

# **EXHIBIT “A”**

## **Councilor Prince Councilor Comments**

### **Regular Town Council Meeting**

**August 8, 2023**

I wish all our students the best in their new school year, and the best to our community’s teachers, coaches, administration, and staff. The bond measures voted on in the 2021 election cycle have been coming to great fruition, and I am encouraged by the engaged leadership in our school districts.

I also wish to encourage everyone to get their votes in for our region’s emergency dispatch funding. Ballots are due the 22nd, and I will personally commend the efforts of county manager Charlene Webb, and 911 dispatch director, Verne Laney, particularly during the Rico fire earlier this summer.

As per our agenda, our primary topics this evening are on our infrastructure, so I have a few brief comments.

While mostly in the background of our daily lives, what we do in our city to shape the small moments of where and how we travel, the quality of our water, and the processing of our waste, all sit firmly as essentials that are often taken for granted. This doesn’t even begin to cover our public parks, library, museum, where we bury our dead, how we receive electricity, what we communicate with, how we record history, and efforts by thousands, only hundreds of whom we count as our city’s employ.

As my fellow councilors and mayor can attest to, we all are on point when it comes to the public’s needs. Steering folks to the appropriate channels our city provides, connecting interested constituents to one another to build effective project teams, the creation of public events, and participation in how we allocate and maintain our shared resources are all ideals we can aspire to and continue.

As we get a chance to take advantage of the bounty of this period, I encourage this body to anticipate and aid what we have coming down the pipeline.

We have had great success over these years in growth and investment in our water system. With new tanks, a joint powers agreement to help our neighbors, and extensions to our own town’s grid, I feel safe about our future. Though the season has been drier in our basin, what replenishes our aquifer in the

national forest is meeting averages. However, though my hope is for an easy fall, the sequential deluges of last year left scars, and remembering how critical our public safety officers and citizens were to mitigating that damage, helping those isolated, and working with our elected officials to leave things better than how they were found should be testament to how we will adapt to coming extremes.

Towards the knowledge of said extremes, it is a good time to remind folks that we're still at the beginning of this heat cycle. Checking around, everyone can agree this was a hot summer. Maybe the hottest. Just yesterday we had many in the East of town and Arenas Valley seeking cooling with a significant power outage. Beyond the pre-existing concerns of folks reliant upon medical devices attached the electrical grid, with the heat we've had we risk the lives of our elders. Thankfully it was a weekday and many of our public cooled spaces were open, but, looking to the future, we ought to deeply consider what our response will look like should extended outages occur, or if we experience heat for so long that people can't afford to keep their air conditioning on.

In addition, we're seeing the cost of living outlook improve, but not beyond serious challenges in food security. Our town and county's food banks have been in the highest demand, even more than during the pandemic, and though costs have come down since last year, there are significant crop failures stretching across America, and the globe. I urge our city officials to remember the strain that many will see increase, as what few reprieves have been taken by increasing costs in rent, utilities, healthcare, construction, everything.

For our community's kids and their families, I have been heartened to see priorities adapt and respond to their needs since the pandemic. From the new recreation center, to the phenomenal programming of our schools and institutions, I am proud of what our city accomplishes, and look forward to further. It is always wise to invest in our kids, and from work in the medical district, I will again remind that the pandemic baby boom is real, and we're gonna need a lot more help. Let's be sure to support new parents in the town, and see if we can't develop new leaders from the bunch.

To end, I will say I remain hopeful in the face of these challenges because of the people and leadership in our communities. Our efforts, attention, and commitment are what got us here, and with what's in front of us, not just tonight, it's a good feeling to help and share in that help.

Thank you."