opting-in to Regular Local Elections for Village Officer Elections

Mayor Nealeigh explained Ordinance #205, which provides the Village with the option to have its officer elections administered by the Sandoval County Bureau of Elections rather than the Village Clerk. He noted the primary impacts would be a change in the election timing and a shift in the cost, estimated at around **\$12,000**, from the Village to the county. Trustee Wilson moved to approve Ordinance #205 to opt-in to the regular local election cycle, and Trustee Boyd seconded the motion. Trustee Sanchez expressed concern about losing local control over elections but acknowledged the financial benefit to the Village. In response to a question from Trustee Boyd, Mayor Nealeigh confirmed that the Village could opt-out of this arrangement after one election cycle. A roll call vote was taken Trustee Boyd, aye; Trustee McCue, aye; Trustee Sanchez, no; Trustee Wilson, aye. The ordinance was approved, having met the required three-fourths majority.

Following the vote, Mayor Nealeigh stated the Council must decide whether to shorten or lengthen the current terms of office to align with the new election schedule. Shortening the terms would mean they end in December instead of the following March, while lengthening them would add sixteen months. Trustee McCue moved to shorten the terms of office. The motion was seconded by Trustee Wilson. A roll call vote was taken Trustee Boyd, aye; Trustee McCue, aye; Trustee Sanchez, aye; Trustee Wilson, aye. The motion was approved unanimously.

f. Approval of Resolution 2025-008—Adoption of 2027-2031 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan

Mayor Nealeigh introduced the five-year Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for 2027-2031. He explained that the list of 23 projects was developed following a public input process that included solicitations in the newspaper, on the Village website, and in public places. The Mayor and Finance Director organized the nominated projects into a five-year timeline, ordering them based on priority lists submitted by the Trustees and to ensure internal consistency. He provided an example, explaining that a large project like a new Welcome Center at the Community Park would be broken into logical steps across multiple years, such as engineering a new entrance in year one before designing and building the center in year two. Mayor Nealeigh clarified that while the cost estimates are currently preliminary, they will be refined before the plan's submission to the state on July 11. He noted that the Council's approval was for the list of projects and their general priority order, with only the first year's priorities being formally binding for state purposes.

Trustee McCue moved to approve the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan, seconded by Trustee Sanchez.

During the discussion, Trustee Wilson suggested reordering the priorities to move projects at the Community Park higher on the list. Mayor Nealeigh explained the sequencing of the Welcome Center project, which required re-engineering the park entrance as a first step. Trustee Boyd expressed concern about the potential for a Welcome Center to be open all night, as the park is adjacent to her property. Mayor Nealeigh assured her that operational policies would be determined by the Council with residents' interests in mind.

Trustee Sanchez expressed his desire to prioritize projects that directly improve the quality of life for residents, such as the retaining wall repair, the computer network, and the communication system. He proposed moving the technology and communication projects, currently listed as priorities five, six, and seven, ahead of the tractor storage building, currently listed as number three. Trustee McCue and Trustee Boyd agreed, with Trustee Boyd adding that the new pickup truck should remain a top priority. Trustee Wilson questioned moving the tractor storage building down the list, citing the need to protect the asset from the weather. Trustee Sanchez responded that a metal storage container at the Fire Department could be used in the interim.

Based on the discussion, Mayor Nealeigh summarized the priorities for 2027: 1) Design and build retaining wall at Fitzgerald Park, 2) Purchase and outfit Wastewater department pick-up truck, 3) Design and install police/fire communication system, 4) Build secure and resilient computer network, 5) Design and install police/fire/wastewater integrated security system, 6) Remodel stage into maintenance/event barn, 7) Purchase compact tractor/skid steer attachments, 8) Design and construct new entrance to Community Park.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nealeigh called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the 2027-2031 ICIP as finalized in the above discussion. Interim Clerk Gutierrez called the roll. Trustee Boyd, Trustee McCue, Trustee Sanchez, and Trustee Wilson all voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Adjourn

There being no other business on the agenda, Mayor Nealeigh declared the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.