



MICHAEL NEALEIGH
Mayor

ROBERT WILSON
Mayor Pro-Tem.

VILLAGE OF JEMEZ SPRINGS

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JUDY BOYD

Trustee

JAMES MCCUE

Trustee

MANOLITO SANCHEZ

Trustee

Jemez Springs Village Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday December 11, 2025, 6:00 PM

Community Park Building

1. Call to Order – Mayor Nealeigh called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council Members Present: Mayor Michael Nealeigh, Trustees: Judy Boyd, James McCue, Manolito Sanchez and Bob Wilson.

Also in Attendance: Interim Clerk Heather Gutierrez, Police Chief Joe Moreno, Library Director Andrew Adaryukov, Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton, Wastewater Assistant Alec Elliott, IT Consultant Fred Simmank, Court Clerk Donna Sanchez, Trustee-Elect Victoria Martinez, Library Board Chair Barb Stone, and community members and guests Benjamin Shendo, Tom Swetnam, Glen Thamert, Myra Maher, Cheryl Ridlon, Hosen Ranger, James Caldwell, Kathleen Allen, Mark Mooney, Ryan Gonzales. Amber Nelson, Ramona, Albira, Juan Trujillo, Bonnie Smith, Robert Mammoser, Kai Mammoser, Natalie, Jake C., and Iamora Colaqueson, Jr.

2. Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Nealeigh led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Certification of the Agenda – Mayor Nealeigh certified that the agenda had been published in its current form at least 72 hours before the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes – Regular Council Meeting on 11-18-2025

After Trustee Wilson corrected a misidentification of a speaker on item 4 a motion was made by Trustee Sanchez and seconded by Trustee Boyd to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion passed.

5. Public Input

Mayor Nealeigh asked if members of the public wished to address the Council on any subject not listed on the agenda and assured those present that they could speak to items on the agenda when that item was presented. No one wished to speak at that time.

6. Court Report

Mayor Nealeigh presented the municipal court and reminded the Council that the Municipal Court is independent from the Council and the Mayor.

7. Mayor's Report

a. Code Enforcement

Mayor Nealeigh reported that the Short-term Occupancy Rental Conditional Use Permit violation reported at the last Council meeting was resolved when the property owner paid all past-due lodgers tax.

b. Administration

i. General

Mayor Nealeigh stated he wanted people to see the community park building in its current state, before it is fully furnished, so they might see ways to contribute to its functionality. He specified this assumed that the Village Council would later vote to designate the building as a community center.

ii. Event Planning Committee

Mayor Nealeigh reported that the second annual Holiday Festival on November 29 was a huge success and mentioned that pictures would be available soon. He added that the Events Committee conducted an after-action review and is likely to schedule next year's event for a warmer time of day. Responding to a question about the community choir's next performance, Mayor Nealeigh said that the Jemez Mountains Community Chorus was scheduled to perform at the Presbyterian Church on December 21.

iii. Project Updates

1. Community Park Building

Mayor Nealeigh reported that new locks, featuring crash bars and both digital and key access, were installed on the community park building that afternoon. He noted that locks were also installed on two interior rooms. The installation of six Dark Sky compliant, gooseneck-style exterior lights on the building was also approved for funding and will be initiated soon.

2. South Mooney Bridge Project

Mayor Nealeigh reminded the Council that the NMDOT Transportation Project Fund application for **\$1 million** for planning and design of the South Mooney was granted. The award, however, came with a **\$50,000** match requirement, for which the Village had no unencumbered funds. Mayor Nealeigh reported that a waiver of the match funds was requested and received.

Trustee Boyd asked for clarification that the **\$1 million** was designated for planning and design rather than the bridge replacement itself, which Mayor Nealeigh affirmed. Trustee Wilson inquired if there were plans to replace the North Mooney bridge. Mayor Nealeigh replied that a similar application for the North Mooney bridge had been declined, speculating that the state did not want to award two grants to the same entity.

3. Capital Outlay Funds

Mayor Nealeigh reported that the Village has requested capital outlay funding for the community park building, the conversion of the vault toilets to full plumbing, a sun shelter and playground for the community park, a retaining wall at the Village Plaza skate park, and a new wastewater truck with lift equipment to replace a 2002 model.

c. Personnel

Wastewater Operations Manager Rose Fenton introduced Alec Elliott, the new wastewater assistant, who began work on December 1.

d. Community Relations

Mayor Nealeigh introduced Tom Swetnam who presented on the topic of saving Soda Dam.

At the conclusion of his presentation Dr. Swetnam called for better management of Soda Dam. He cited past design concepts from UNM and mentioned the Forest Service's awareness of the situation. He suggested transferring Soda Dam to the National Park Service or New Mexico Historic Sites, as their mandates include public interpretation and management. He stressed that any management plan must be developed in co-management with Jemez Pueblo. Swetnam stated he had discussed the matter with the Forest Service District Ranger, the Valles Caldera Superintendent, Chris Toya at Jemez Pueblo, and Senator Martin Heinrich, all of whom expressed general support. He requested the Village Council consider a resolution of support for improved management, which would entail funding for a visitor center, safer parking, interpretive signage, and personnel. He added his intent to speak with the Tribal Council to seek a similar resolution.

Mayor Nealeigh then introduced Benjamin Shendo who spoke about his journey and current effort to establish an Indigenous Connection program on Mooney Boulevard. He detailed plans for the property, expressing a desire to create something that involves the entire community and offers a positive outlet for youth. He specified that the program would operate during daytime hours and provide programs for fitness, Capoeira, silversmithing, and culinary arts, with the aim of helping youth build identity and confidence. He stated his wish to be a community partner by directing workshop participants to local businesses, adopting a mile of Highway 4 for cleanup, and maintaining the cleanliness of Mooney Boulevard for walkers. He offered to organize a monthly volunteer group on a Saturday to assist with community projects, such as cleaning up Soda Dam. He explained he was addressing the Council to follow protocol and inform them of his plans.

Mayor Nealeigh explained that since the intended use is not permitted in the current neighborhood residential zone, it would necessitate an application for a zoning amendment to the Planning and Zoning Commission, which would require a public hearing. If the Commission were to recommend the amendment, the matter would then proceed to the Village Council for a second public hearing and a final decision. Responding to a question asking how long such a process might take, P&Z Chair Betsy Daub explained that the next commission meeting was scheduled for January 27, and an application would need to be submitted at least a week in advance. The commission would conduct a hearing and decide whether to recommend the zoning change to the Village Council. If all steps proceeded accordingly, the issue could potentially be on the Village Council's February agenda. Mayor Nealeigh added that a 10-day public notice period is required before any hearing. He also clarified that any action by the Village Council or the Planning and Zoning Commission would not represent an endorsement or rejection of the program itself but would be a decision on the appropriateness of the proposed function for that specific location.

e. Boards and Commissions

Mayor Nealeigh reported that the Library Board had not met since the last Council meeting. He directed the Council to the draft minutes from the Planning and Zoning Commission's December 9 meeting and asked for any questions. There were none.

f. Department Reports

The Council reviewed reports from the Bath House, Fire Department, Information Technology, Library, Police Department, Public Works, and Wastewater. Mayor Nealeigh invited questions or comments from Trustees or department heads. Trustee Sanchez inquired if there had been any progress on the sinkhole in the fire department driveway. Mayor Nealeigh responded that no action had been taken but that he would renew his efforts on the matter.

8. Trustee's Report

Trustee Boyd, Trustee McCue, and Trustee Wilson indicated they had nothing to report. Trustee Sanchez announced that this would be his final Council meeting as a Village Council member, having served for 12 years after being elected three times. He stated he would continue to attend meetings in his capacity as Fire Chief. He extended his thanks to everyone who voted for him, to his wife for her support, and to Trustee Wilson, with whom he had served for his entire tenure. Trustee Wilson remarked that he would be missed.

Mayor Nealeigh presented Trustee Sanchez with a plaque in recognition of his service on the Board of Trustees from March 2014 to December 2025. Trustee Wilson announced that a reception would be held after the meeting to thank Trustee Sanchez for his service.

9. Finance Board

A motion to convene the Finance Board was made by Trustee Boyd and seconded by Trustee McCue. The motion passed, and the board convened at 6:52 PM.

a. Interim Clerk Report

Interim Clerk Gutierrez had no report.

b. Lodgers' Tax Board Report

Trustee McCue reported that the Lodgers Tax Board was scheduled to meet within the next couple of weeks.

c. Finance Director Report

Mayor Nealeigh presented a summary of the Finance Director's report, as Finance Director Consultant Jim Cox could not be present. He stated that auditors are currently working on audits for fiscal years 2023, 2024, and 2025. The Village is nearing access to **\$1,042,707.47** in outstanding Capital Outlay funds from past legislative sessions. He has been working with the DFA to resolve the delay, and the Mid-Regional Council of Governments will act as the Village's fiscal agent. These funds will cover the match for a **\$2.2 million** EDA grant for sewer line rehabilitation, **\$130,000** for library improvements, **\$75,000** for the community building, **\$100,000** for the River Walk, **\$100,000** for a maintenance tractor, and **\$20,000** for library HVAC improvements.

For the upcoming legislative session, the Village has submitted Capital Outlay requests for the community park building renovations, the conversion of the vault toilets, a park shelter and playground, a retaining wall, and a pickup truck for the wastewater department.

Regarding the current fiscal year 2026, Mayor Nealeigh reported that GRT collections are rising steadily and reducing the deficit from the first quarter. He also noted that the Village is preparing to receive the **\$1 million** grant for the South Mooney bridge project. As the funds will be received upfront, the Village is collaborating with financial institutions and state regulators to determine how to deposit the funds while ensuring they are fully collateralized, since the amount surpasses FDIC insurance limits.

A motion was made by Trustee Wilson and seconded by Trustee Boyd to adjourn the Finance Board. The motion carried and the Finance Board adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

10. Old Business

There was no old business.

11. New Business

a. Approval of Police Department Standard Operating Procedures sections 318, 319, and 323. Police Chief Moreno identified the sections as pertaining to Domestic Violence Assistance, Child Safety, and Witness Protection. Trustee Wilson moved to approve the sections, which was seconded by Trustee Sanchez. There was no additional discussion. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously.

12. Adjourn

There being no other business on the agenda, Mayor Nealeigh adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.