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# 2026 Municipal Officer Election Candidate Guide

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# CANDIDATE GUIDE OVERVIEW

This guide has been prepared by the Rio Rancho City Clerk for the 2026 Municipal Officer Election to be used by candidates, campaign committees and individuals either involved or interested in the municipal election process. The Rio Rancho Municipal Officer Election is nonpartisan.

All elections in New Mexico are governed by the New Mexico Election Code (“Election Code”). In addition, the City Charter of Rio Rancho (“City Charter”) and Election and Campaign Practices Ordinance contain election and campaign regulations specific to this municipality.

A digital copy of the Election Code, Election and Campaign Practices, and City Charter can be accessed via the links below:

**[Election Law & Codes](#)**

**[Rio Rancho Election and Campaign Practices](#)**

**[Rio Rancho City Charter](#)**

Pertinent election information, including candidate eligibility, voter registration, campaign finance reporting, voting and significant dates are provided within this guide. In addition to this publication, the Office of the City Clerk is committed to assisting constituents to the best of our ability. This guide provides applicable references to election law provisions; however, the contents are not intended to serve as legal guidance on federal, state or local law.

The official forms referenced throughout this guide can be accessed with the following links:

**[Candidate Campaign Committee Registration Form](#)**

**[Sign Permit Application](#)**

**[Voter Data Request Form](#)**

**[Declaration of Candidacy- Statement of Intent](#)**

**[Declaration of Intent – Write In Candidacy](#)**

**[Written Authorization for Designation](#)**

**[Affidavit of Withdrawal of Candidacy](#)**

**[Financial Disclosure Form](#)**

**[Public Official Confidential Address Form](#)**

Please contact the office at 505-891-5004 or via email to [clerk@rrnm.gov](mailto:clerk@rrnm.gov). Information can also be obtained via the City Clerk’s Office website [by clicking here](#).

# GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION

The Municipal Officer Election will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026. The election will be held to elect the following municipal officers:

- Mayor: 4-year term
- City Councilor District 2: 4-year term
- City Councilor District 3: 4-year term
- City Councilor District 5: 4-year term
- Municipal Judge: 4-year term

Citywide, voters will also be asked to consider General Obligation Bond questions. Detailed information about the bond questions can be found on the City's Website.

## IMPORTANT DATES

### Tuesday, January 6, 2026

- Candidate Filing Day - Between 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Individuals wanting to declare their candidacy must file a Declaration of Candidacy Form with the City Clerk - 3200 Civic Center Circle NE, Suite 150, 87144. 1-22-3.1(E)(3), NMSA 1978
- Candidate Campaign Committee Registration Form due §30.25, R.O. 2003
- Designation of Campaign Treasurer due §30.26, R.O. 2003

### Friday, January 9, 2026

- Notify candidates of declaration of candidacy qualification or disqualification by 5:00 p.m. 1-22-3.1(E)(3), NMSA 1978

### Tuesday, January 13, 2026

- Write-in Candidate Filing Day - Between 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Individuals wanting to declare write-in candidacy must file a Declaration of Write-In Candidacy Form with the City Clerk - 3200 Civic Center Circle NE, Suite 150, 87144. 1-22-3.1(E)(4), NMSA 1978
- Write-in Candidate Campaign Committee Registration Form due §30.25, R.O. 2003
- Designation of Write-in Campaign Treasurer due §30.26, R.O. 2003
- Last day to file a petition challenge candidacy in District Court 1-22-3.1(E)(5), NMSA 1978
- Last day to withdraw candidacy by 5:00 p.m.

### Friday, January 16, 2026

- Notify Write-in candidates of declaration of candidacy qualification or disqualification by 5:00 p.m. 1-22-3.1(E)(4), NMSA 1978

### Tuesday, January 20, 2026

- Last day to withdraw write-in candidacy by 5:00 p.m.
- Last day to file a petition challenge write-in candidacy in District Court 1-22-3.1(E)(5), NMSA 1978
- Certification of official ballot 1-22-3.1(E)(6), NMSA 1978
- First campaign finance report due by 5:00 p.m. §30.28, R.O. 2003

### Tuesday, January 27, 2026

- Military and Overseas ballots sent to Federal Qualified Electors 1-22-3.1(D)(6), NMSA 1978

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Last day to register to vote or update voter registration 1-4-8(A), NMSA 1978 *with the exception of those individuals who participate in same day voter registration at an Early or Election Day location.*

- Early voting at the Clerk's Annex Broadmoor Senior Center begins 1-6-5.7(A), NMSA 1978 (Same day voter registration conducted at Clerk's Annex)
- First day absentee ballots are mailed out 1-6-5(F), NMSA 1978
- Second campaign finance report due by 12:00 p.m. §30.28, R.O. 2003

Saturday, February 14, 2026

- Additional early voting locations open 1-6-5.7(A)(3), NMSA 1978 (Same day voter registration conducted at additional locations)

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

- Last day to request an absentee ballot 1-6-5(A), NMSA 1978

Saturday, February 28, 2026

- Last day to early vote 1-6-5.7(A), NMSA 1978

Monday, March 2, 2026

- Third campaign finance report due by 12:00 p.m. §30.28, R.O. 2003

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

- Election Day – Voting hours 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (Same day voter registration conducted at locations)
- Absentee ballots must be returned by 7:00 p.m. to any polling location or to the City Clerk's Office 1-6-10, NMSA 1978

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 - Friday, March 13, 2026

- City Clerk begins the verification of election returns for certification by Local Canvassing Board

Friday, March 13, 2026

- Last day for Local Canvassing Board to canvass election results 1-13-13, NMSA 1978

Monday, March 16, 2026

- Fourth campaign finance report due by 5:00 p.m., when applicable §30.28, R.O. 2003

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

- If run-off not required, certified candidates take oath of office and begin term 1-22-3.1(F), NMSA 1978

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

- Run-off Election, if required 1-22-16, NMSA 1978 and §30.30, R.O. 2003,

Friday, May 1, 2026

- If run-off required, certified candidates take oath of office and begin term 1-22-3.1(F), NMSA 1978

# CANDIDATE'S QUALIFICATIONS

Pursuant to Article VII, Section 2 of the New Mexico Constitution, Rio Rancho Charter and Municipal Code, the requirements to hold public office in Rio Rancho are:

## Mayor:

- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Continually reside within the City of Rio Rancho throughout the term of office,
- Be a qualified elector of the City of Rio Rancho, and
- Have no felony convictions 31-13-1 (E) NMSA 1978.

## City Council:

- Be at least 18 years of age,
- Continually reside within the district to which elected throughout the term of office,
- Be a qualified elector of the City of Rio Rancho, and
- Have no felony convictions 31-13-1 (E) NMSA 1978.

## Municipal Judge:

- Be at least 21 years of age,
- Continually reside within the City of Rio Rancho throughout the term of office,
- Be a qualified elector of the City of Rio Rancho,
- Have no felony convictions 31-13-1 (E) NMSA 1978,
- Complete mandatory training approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

# RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

To participate as a candidate in the Municipal Officer Election, an individual must reside within the:

- City of Rio Rancho when seeking a citywide office, or
- Particular council district in the City of Rio Rancho for which they seek election.

For the purpose of determining the residence of a person desiring to be a candidate for the nomination or election to an office under the provisions of the Election Code, permanent residence shall be resolved in favor of that place shown on the person's certificate of registration as their permanent residence, provided the person resides on the premises. 1-1-7.1, NMSA 1978.

# DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

Anyone interested in participating as a candidate in the Municipal Officer Election must file a declaration of candidacy between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on the fifty-sixth (56) day before the election, Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

## *Voter Registration Requirements*

- The candidate's name and residential address provided on the declaration of candidacy shall match the voter registration certificate on file with the Sandoval County Clerk. Each candidate's name will appear on the ballot exactly as it is listed on the voter registration certificate. 1-10-6 NMAC.
- The voter registration certificate to be used for candidacy qualification must be effective on or before the date on which the Secretary of State's Office issues an Election Proclamation,

Wednesday, December 3, 2025. Changes are not allowed at the time of candidate filing. 1-22-8, NMSA 1978.

- Current voter registration information is viewable at [Voter Information Portal](#) or a copy of a voter registration certificate can be obtained by contacting the Sandoval County Clerk.

#### *Declaration of Candidacy - General Information*

- Declaration of candidacy forms can only be accepted between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Filings will not be accepted prior to, or after, the statutorily mandated timeframe. 1-22-3.1(E)(3), NMSA 1978.
- Each declaration of candidacy shall be filed in person by the prospective candidate or by an authorized individual by virtue of a completed and notarized affidavit of written authorization.
- The City Clerk is prohibited from accepting more than one declaration of candidacy from anyone. 1-22-3.1(E)(2), NMSA 1978.
- A candidate shall file for only one municipal officer position in the City of Rio Rancho. 1-22-3.1(E)(2), NMSA 1978.
- A declaration of candidacy shall not be amended after it has been filed with the City Clerk. 1-22-7(C), NMSA 1978.
- Please be prepared by completing and notarizing the required forms.
- A review of each declaration of candidacy form will occur beginning on the day after the official filing and a determination of qualification will be provided in writing by the City Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 9, 2026. 1-22-3.1(E), NMSA 1978.

## WRITE-IN CANDIDACY FILING DAY

Anyone interested in participating as a write-in candidate in the Municipal Officer Election must file a declaration of write-in candidacy between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on the forty-ninth (49) day before the election, Tuesday, January 13, 2026.

#### *Write-in Candidate General Information*

- The name of a declared write-in candidate will not appear on the ballot; rather, the ballot will contain a space under the applicable office. 1-22-8.1(E), NMSA 1978.
- The name of a declared write-in candidate will not be posted in any polling place. 1-10-13(B), NMSA 1978.
- A certificate of election shall not be issued to an unopposed write-in candidate unless the candidate receives either one hundred votes or the number of write-in votes equal to at least ten percent of the total number of ballots on which the office appears that are cast in the regular local election. 1-13-24(B), NMSA 1978.

A write-in vote for a declared write-in candidate shall be counted if the name is:

- (1) the name of a declared write-in candidate for that office and position and is on the proper line provided for a write-in vote for that office and position; and
- (2) written as first and last name; first name, middle name or initial and last name; one or two initials and last name; or last name alone if there is no other declared write-in candidate for the office or position that is the same or so similar as to tend to confuse the candidates' identities; provided that:
  - (a) when the presiding judge and election judges reviewing the write-in vote unanimously agree that the voter's intent is clearly discernable, an abbreviation, misspelling or other minor variation in the form of the name of a declared write-in candidate shall be accepted as a valid vote; and

(b) as used in this subsection, "write-in" and "written" do not include the imprinting of any name by stamp or similar method or device or the use of a stencil or a preprinted sticker or label. 1-1-5.2(C), NMSA 1978.

## WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDACY

If, after filing a declaration of candidacy, an individual decides they do not wish to continue as a candidate, a signed and notarized Affidavit of Withdrawal must be filed by the following deadlines:

- Withdrawal of candidacy – Tuesday, January 13, 2026, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- Withdrawal of write-in candidacy – Tuesday, January 20, 2026, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

A withdrawal of candidacy filed after the deadline will be deemed invalid and the official ballot will contain the names of each certified candidate.

## CHALLENGING CANDIDACY

Any voter may challenge the candidacy of any person seeking election to municipal office for the reason that the person does not meet the requirements for the office sought by filing a petition in the district court within seven days after the deadline for filing a declaration of candidacy.

The district court shall hear and render a decision on the matter within ten days after the filing of the petition.

The decision of the district court may be appealed to the Supreme Court within five days after the decision is rendered. The Supreme Court shall hear and render a decision on the appeal forthwith. 1-22-3.1(E)(5), NMSA 1978.

## BALLOT ORDER AND CANDIDATE NAME APPEARANCE

The order of qualified candidate names is determined using the New Mexico Election Alphabet, a randomization method, pursuant to 1-10-8(A), NMSA 1978.

- The Election Alphabet is available on the New Mexico Secretary of State Website.
- Qualified candidates for the same office will be ordered based upon the first letter in each candidate's last name, according to the order of letters in the Election Alphabet.
- When two or more candidates for the same office have the same first letter in their last name, the order is resolved by applying the Election Alphabet to each subsequent letter in each of their last names.

The name of each qualified candidate will appear on the ballot as it is listed on the candidate's certificate of registration. Additionally,

- Academic, honorific and elected titles will not be printed on the ballot;
- Periods after initials shall not be printed;
- Punctuation common to names, other than a period, shall be printed as it appears on the candidate's certificate of registration;
- Only letters and punctuation used in roman typefaces shall be printed, and
- Candidate names will appear on the ballot without party or slate designation.

# CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

## POLITICAL OR CAMPAIGN SIGNAGE INFORMATION

Temporary political signs are permitted on public property and are regulated by ordinance, §156.04, R.O. 2003. To obtain a permit to place political signage on public property, please review, complete and submit a [Sign Application](#).

Questions regarding signage or the permitting process can be answered by the Development Services Department at (505) 891-5005.

### *Signage Disclaimer Requirements §30.27, R.O. 2003*

- All campaign advertisements shall contain a disclaimer to include the name of the candidate, or campaign committee who has authorized the advertisement, or if paid for by an independent expenditure, a statement including the words “paid for by” followed by the name of the person, organization or entity who made the independent expenditure.
- The disclaimer shall be placed conspicuously in a legible manner on printed material or electronic communications, such as websites or social media sites, clearly spoken, when transmitted via audio broadcast means, and both legible and clearly spoken for visual media advertisements.
- A disclaimer is not required on printed campaign material such as pins, bumper stickers and other comparably sized items on which the disclaimer cannot reasonably be printed or displayed.

## POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND ELECTIONEERING

Campaigning and electioneering is prohibited as follows:

Any city property or facility designated as an early voting or election day polling place for a statewide or municipal election shall not be eligible for reservation or rental within 30 days of the date of the election, when the purpose is to discuss, inform, debate or confer, in any manner, a candidate or ballot question, or engage in any activity which may influence an election outcome regarding any candidate or ballot question. §39.13, R.O. 2003.

Electioneering too close to the polling place consists of any form of campaigning within:

- one hundred (100) feet of the building in which the polling place is located on Election Day when voting at a school, church or private residence; and
- one hundred (100) feet of the door through which voters may enter to vote at the Office of the City Clerk, an early voting location, a mobile voting site or any location used as a polling place on Election Day that is not a school, church or private residence.

Electioneering includes the display or distribution of:

- signs;
- campaign literature;
- campaign buttons, t-shirts, hats, pins or other such items; and
- verbal or electronic solicitation of votes for a candidate or ballot question.

Whoever commits electioneering too close to the polling place is guilty of a petty misdemeanor. 1-20-16, NMSA 1978.

Campaign material, literature, placards, posters, or any other communications intended to influence an election shall not be distributed or posted in a city facility or office ordinarily used to conduct city government business or services.

This does not include the placement or distribution of a nonpartisan voter guide intended as education, which contains candidate questionnaires or ballot question information that does not advocate for or against a candidate or ballot question. §39.13, R.O. 2003.

No municipal resources, including funds, facilities and personnel, may be used for political campaign purposes or to influence an election; provided, that this shall not prohibit the use of public resources proposed for the limited purpose of educating voters about the details of a ballot question placed on the ballot as authorized by the City of Rio Rancho Governing Body. §39.13, R.O. 2003.

## DAILY VOTER DATA

Beginning on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, daily absentee and early voting data (of the previous day) will be available upon request. The data file will consist of the voter name, address, precinct, type of voting method (early voting or absentee by mail), and the date voted.

There is no charge for the electronic data; however, a data request form must be completed before the data is provided.

## CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE REGISTRATION

### Candidate Campaign Committee Registration

Each candidate shall establish one candidate campaign committee for the election and register on a form provided by the City Clerk, when filing declaration of candidacy, to include:

- The name, street address, telephone number, and email address of the candidate's campaign committee;
- Designated campaign treasurer information - name, street address, telephone number, and email address of the campaign treasurer, and
- The name and street address of the financial institution where the candidate's bank account is established.

Campaign Committee Registration (non-candidate committee) – Due within seven (7) days of formation. In no case shall the registration occur later than the date on which a campaign committee initiates the dissemination of campaign advertisement on a form provided by the City Clerk to include:

- The name, street address, telephone number, and email address of the campaign committee;
- The name, street address and telephone number of each firm, association, partnership, business trust, corporation, company, committee, and any other organization or group of individuals which the campaign committee is affiliated or with which it coordinated or cooperated in its efforts to support or defeat a candidate or ballot question;
- The name, street address, telephone number and title of each officer or responsible leader;
- The purpose for which the committee was organized;
- Designated campaign treasurer information - name, street address, telephone number, and email address of the campaign treasurer, and
- The name and street address of the financial institution where the campaign committee's bank account is established.

Campaign Treasurer Duties

Responsible for receiving contributions, authorizing disbursements and maintaining a true and complete record of the campaign finances. A candidate may serve as campaign treasurer to their own campaign committee.

No more than one campaign bank account to be used for the deposit of all contributions and debit of all expenditures for the election. The name and street address of the financial institution where the bank account is established shall be filed when submitting a declaration of candidacy or registration of a campaign committee to the City Clerk.

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING**

The City of Rio Rancho requires all contributions and expenditures made in conjunction with the election to be reported. A Campaign Finance Reporting Guide with instructions on how to report the financial activity will be made available separate from this publication with information posted to the City’s website (rrnm.gov)

During the election, campaign finance reports shall be filed according to the schedule below:

1st Campaign Report Due	2nd Campaign Report Due	3rd Campaign Report Due	4th Campaign Report Due
January 20, 2026 5:00 P.M.	February 3, 2026 12:00 P.M.	March 2, 2026 12:00 P.M.	April 2, 2026 5:00 P.M. *Excluding runoff candidates
If a run-off election is required, reporting dates will be provided.			

*General campaign finance information*

- Total contributions to a candidate or campaign committee for a council district cannot exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000) or five thousand dollars (\$5,000) for a citywide race from any one person, organization, entity, or campaign committee for the election.
- Contributions and expenditures received and made by or on behalf of an individual prior to the individual filing a declaration of candidacy for a Rio Rancho municipal office, or by or on behalf of a campaign committee at any time prior to the relevant election through the time the final campaign finance report is due must be reported.
- Each person, organization or entity who has made independent expenditures exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) or more in the aggregate during an election shall register with the City Clerk within seven (7) days of meeting such monetary threshold. §30.28, R.O. 2003.

# VOTING

To participate in the Municipal Officer Election, an individual must be registered to vote no later than Tuesday, February 3, 2026, with the exception of those individuals who same day voter registration at an Early Voting or Election Day location.

A certificate of voter registration can be completed online via the [NM SOS Website](#) or by filling out a paper voter registration application downloadable from the same website. Voters can view, and make updates to their current voter registration by contacting the Sandoval County Clerk's Office at 505-867-7577 or online at [Voter Information Portal](#).

Tuesday, March 3, 2026 - Municipal Officer Election Day. Voting will take place between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Election Day. Voters may vote at any of the below listed polling locations, regardless of where they are registered to vote within the City of Rio Rancho.

VCC 1	Broadmoor Senior Center (Clerk's Annex)	3241 Broadmoor Blvd.
VCC 2	Loma Colorado Library	755 Loma Colorado Blvd.
VCC 3	Sabana Grande	4114 Sabana Grande Ave.
VCC 4	The Hub @ Enchanted Hills	7845 Enchanted Hills Blvd.
VCC 5	Southern Blvd.	2345 Southern Blvd. Suite C-2
VCC 6	Cabazon Community Center	2307 Cabazon Blvd.
VCC 7	Rio Rancho Middle School	1600 Loma Colorado Blvd.
VCC 8	Esther Bone Library	950 Pinetree Rd. SE
VCC 9	Cielo Azul Elementary School	3804 Shiloh Rd.
VCC 10	Haynes Community Center	2006 Grande Blvd. SE
VCC 11	Puesta Del Sol Elementary	450 Southern Blvd.
VCC 12	Star Heights Recreation Center	800 Polaris Blvd.
VCC 13	Colinas Del Norte Elementary School	1001 Night Sky Ave.
VCC 14	Joe Harris Elementary School	2100 10 <sup>th</sup> Street

## Absentee Voting

Absentee ballots will be mailed beginning on February 3, 2026. The last day to request an Absentee ballot is February 17, 2026.

### Early Voting

Begins on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at the Broadmoor Senior Center (*Clerk's Annex*) and runs Monday through February 28, 2026, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with expanded hours on Saturday, February 14, 21 and 28, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

EVCC 1	Broadmoor Senior Center (Clerk's Annex)	3241 Broadmoor Blvd.
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Four additional early voting locations will open on Saturday, February 14, 2026, through Saturday, February 28, 2026, Tuesday – Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (closed Sunday and Monday) as follows:

EVCC 2	Loma Colorado Library	755 Loma Colorado Blvd.
EVCC 3	Sabana Grande	4114 Sabana Grande Ave.
EVCC 4	The Hub @ Enchanted Hills	7845 Enchanted Hills Blvd.
EVCC 5	Southern Blvd.	2345 Southern Blvd, Suite C2

### PHOTO IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED

Each voter seeking to vote in the City of Rio Rancho Municipal Officer Election shall present a current identification card containing the voter's name and photograph. §30.31, R.O. 2003. A valid photo identification includes:

- any card issued by a government agency, including an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo,
- driver's license,
- student identification card,
- commercial transaction card (such as a credit or debit card),
- insurance card,
- union card,
- passport,
- a professional association card or,
- a voter identification card issued by the City Clerk.

Voter photo identification cards shall be issued by the City Clerk without charge to any voter who presents required identification documents that show the name and address of the voter. For more information on obtaining an identification card from the City Clerk, please contact 505-891-5004 or send an email to [clerk@rrnm.gov](mailto:clerk@rrnm.gov)

# RUN-OFF ELECTION

If no candidate for municipal office receives over 50% of the total vote through the regular election, a run-off election is required for that seat between the two highest voter getters in the regular election. 1-22-16, NMSA 1978 and §30.30, R.O. 2003. The City of Rio Rancho requires a top-two run-off election to be conducted. If a run-off election is required it will occur on Tuesday, April 14, 2026.

Candidates subject to a run-off election do not have to fill out additional declaration of candidacy paperwork; however, they are responsible for disclosing campaign finance activity during this timeframe.

Absentee, early and Election Day voting will be available during the run-off election.

# MUNICIPAL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The only municipal officers to be elected during the 2026 Municipal Election are Mayor, Municipal Judge and Councilors for Districts 2, 3 and 5.

The City is governed by six councilors, each elected from separate districts and a mayor, elected at-large. Councilors are elected to represent the citizens within their respective districts relative to the enacting of policies that affect the operations of the City. [Learn more here](#)

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The City Charter and Municipal Code set the annual salary for the Mayor, Municipal Judge and Councilors as follows:

**Mayor** - Effective July 1, 2025, when a Mayor begins a new, elected four-year term, the Mayor shall receive an annual salary of \$97,765.

**Municipal Judge** - Effective from the date the Municipal Judge begins a new, elected four-year term, the Municipal Judge shall receive an annual salary of \$80,500.

**City Councilor** – Effective July 1, 2025, when a City Councilor begins a new, elected four-year term, the City Councilor shall receive an annual salary of \$39,106.

The annual salary of the Mayor, Municipal Judge or a Councilor shall not be increased or decreased during their respective term of office, pursuant to Article IV, Section 27 of the New Mexico Constitution.

Per 30.03 (C): Councilors and eligible family members shall have the option to participate in city-sponsored elective insurance coverages for medical, dental, vision, and life, with the same conditions and terms as offered to classified city employees. City Councilors shall not be eligible for leave benefits offered to classified city employees.

Per 31.15 (E): The Mayor and eligible family members shall have the option to participate in city-sponsored elective insurance coverages for medical, dental, vision, and life, with the same conditions and terms as offered to classified city employees. The Mayor shall not be eligible for leave benefits offered to classified city employees.

Per 34.02 (B)(3): The Municipal Judge shall have the option to participate in any city-sponsored life insurance and health insurance programs on the same conditions and terms as any other city employee.

# FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Rio Rancho has a City Council-City Manager form of government.

What is the council-manager form of government?

Council-manager government combines the strong political leadership of elected officials with the strong managerial experience of an appointed manager or administrator. All power and authority to set policy rests with an elected governing body, which includes a mayor or chairperson and members of the council, commission, or board. The governing body in turn hires a nonpartisan manager who has very broad authority to run the organization.

How does a council-manager form of government work?

The elected council represents their community and develops a long-range vision for its future. They establish policies that affect the overall operation of the community and are responsive to residents' needs and wishes. To ensure that these policies are carried out and that the entire community is equitably served, the governing body appoints a highly trained professional manager on the basis of his/her education, experience, skills, and abilities (and not their political allegiances). If the manager is not responsive to the governing body, it has the authority to terminate the manager at any time.

What is the role of the council?

The council is the community's legislative and policy-making body. Power is centralized in the elected council, which, for example, approves the budget and determines the tax rate. The council also focuses on the community's goals, major projects, and such long-term considerations as community growth, land use development, capital improvement and financing, and strategic planning. The council hires a professional manager to implement the administrative responsibilities related to these goals and supervises the manager's performance.