

FINAL COPY
Torrance County Board of Commissioners
Regular Commission Meeting
May 08, 2024
9:00 AM

Commissioners Present:

RYAN SCHWEBACH – COUNTY CHAIRMAN
KEVIN MCCALL – COUNTY VICE CHAIRMAN
SAMUEL SCHROPP – COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Others Present:

JANICE BARELA – MADAM COUNTY MANAGER
TRACY SEDILLO – DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
MICHAEL GARCIA – COUNTY ATTORNEY
LINDA JARAMILLO – COUNTY CLERK
GENELL MORRIS – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I
DONALD GOEN – COUNTY P & Z DIRECTOR

1. **Call Meeting to order.**

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Calls the May 08, 2023, Regular Commission Meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

2. **Pledge led by:** Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman

Invocation lead by: Kevin McCall– County Commissioner

3. **Changes to the Agenda:**

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Remove agenda item 12 C (2) from the agenda.

4. **PROCLAMATION: None**
5. **CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS: None**
6. **BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: None**
7. **PUBLIC COMMENT and COMMUNICATIONS:**

Linda Jaramillo-County Clerk: Early voting and Absentee by mail started yesterday May 7th, 2024. 167 ballots were sent out and 27 people voted in person. I encourage everybody to vote early, Absentee by Mail or on Election Day. For Absentee by Mail, I suggest people request the application as soon as possible to ensure we get the ballot back with time for processing. Thank you.

Nathan Dial – Mayor of Estancia: I want to apologize to the Wrye family. I asked for data on any applications about water being converted from irrigation to commercial, to be sold to leave the county. The list I saw was a list of all applications within the county. When I got into the system and read the application, which is in water legalese, I didn't understand. I realized the Wryes are not trying to sell water out of this valley. They are maintaining the current well. To the Wrye family, I apologize. I'm sorry for the statement I made in the last meeting it was wrong.

I did confirm that as long as an individual puts in an application, posted on the OSE website, and published in a newspaper in Santa Fe, Bernalillo, or San Miguel County, they have met their legal requirements because there is no newspaper in Torrance County. I asked the Officer at the State Engineers if they could give faith to the county or the municipalities of what's going on, and their response was, no, the legal obligation is met. In saying that, yes, Jacob Serrano and Anna Serrano through Sun Zia transmission have a proper application. It has been approved and they are legally able to sell their irrigation water as commercial water. It goes back to the statement that, yes, the precedent has been set. This is a legal way of doing it. If enough people do this, I believe all the shallow wells are going to start going dry. Thank you for your time.

Ann Schropp – Resident: Mr. Schropp and I attended the first New Mexico County Commission Affiliate Retreat in Ruidoso. One of the speakers was addressing changes to BLM rules and regs. He told us we had three choices, the same three we have talked about, number one, we can do nothing, and the changes will happen, and they'll roll right over us. Number two, you can negotiate and compromise. Both of those words were spoken in a tone of complete disgust. Number three, "You can do what I prefer and get into a good old-fashioned scrap". He then proceeded to tell us how to conduct paper terrorism on the government, where the government doesn't talk to each other, doesn't make any effort to understand their position, and for goodness sake, doesn't ever concede a point. I have a somewhat different philosophy. I even have a parable for it. I had one dollar I met a man who had one dollar. We exchanged dollars. When we parted, we each had one dollar. I had an idea and met a man who had an idea. We exchanged ideas, and when we parted, we each had two ideas. This is how we build everything from local programs to nations. When necessary programs, such as our Emergency Management Department have been sorely neglected, a leader with ideas who listens to others' ideas, and a rulebook will build it back. Torrance County is lucky to have that in our Emergency Manager. We're building that with our Fire and EMS Departments. When the management style, "we've always done it this way," is overseeing the downfall of the project, it's time for some new ideas in management style. Thank you.

Erick Andrada Rodriguez: Audio recording in Spanish. Translation below.

Aurora Arreola: Policy Manager at New Mexico Immigrant Law Center: I am here to uplift the voices of detainees and the Torrance County Detention Facility. I will be reading the previous statement you just heard by Erick Andrada Rodriguez. Hello, my name is Erick Andrada Rodriguez. Through this medium, I will inform you about the cruel things that one lives and experiences inside Core Civic prisons. When we arrived there in Torrance, we arrived at the poor medical care that exists in that center, where they denied me medical assistance many times, and on many occasions, the security guards were not attentive, to be able to attend to medical emergencies. I was a victim of that abuse. They only gave me pain pills. I didn't know what the pills were for. It was only the pills, and I had to take them. They didn't provide me with a medical checkup or anything. They also gave bad advice. During the credible fear interview, we did not know what we were facing. The person who was giving this communication instead of guiding us for the credible

fear interview, discouraged you. At that center, we also suffered torture because they did not take us out routinely to the recreational area. The food is bad and is bad nutritionally, for the immigrants in this center in Torrance. I weighed around 89 to 90 kilos. I'm currently at 65 kilos. I was transferred to Mexico with the intention that they were going to take me to Venezuela, but I'm still here. This is cruel, and quite difficult to endure. I want to return to my country but haven't been able to.

Andres Esquivel: Audio recording in Spanish played. Translation below.

Osiris: Continued the same recording in Spanish. Translation below.

Alondra Reyes: I will be translating the audio we just heard. Hello, my name is Benjamin Alonzo. I'm 32, from the state of Morelos, Mexico, and in the pillar of a family of five people. My wife's family took me to the United States for safety, but I had to return to Mexico for my family. I was kidnapped two months later and almost executed. Where I live, they execute people in broad daylight. They don't respect the lives of children or women. There is zero respect for life. This is why I had to return. I do not want this life for my children. I surrendered to immigration when I came here, and they took me away.

In Torrance, I suffered a stroke, but the prison staff did not pay attention to me. The response time was very slow despite the symptoms I presented. In the hospital, they can be handcuffed; and my hands and feet are handcuffed at all times. Even when the doctor suggested removing the handcuffs for a faster recovery. They did not remove the handcuffs no matter how much the doctor requested. I was not allowed to speak to a lawyer in the hospital. When the lawyer went to see me at the hospital, they did not let her talk to me. I had a hearing with the judge that I do not remember clearly because I was on medications, one called Keppra, which put me in a drowsy state. They woke me up to receive the call and the judge ordered my deportation. I never received documents and didn't sign anything. They forced me to leave the hospital against the doctor's recommendations.

When they took me out of the hospital, they returned me to the prison. In two hours, I was on my way to another place. I was not told where I was going. They did not give any information. When I arrived at the last prison, they didn't know what they were going to do with me. The officers didn't even know why I was

there. I told him that I didn't feel well. They took me to the infirmary where I stayed the whole time. I didn't receive proper care and medications did not work. I did physical tests that the doctor ordered, and he required I be rehabilitated. After a week the medic forced me to walk without the walker and I fell that same day I was deported to Juarez. I'm stuck at the border. I do not have my identity documents and I do not know what to do. I am stuck. I have no family and no money.

Jessica Martinez - Director of Policy and coalition building at the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center: I am also an immigration attorney who specializes in working with Special Immigrant juveniles and I serve as one of the Board of Directors of the Immigration Law Section of the New Mexico State Bar.

As attorneys, we take an oath and have to hold ourselves to a high ethical standard. We are trained in the rules of evidence and legal standards. At NMILC, I work with attorneys and legal experts who have documented and substantiated claims of terrible conditions in these detention centers. We hear those who support the prison's ICE contract, try, and refute these persistent reports of violations. I met with detainees in the Torrance facility and saw with my eyes men with injuries and heard from several of them how bad the conditions were. I met with several attorneys and legal advocates who have witnessed detainees with serious injuries, suffering, and pain.

A case that continues to haunt me, to this day, is of a man who had a bone sticking out of his ankle, and nothing was being done for him. The experiences detainees have shared continue to fall on deaf ears, as no action has been taken to stop their suffering. This is unacceptable and does not align with our values in the state. It does not align with the essence of our core humanity. Legal experts have said that the detention centers in New Mexico are some of the worst, if not the worst in the country. Not only have we documented and substantiated these claims, but these conditions have also been confirmed by multiple government oversight bodies as the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the Office of the Inspector General. Every member of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation has called for the cancellation of the ICE contract at Torrance, we will continue to elevate and uplift the voices of detainees. We hope you will work with us as the only viable solution in this instance is to end the suffering of detainees and take a stance or refuse to be complicit in human rights abuses. Thank you for your time.

Marcie Wallin – Torrance County Fair Board: I'm here to clarify some statements that were made at the previous County Commission meeting. Our agenda was posted on time, thank you, Manager Barela, for clarifying that during the meeting. A correct statement was made, and attendance was for our special meeting. However, the public needs to know that the agendas are sent to all Commissioners, the newspaper, all the County Ag departments as well as the extension agents, and all of our superintendents receive the agenda as well.

Several families that attend our meetings regularly have been involved, either as a fellow board member or the secretary. They know the process is lengthy when we go through the Fair Book. A comment was made that we make our own rules, and do make the rules, and that is true. That is what we are tasked with to run a County Fair. I have researched County Fair Boards throughout New Mexico. I wanted to be up to speed and do things as other counties do. Their Fair Boards, some do have committees that come up with the rules. When I asked who was on those committees, they stated Fair Board members. Some of those had three Fair Board members in total and maybe had 21 on their entire Fair Board. To clarify for all Torrance county residents, this statement was not made at a Commission Meeting, but it was made in our meeting that our budget is \$9 million. I wish that were true. Unfortunately, it is not true. Thank you.

*Comments by ZOOM

Barbara Schroder- Volunteer with the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center: I will read a statement from Jose Manuel Nunez Garcia, a current client of NMILC. NMILC gathered this statement and is sharing it with his consent. We confirm that it's a true and correct translation and the recitation of Jose's Words. My name is Jose Manuel Nunez Garcia. I am currently detained at the Otero County processing center but spent several weeks at Torrance before I was transferred. I will be very sincere. This is too much abuse for me, for a person. That food is not food for a person. We were not given enough calories. On two occasions I received food that was decomposing, bitter, and rotting. I spent much time hungry and with an empty stomach. It felt like a business. They don't give you enough food so you will spend your money in the commissary. Concerning the treatment, I received from the guards of TCDF. The staff didn't pay attention to us, we were often alone. When they did speak to us, they spoke to us with bad words. We are people, you have to speak to people with dignity with politeness. I think it is not fair to have people detained for so many months, and that we're subject to mistreatment. Maybe my opinion isn't important to you all. But for me as a human

being the situation in Torrance was very bad. I was very discriminated against, I experienced verbal mistreatment. It's a deprivation of liberty all at the hands of the guards and TCDF and at the hands of ICE. I never want to experience this again in my life. I had the idea that the US was a country of laws, but inside of TCDF our human rights have been violated. Thank you.

Edwin Garcia: I was a detainee at Torrance County Detention Facility. I've been released, and I'm out free with my family in the United States. I'm here now speaking to you all once again, but now with no holding back or being kept quiet. I'm still in contact with people in the Torrance Detention Facility, or should I say, Torrance County Prison. They advised me and described to me the same following issues. The lack of staff, especially on the weekends, not being there, which is a safety hazard in case of an emergency. The poor medical attention when needed and lack of communication between the guard staff and trainees due to not speaking Spanish or guards also not wanting to speak Spanish, even though they're able to. No accountability for all the medical treatment by the guards. When I was there, I could advocate for them because I spoke English and I speak English very well. Even then, I was still given a hard time. The last dreadful week I was there in Torrance, there was an audit of the facility. When the people came in for the audit, I was not only denied once but three times by guard staff to speak with the auditors. On one of those occasions, I banged on my cell door and got one of the auditors' attention which was a woman who looked right at me through my window cell. As I yelled, hey, I speak English, I want to speak to you about this place and what's going on with staff, they quickly shuffled them out of the pod. I then spoke to a guard and asked, why am I being denied? He answered, there's nothing I'm able to do for you. This is not a situation to be taken lightly at all. These are ongoing problems that have not stopped and are not going to be solved. They can't and nor will they be able to fix these issues. This is a no-brainer for everyone. This contract should never be considered to be renewed at all. I stand by my comment, and I stand by the comments provided to you guys are true. I lived it, in real life. Thank you all again for your time. God bless.

PJ Podesta: I'm a legal services provider when people are detained by ICE at TCDF. While doing my preparation, people often raise upsetting conditions. We report these here because we hope that the Commission will remove the County's role in contracting with ICE and Core Civic who act with impunity. To illustrate, I'm going to speak on an ongoing issue that ICE and Core Civic have not addressed, despite long-running reports of sewage floods. The other day someone

who was detained at TCDF, one year ago reached out to me. During our chat said, "They had us in Unit 6A for two days and the smell was foul. There was overflow from the toilets, all the toilets on the bottom level in the central area in the shower". This comment struck me because this past fall we heard similar reports from inside the facility and alerted the Department of Homeland Security Offices for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Inspector General, and the detention ombudsman about this.

I'm going to read a series of excerpts from four such reports spanning four months in a row. " On November 14th, sewage floodwater in unit 8B containing physical human excrement covered the downstairs cells i.e. half of the unit cells. On December 12th, several individuals housing unit 6C reported that at least four cells in the unit had sewage smelling of excrement consistently pooling in them. On December 19th, several individuals in housing unit 5B reported that at least five drains in the common areas are fully backed up with sewage water containing liquid excrement flooding areas of the unit, including the shower and the dining area. Several men detained in the unit have experienced vomiting, nausea, and dizziness. On the morning of January 25, 2024 people detained in unit 6B observed sewage overflow from approximately nine of the unit's ground floor toilets and individual cells. On February 27th, showers in Unit 7A never draining and the men are bathing in stagnant wastewater. Most men in the unit have developed an unidentified skin infection involving painful itching, significant discoloration, and unprecedented visible fungus. This is a snapshot; it turns out that similar reports go back to at least March 2022. We're not able to spend all our time tracking this one issue when we are supposed to provide legal services. Thank you.

Diana Nevarez - Las Americas: I am reading an excerpt from a letter from 10 men formerly detained at Torrance. Being in a place like this is tough. The conditions that we're living through are terrible, it's torture. One of the problems that this lockup causes us is the psychological damage that we suffer every day since none of us has ever been in jail or had to see a psychologist and a psychiatrist or take pills to be able to sleep due to the anxiety, depression, and headaches. When we see a psychologist or psychiatrist one of the questions they ask us is if we want to hurt ourselves or if we have suicidal thoughts. To this question, we must answer, no, because otherwise, if we don't keep quiet rather affirmatively, they immediately take us to a cold dark cell, which we call the hole, due to the descriptions of the people who are unfortunately there. In the hole, we have to be practically naked because they only give us a hospital gown. We have to sleep on the concrete and that's only if you can sleep since the sound of the air conditioners

is like a car engine. The food they give us is raw carrots and celery. The lights are on all night. When we leave that place we are physically and psychologically damaged. One of us left the hole with a damaged rib caused by the concrete where he slept. To get out of the hole we have to lie and see that the thought of self-harm has passed. We have to say that we have recovered, when in reality we leave worse than when we entered. Thank you.

Ian Philabaum - Innovation law lab: I'm reading an open letter written and signed by 23 men who were detained on December 1, 2023. The United States with its immigration process is stealing and taking our lives, and we can do absolutely nothing. They take away our human rights. We're being mistreated, killed slowly and psychologically. It is a cry for help to the world for the rights of human beings that the US defends so much. There must be reasoning as to what this country preaches in its defense. For crossing a wire and surrendering to immigration we are being detained serving sentences in federal prisons where we are isolated from the world without communication and telephones. We have suffered abuse. We are locked in our cells five times a day. We're locked 11 hours a day in the four-by-two-meter cell. They give sleeping medication to all of us who express some type of depression or anxiety. Those who take them have the effect of taking drugs that make you sleep all day. Some who take the pills do not wake up to eat. They take us out for recess only twice a week. Some officials arrive screaming when the count time comes. They have no compassion. Five times daily, they come in shouting and intimidating. They pass by every half hour shining lights in each room. They open the door and slam it waking us up and scaring everyone. They wake us up at 4:30 am to 5 am for breakfast and eat a miserable meal, most of them losing weight from hunger. The world will only see worse disasters and harm to people if something major is not done about what was happening at the Estancia Correctional Facility in New Mexico. Families separated, men deteriorated by a slow death but in the eyes of no intervein or being seen. We want to live. Thank you very much.

Tracey Master: Former employee and resident: Commissioner Schwebach, Several months ago, you commented on a finance discussion concerning stopping blaming Tyler for the things that are going on. I don't know the answer. I learned last week that there were concerns that the DWI budget was overspent last year and that it was going to be looked at very closely this year. I want to make sure that you understand that I discovered in December of 22, that there were some issues and submitted 27 journal entries to the previous Finance Director. None of those

were completed. Once they were submitted, I didn't think about them again, I went about my regular job. Then as we were closing out the year, and as you know, with certain grants, it's use it or lose it. I was working to use it, so we didn't lose it. I did a visit with Finance throughout FY23 and followed proper procedures. When I realized at the end of May first part of June, that overtime monies for the Sheriff's Office into the DWI program and the drivers were not attributed to the proper line items and knew that the fund was going to be overextended, because of that, I immediately went to my previous supervisor and said this to him. He said it was because of Tyler that they were having issues, and they were trying to get it figured out. One of the problems could have been that we started using Tyler around September 22. Yet we were not getting training on Tyler until March of 23. I want you to know that I was diligent in making sure that expenditures were made properly.

Jovanny Sabastian Hernandez - Manager of the New Mexico DREAM team:

We are advocating on behalf of the New Mexican Dream Team, urging the Torrance County Commission to end contracts in the Torrance County Detention Facility. We've heard many testimonies or articles describing the inhumane conditions of this place. It's sad to see that places like this are still operating because of the profit motive for human dignity. We have to understand that asylum seekers are seeking a place to feel safe and to call home. Being in horrible places like this one is not the solution and will never be, detainees are treated badly. They're fed poor food; health care is denied and their mental health and physical well-being in general are put at risk day to day. New Mexico residents should not live in fear of being detained in Federal Immigration Detention Centers, or seeing their families go through that horror. No asylum seeker should have to question why they are placed there. As public servants, we hope you stand by your community's values. Together we can envision, that New Mexico does not thrive off caging populations but welcomes migrants and asylum seekers.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. COMMISSION:** Request approval of minutes of the April 10, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve minutes of the April 10, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

B. COMMISSION: Request approval of minutes of the April 24, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve minutes of the April 24, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

9. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A. FINANCE & PURCHASING: Request approval of payables.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve payables.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

10. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE/AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE:

A. COMMISSION: Public Hearing to consider: AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BOND POLICY PURSUANT TO THE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BOND ACT, ESTABLISHING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES, AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MANAGER TO ENGAGE PROFESSIONALS TO EVALUATE AND ADVISE ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND UNDERLYING LEASE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE COMPANIES, AND ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK UNDER WHICH THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON APPLICATIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to Move into Public Hearing.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

9:45 AM

Michael I. Garcia-County Attorney: Mr. Burpo, Do you swear to tell the truth?

Rob Burpo – First American Financial Advisors: I do. The county has been fortunate over the years in the number of Industrial Revenue Bonds done without policies. Most counties in the state of New Mexico have a policy or ordinance that deals with the issuance and the process dealing with Industrial Revenue Bonds. As the county has become more well-known in the communities you'll be seeing a lot more projects coming your way, not necessarily in the wind industry, not the same vendors and project developers you have been working with. This policy mirrors Sandoval and Curry counties. What we're trying to do is make sure that, when somebody applies for an IRB, the county is dealing with as much information at the get-go as possible. The other thing that we're doing, that has not been done in the past is requiring a \$10,000 deposit. The reason for that deposit is, that the state statutes demand that the counties cannot spend its own money in dealing with Industrial Revenue Bonds, those expenses, your contract attorney, your bond counsel, our firm, those things have to be borne by the project developer and not

the county. In the past, you have been fortunate, because you've had big firms come in that understand that. As more folks come into the county they may not be aware of the policies of the state. We thought it was important to raise this policy for you.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: With that \$10,000 deposit, at which point will we credit them or how will that be handled?

Rob Burpo – First American Financial Advisors: They will deposit the county; it will go into the Treasury, in a special line item for disbursement. Depending on the level of work, when the transaction comes in the three parties will have a conversation with them as a project developer in terms of the level of work that is going to be needed, the timelines for those, and if they don't agree to those kinds of things. Bond counsel and your contract attorney all have ongoing seasonal expenses that are supposed to be paid by these folks. This will be used as a down payment. If the project doesn't go any further or incur any expenses or the developer walks away you can return that money. Depending on how much work is required at what stage of development. On a typical deal like wind farms that \$10,000 is a drop in the bucket. To be candid, we are trying to make sure that people understand the statutes. If you have a policy, then they understand the workload, or lack of workload, that the three outside parties of the county are going to incur. They should know that that's going to be an expense of theirs per state statute. Typically what will happen in these deals is that we will enter into a contract, and we have to represent the County. We have to contract but the contract states that they, the project developer are responsible for them. We work with a developer at the very beginning to say, this is the workload that's going to be incurred, based on what you're telling us your project is. It may be that the \$10,000 doesn't cover some initial work, they determined they don't want this project, in which case they might get all their money back.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: For those of you listening in the gallery, what we're trying to do is protect the County from the cost of poorly run projects, from companies or corporations who back out of a project and leave the mess behind, or other kinds of problems, that may be encountered that are not caused by the company. We're discussing at this point, bonding, and theories to protect the citizens of Torrance County from costs incurred by business ventures that don't work out.

Rob Burpo – First American Financial Advisors: That is spot on. This ordinance creates an application that they have to fill out. Some of the things in

there are who's their attorney, what is their address, who are their principles, and what are their backgrounds, that built the project? How many of these people are going to be employed during construction and how many people are going to be employed to operate? The basics of a business venture of any kind that the county should know.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Do we have the flexibility? Is this going to be a standard bond across all types of industries? Some businesses will require more money. A hydrogen plant is going to have a footprint, which if that entity were to file for bankruptcy and walk away, could cost the county a lot of money to clean up.

Rob Burpo – First American Financial Advisors: One of the things that are important in this ordinance is it specifically states funding and reaffirms what the state statute says that the county cannot ever be on the hook for any of the debt. Let's say they build a billion-dollar hydrogen plant. They are going to get that money from third parties. They are not going to get it from the county, that's the way they are funded. By law, the county cannot operate the facility, you didn't have any say in the business. Also, you can't be in any way obligated to make any of the payments on any of the debt or any of the operations. That's one of the things that we want to put in place. In another county, we've had people come in thinking the county's going to issue the bond and be on the hook. We want to make sure everyone understands Industrial Revenue Bonds, and how they work. They're on the hook for everything. The only issue, depending on the quality of the developer, is the operating expense escrow account which we have done on a couple of transactions in other parts of the state. In the transaction, we could make them put up an escrow account that's reserved for ongoing expenses, that's a common practice.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: My concern is, in Iowa when I was living in a part of the country where family farms were required to be bonded at a much lower rate than Tyson Foods. They all run in concentrated animal feed operations. When one of the family farms broke, their bond was for \$5 million. The manure pit broke and just did all kinds of environmental damage that ran way past that farm. That's why I was asking, do we have the flexibility to say to a hydrogen plant, or some other kind of industry coming in here that we expect a bond, which is a percentage of capital investment? I understand what you said about legally we wouldn't be holding the bag. When they had that kind of disaster, they just went out of business and walked away. I understand this is to protect and

help us. Do we have the flexibility in writing these contracts to cover larger or smaller operations at different bonding rates?

Rob Burpo – First American Financial Advisors: Yes, you do. That's one of the important things about Industrial Revenue Bonds. A lot of the language is boilerplate if you will. There are always special provisions that we put in there specifically for the given transaction. For example, the recent wind turbine transaction, we require from the turbine operator at this time. When the blades expire, and they need to be replaced they have to be removed from the county. As you drive east, there's a bunch of blades just laid on the ground, that was a transaction that our firm was not involved in. We can be pretty specific on the language as a condition of making the transaction and that can be in the form of performance bonds, put up by a third party or reliable insurance company. They can be required to be put into an escrow account, held either as a third party or the accounting. This gives the county the flexibility to recall funds or impose their will on transactions.

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Does anyone have any more questions?

*No response

Michael I. Garcia-County Attorney: For the record, I did review it as well and I think it is very good.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to come out of public hearing.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

10:00 AM

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: We will look at this ordinance at the next Commissioners meeting for approval.

11. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION: None

12. APPROVAL

- A. **GRANTS:** Request approval of contractual Amendment by submission of a BAR Request to New Mexico Children's Youth & Families Department for Juvenile Justice Continuum Funding for increased contractual services for Girls Circle; Amendment will be to Article II for an increase of \$17,249.25.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: We are requesting approval for an amended contract that we have from CYFD for this increase of \$17,249.25. It is to cover the cost of the girl's circle facilitator. We have an increase in programming which led to an increase in the number of sessions. The funding is coming from CYFD, not the county.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve the contractual Amendment by submission of a BAR Request to New Mexico Children's Youth & Families Department for Juvenile Justice Continuum Funding for increased contractual services for Girls Circle; Amendment will be to Article II for an increase of \$17,249.25.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

- B. **SHERIFF:** Request approval to pay bonuses for the LE-Recruitment and Retention Grant from the New Mexico Department of Finance & Administration totaling \$37,500.

Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant: This was from grant funds that you had previously approved. At this point, I'm bringing to you the proposed

schedule for the payout of bonuses. The table was included in the packet. I want to go over how we determine this. This was awarded last year. Last year's award was \$37,500. I've compared the bonus schedule that was developed for last year and found that we have fewer deputies eligible this year for the award. I adjusted that schedule based on the number of deputies that we have that are eligible for FY 2024. After entering the proposed awards, I determined there was a remaining balance of \$3,500 and I divided that balance by 10 deputies which is the deputies not including the Undersheriff, which equaled \$350. I added \$350 to each of those deputies based on the schedule excluding any taxes. It's based on their years of service. Deputies have to have served the department a minimum of three months.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve to pay bonuses for LE-Recruitment and Retention Grant from New Mexico Department of Finance & Administration totaling \$37,500.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

C. SHERIFF: Request approval to create new positions in the Torrance County Sheriff's Office, effective immediately:

- 1) Two Community Service Aides (commissioned, uncertified officers) at \$20.00/hour.

David Frazee-County Sheriff: We are coming here today to advise you of a situation we have in the department of a shortage of manpower and a plan on how we're going to deal with that. At this point, we are recruiting and hiring but need some immediate action. I would ask my Undersheriff to explain this in detail to you.

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: We are short-staffed for deputies. We are still utilizing them for the transport of prisoners to and from the court and other

facilities etc. The sole purpose of a Sheriff's Department by state statute is to provide court security and transport of prisoners. This is something that we can't vet out, this is something that we are responsible for providing. We are having to request overtime for our Criminal Investigations Division, our deputies are all putting in the overtime to provide this service. We are not getting applicants for this position. There are no deputies within our department who are eager or excited to provide transports as their sole job. We are asking for a non-certified commissioned individual who would be listed as a CSA or Community Service Aide. I do realize that this is something that was removed from the Department not too long ago. It was tried and simply did not work for our department.

The way that we have talked about this position will be similar to what we had in the past. The responsibilities of these individuals will be transportation of prisoners to and from court and other facilities when needed. It will be to provide court security, they will be able to provide specific services such as service of documents, nothing that would require a law enforcement decision-making type of scenario. Even some of the service of documents would still be given to certified deputies. However, they can handle things such as when they are required to be in court at such and such date. The way that this would benefit the department is we would have the ability to utilize them for the services that are required. We would not have to pull deputies or request that they provide more overtime than what they're already doing. I have spoken with County Manager Barela and our legal about this position and they have guided me in specific ways on how we can provide this service the way that it needs to be laid out. I can provide a job description with better detail. I haven't completed that yet because I wasn't sure exactly what direction this meeting may go.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Why were these positions removed in the first place?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: I don't have a good answer for that. I don't think it was a good decision at that time, the Sheriff may have addressed that.

David Frazee-County Sheriff: It was my opinion then that we need certified officers, especially when they're handling prisoners. The problem that we have found ourselves in since that time is the fact that it is very difficult for us to get our deputies who are certified to go and do this job. It is looked upon as a demeaning job, and they don't want to be doing that full-time. We are at the bottom level where we can go without cutting services back. If I push this on the deputies, I

have a fear that some of them may leave. We had a Sergeant leave the other day to take a job in Albuquerque. I don't want to push it to that point. I think that we have it at a workable point. In theory, it would be better to have everybody certified. When we can't get the certified deputies to want to do that particular job we need to hire people that want to do that job.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: How is this position as an uncertified officer? What are their abilities and how are they equipped?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: They would be identified as a CSA, Community Servicing Aid. We do not have anybody filling this position. We do have two uncertified individuals who have not yet been to the academy, and they are filling this position and are currently assisting with transports. When they provide that service, they are in unmarked units, they travel together, and they are required to attend the same classes for firearms that deputies are required to attend. They are required for the less-than-lethal that they carry, a 16-hour course for tasers. They are welcome to attend all of the training in-house that we provide to all of the deputies. They are equipped with that they are just not certified, as of yet. If this position is approved, we would like for them to have that same opportunity, the same training in-house that we can provide. We want them to be safe and able to provide that service. They would not go to the academy and become a certified police officer.

David Frazee-County Sheriff: They wouldn't wear the same uniform.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: You mentioned firearms training, will these Community Service Aids carry firearms?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Yes

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Currently we have one deputy who is going through to become certified and have a year to become certified.

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Yes, \$20 An hour uncertified.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Do you envision this as a potential that there's going to be some individuals that want to stay here?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Yes.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Are they going to want to use this to move into a deputy position?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Maybe eventually. We have one individual who was hired to go to the academy as an uncertified deputy in the hopes that he would be going to the academy. He is enjoying the position. He helps with our SORNA which is the registered Sex Offender Registrations. He has also helped me with the service of documents, and court security transports. He has expressed interest in staying in that position.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Is this in response to a shortage of police officers all around the country?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Yes, that's correct.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Every Police Department and Sheriff's Department in the country is having trouble getting qualified individuals. We are at a point with a couple of deputies leaving, that we're at an officer safety, citizen safety point with being able to patrol. Would you agree with that?

David Frazee-County Sheriff: I agree.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: In adapting in this way, I understood your point about doing away with the CSAs and going to all certified officers when you brought it to us. But you are now responding to a critical shortage of qualified candidates to be certified?

David Frazee-County Sheriff: Yes, sir. I have two applicants who are currently certified that we're looking at.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: You can take these two CSAs, and free up patrol deputies, to be back on the road covering each other and providing the coverage that Torrance County requires.

David Frazee-County Sheriff: Yes, sir. So exactly.

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: I would like to propose taking one of our certified positions and turning that into two uncertified positions.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: If we have people under the county's flag, so to speak, we're carrying firearms, and they are not certified legally. Does that change the Captain's liability?

Michael I. Garcia-County Attorney: They will still be covered under the Tort Claims Act, whatever they did we're responsible for.

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: How long did it take to get trained to be comfortable in this position from coming in totally green to getting trained for them to do this job?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: It took three weeks for these uncertified individuals to be able to provide court security, the service of documents, and transports. It's not extensive and that does include the 16 hours of firearms training and in-house training that Deputy Saavedra provides.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Who conducts the firearm training?

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: We have several individuals that we utilize. Right now our sergeant is in class this week to become a firearms instructor. We did lose our firearms instructor to another agency. However, we have utilized the Edgewood Police Department, Moriarty Police Department, and Estancia Police Department to provide that service.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I have concerns, you say three weeks, they're up and running, carrying a gun. Where are patrol deputies? That's a much longer process.

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: For firearms, they are required to have a 16-hour training to carry a firearm that is for law enforcement officers.

David Frazee-County Sheriff: They won't be carrying a gun until they're certified with a firearm.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I'm in favor of this change. I think this Commission is going to have to pay pretty close attention to who we hire. I know that the department will have very effective oversight of the CSAs carrying firearms.

Stephanie Reynolds-County Undersheriff: Yes. If it is approved, we will have Deputy Saavedra provide the training for them, because he is the one currently in the position of court services, which is inclusive of everything that we've discussed. He is a certified trainer in the state of New Mexico. All of the training that he provides is up-to-date and accurate. He would oversee how they perform what duties they are given.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Makes a motion to add two Community Service aide positions for uncertified officers at the rate of \$20 an hour and remove one vacant certified deputy position from the Sheriff's Office.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

2) One Patrol Sergeant at \$35.50/hour (current Patrol Sergeant salary) –
Removed from Agenda

D. ASSESSOR: Request approval of 2024-2025 Assessor's Valuation Maintenance and Reappraisal Plan.

Linda Gallegos-Chief Deputy Assessor: I provided our Assessor Revaluation Reappraisal Plan. You have that in your packets. This report is a flagship report going forward. In the next reports that we have, you won't see a report that's this size and contains more exact information. County Assessors are exclusively responsible for determining the values of property for property taxation purposes. Assessors also implement a program of updating property values, so that current correct values of property are maintained, we have the sole responsibility and authority at the county level for property valuation maintenance. This aids the Board of County Commissioners in determining whether the County Assessor is operating an efficient program of property valuation maintenance and in determining the amount to be allocated to that office for this function. The County

Assessor shall present with his annual budget request, a written report known as the annual report, this is the valuation maintenance and reappraisal, but I'd also like to include it as our annual report until we do quarterly reports.

The report contains improvements of properties added to property valuation records during the year, additions of new property evaluation records, increases and decreases in the valuation during the year, the relation of sales prices of property sold to the values of property for property taxation purposes, and the current status of overall property valuation maintenance program in the county. It also contains expenditures from the county property valuation fund which shall be made pursuant to this property valuation program presented by the County Assessor's Office and approved by the majority of the County Commissioners. The purpose of a valuation maintenance program is by the statute. The purpose of this report is to aid the Board again in determining whether the County Assessor is operating an efficient program of property valuation maintenance, and this program is subject to approval once again.

The valuation maintenance program developed by the Torrance County Assessor's Office contains two major components. One is reappraisal and data maintenance of all taxable parcels on a yearly cycle and a door-to-door re-inspection of all taxable improved real property every four to six years. This program can only be implemented and completed with an adequate budget and proper management of employee time and resources. I'm not getting into the budget here; the statute includes that terminology and work on the budget next week. We are provided with two budget sources that fund our operation. One is the General Fund, which is directly funded from the county coffers, and a 1% Valuation Fund or Property Valuation Fund. That Revaluation Fund is mandated by statute, and it requires that all entities except institutions of higher levels, collect a property tax levy that helps share the cost of reappraisal and assessment of parcels within their jurisdiction by contributing 1% of their property tax revenue to this fund. This is a special use fund that may only be used by the Assessor for property valuation maintenance and reappraisal.

Further down in your packet, you'll see that there's a chart on there that shows the Assessors General Fund budget history. For fiscal year 21-22, we were at a little over \$650,000. The next General Fund Budget 22-23 was over \$677,000 and in 23-24, we were at \$706,500. Our 1% valuation budget was at \$70,000 for FY21-22 \$158, for FY22-23, and \$182,571 for FY23-24. One of the processes in our offices

is the property ownership transfers, the way I refer to it in our office is a well-oiled machine. Where every part is integral to the process and production of the information that's critical to our processes.

The Customer Service Representatives and our processors are in the legal documents transfer ownership, where all of the new information is updated on the account, including exemptions, or change of address whatever's needed. Our goal in this particular area is to transfer all information within two weeks of the County Clerk's filing data and minimize data entry for errors. We want to ensure that all transfers are completed before the preparation of the annual mailing of the Notices of Value to the taxpayer each year. I also included the GIS, mapping, and maintenance. The GIS Department is not located in the Assessor's Office, we work closely with that department. They assist us in our maps creating accounts and identifying new parcel numbers, etc., including land combinations and splits. This department not only provides assistance to the Assessor's Office but also to the county and cities, such as utility departments, Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, 911, Clerk, and Planning and Zoning Departments. The reason why I could include that as important is because we use Eagleview Pictometry, and GIS is included in that information.

The next topic is the valuation appraisal of real and personal property. We are responsible for that information, not only real property, which is land, and residences, but also business personal property, and livestock. We are also keeping up with the state assessment properties, which are those properties that are railroads, communications, pipelines, airlines, public utilities, and wind turbines. In addition, we also keep up with the market by processing affidavits of transfers. This helps us to continually monitor and watch the market and develop our sales ratios. We also are using new construction permits, land splits and combinations, agricultural land, and grazing reviews. We have a CAMA which is a Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal modeling and data entry. The business personal property and livestock renditions are sent out every year. We also keep track of the over 3000 manufactured mobile home accounts valuations, removal from the county, etc. Our Appraisal Department uses three approaches to valuation. The sales comparison approach, the cost approach, and the income approach. We're trying to get away from using the sales comparison approach as a general practice by using all the information that I've spoken to you about to get into a more precise mass reappraisal.

Quality control and preparation of value data for printing notices are important. Our CAMA specialist is the system programmer for data quality maintenance and works with the appraisal staff. She is in charge of printing reports of all taxable property, and lists concerning value, and differences from one year to the next. She also assists the appraisers with their field reviews and delivers data to the necessary printers for the information that we send out. We also offer an appeal process, which is 30 days after we mail out our notices of value. Our appraisers are not only involved with the door-to-door appraisal, valuation, maintenance, and field checks, but they also have to work on the protests that come into our office. Every protest that comes into our office is field checked for accuracy to see whether our values are correct, or if the property owner has more information that may assist us in better assessing and valuing their property. In 2021 we had 40 protests, in 2022 we had 71 protests, in 2023 we had 113 protests, and in 2024 we had over 120 protests, maybe even closer to 150. The increase is because of our reappraisal, valuation maintenance, and staff working to get our records in our values more current and correct. This increases the value of the county through new monies, such as new constructions by using permit sales information. Properties that haven't been touched in many years and have been paying the same tax rate for years, see this increase become alarmed, and protest/dispute their value.

On page 19 of your report, there is the Assessor's organizational chart, showing you who our staff is and what their function is in that office. You can see that it looks like a large number of staff in our office, but we need that amount to accomplish what needs to be done for this county. We encourage our staff members to take IAAO, which is the International Association of Assessing Officers classes, and be proficient and an expert in that field. I have five State Certified Appraisers. One appraiser with an appraiser two designation, she's working on her third this summer. Our CAMA person is also taking those appraisal classes so she can more effectively work with the appraisal staff on getting their data correct. She will be working on her fourth designation this summer as well.

You'll notice, I went into specifics regarding the door-to-door reappraisal. By statute, we were required to implement a four-to-six-year reappraisal cycle. In 2018, the Assessor implemented the reappraisal program. We tried to work on getting those accounts more current. In 2023 we had over 32,000 accounts, but due to issues with the conversion to the new software system in 2021, the appraisal staff and most of the other office staff had to divert their efforts to manually correcting 1000s of accounts so that accurate valuations were in place by the time

the tax schedule was sent over to the Treasurer's office in October 2021, thus pushing the reappraisal period back. In addition to the physical field inspections, we use the high-resolution oblique and side-view imaging called Eagleview Pictometry, implemented in 2018. Those properties can be inspected from exterior conditions visible in the photos. Ideally, the flyover should take place every two years to obtain optimal current property information Assessor Lucero plans on contracting for new photos in the fall of 2024. The first flyover consisted of municipal properties consisting of over 274,000 acres. Phase one was implemented in October of 2023, we are 75% complete. That will be finished by the summer of this year. Phase two will begin in the fall 2024-2025. Phase three will be in 2025-2026. Phase three will go faster because there's more open range and not many accounts. Phase two encompasses the wind turbine areas. From north of Hwy 60, south of Hwy 60 to the county line. That shouldn't take too long.

Our goal was data maintenance and door-to-door re-inspection. We decided that years three through six would be the reassessment of residential and nonresidential properties. We will continue to stratify the markets based on current sales. We also wanted to develop a workflow process and collaborate with Eagleview Pictometry, potentially flying over in the spring of 2023. Moving from the dependence of the cost method to the sales market approach. Our Senior Lead Appraiser, who is instrumental in this revaluation process has not been available to our office due to being on FMLA. I took it upon myself to structure this differently. I found that prior reappraisal plans have not proven effective so I provided a sample copy of what our reappraisal will look like in the years to come, on pages 24 and 25 of your report. This particular sample, I compiled while I was the Assessor in Colfax County. This reappraisal plan will be assessor-specific, down to parcels completed daily. It provides more statistical data and gives management more leverage due to the detailed and revised expectations in the reappraisal plan, including appraisal expertise. We feel like that might warrant some salary increases. I know it's pretty involved, but it helps management to track what work is being done and how much more work needs to be done in the time that we need to complete it.

I made an addendum to your report, which is information on the property valuation fund because there's confusion and misnomers regarding the property valuation funds. I provided that showing what is permitted out of that 1% fund and what's not permitted for future reference, and eligible uses of the property valuation fund that's on the back page. In October 2023, I mentioned \$274,000, it's \$278,438. The results of the 23-24 reappraisal was an increase in valuation of \$12,080,765.00, which correlates to \$4,026,922.00 taxable value, we had a decrease in value by doing reappraisal of \$42,750, which correlates to \$14,250. Using an average mill

rate, that decrease equates to about \$200. The median mill rate used for the increase equates to about \$212,000. In the reappraisal of the mountain communities under phase one, we found that some of those properties haven't even been reappraised in 25 years.

All of the rest of the county that we work on resulted in an actual increase in valuation of \$19,067,909 and a taxable value of \$6,355,969. Combined valuation increases out of our maintenance, valuation maintenance, and reappraisal, and all processes in our office are \$31,147,674 taxable value of \$10,382,891.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: If a property hasn't been appraised in 25 years, how do you buffer the sticker shock?

Linda Gallegos-Chief Deputy Assessor: There's a system in place for folks that have owned their property for many years. It's called Tax lightning. What that does is when the market is moving up around that property, instead of moving that specific property up to market value, we can only increase it by 3% per year until it reaches market value. That's one way we do that. When sales occur, the property automatically moves up to market. The software system we have now with Tyler will do the 3% increase. It's flagged to get a 3% increase until it reaches market value. We are asking you to approve my appraisal and reaffirm our reappraisal plan as presented for 24-25. We are funded adequately at this point, to continue to do the maintenance and reappraisal for 24-25.

Our processes ultimately tie into the budget process. I touched on that area and gave you a basic annual report. It's combined, even though it just says Assessors, valuation maintenance, and reappraisal, I did touch on the annual report. I don't have a problem at all, doing an annual report separately. I wanted you all to have this information, as stated by statute going into the budget cycle so that you can see what has occurred, what revenues come in, and what might be projected coming down the pike in the next year, two years, three years, five years.

The Assessor's Office is the only office that can uphold the budget if we're not being appropriately funded, DFA also makes that determination. They'll come in and they'll have talks with the County Commissioners, the County Manager, and the Assessor's office and I see where the problem is. This is mainly the valuation maintenance and reappraisal plan. The other information regarding the budget is simply for you all to keep in the back of your mind going forward with the budget, I haven't asked for anything specific as far as salary or more funding.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: In reviewing the Reappraisal Plan Evaluation Maintenance Report, they are stating that there are needs for their office and they're expressing that. In here, there's nothing that would tie the Commission to have to fund that. They're letting me know what their processes are. They have a component about staffing necessary to complete the project. Within that section, there is nothing that would commit the Commission to add positions or increase their salary. Even in their reporting on the Pictometry, Eagleview, there's nothing that's committing the Commission to have additional flyovers, although that is part of our budget discussion that will be coming forward. This doesn't tie the Commission to that either. They're reporting on what they have done in the past and what they were talking about trying to do in the future. The Assessors want to remind the Commission, same as every other elected official's offices that the Commission does have a statutory obligation to make sure that they can have enough funds to meet their statutory obligations. That is something that has been taken into consideration and will be brought up as part of the budget discussion. They will be covered appropriately.

Linda Gallegos-Chief Deputy Assessor: I appreciate the clarification. That's why I didn't specifically talk about the budget aspects that you see in the report that I may not have mentioned because we'll save that for later. I think that we keep plugging Eagleview Pictometry and the importance of it, just in hopes that we can continue to get the funding for that to continue to do the valuation maintenance and reappraisal and we'll talk about that more in budget.

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Assessor's Valuation Maintenance and Reappraisal Plan.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

E. FINANCE: Discussion and possible approval of the FY25 Interim Budget.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: We would like to bring up some discussion items that we need to complete our interim budget before we can give it to you for final approval.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Finance and the County Managers, met with each Commissioner individually, to go through the budget. We looked at the requests from the departments. The purpose of this and why it doesn't have to be approved, at this point is they have discovered differences or discrepancies between the Commissioners, we're fixing to work those out.

Cost of Living Increase vs. PERA Pickup.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: On the FY 25 department request summary. The first item we have is salary discussions. The cost-of-living increase versus PERA pickup options. I provided a brief total of what each option will look like if you decide to do cost of living or PERA. This breakdown of what cost-of-living increases look like with a \$1 amount with a percentage increase to salaries, or with the PERA pickup. I've provided several options. One of them is a 75-cent increase in salaries across the board for the county, except for the elected officials and appointed employees. For example, the 75-cent total increase would be an increase of \$235,939 to the salary budget for the county. If we were to do a \$1 per hour increase, that total would be \$314,585. If we were to do a \$1.50 cost of living increase, that total increase in the budget would be \$471,878. A \$2 increase in salaries would add \$629,171 to the budget. For the percentage options, we started at a 3% increase. For 3%, the total increase in the salary budget would be \$204,856. For 3.5%, that would be \$238,999. For 4%, the total increase to the budget would be \$273,142. For 4.5% total will be \$307,285. For a 5% increase, the total budget increase in salaries would be \$341,428. For a 5.5% increase, that total would be \$375,571. and for a 6% increase, it would be \$409,713. The option for you for PERA pickup is broken down into 25% 30% 50% and 75%. The county is allowed by PERA to pick up 75% or lower.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: The county currently doesn't pay for any PERA.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: Correct. The county pays what is required by PERA for their percentage, but we pick up nothing, as far as employees' contributions. For a 25% PERA pickup to the employee portion, the total increase to the budget would be \$226,694. For a 30% PERA pickup, that would be \$272,032. For 50%, we're looking at \$453,387, and for 75%, that would be \$680,081.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: The PERA pickup would include anyone who is required to pay into PERA, some elected officials can opt out and I believe have from contributing to PERA pick up, the rest are required. We can't differentiate that; it has to be across the board. They would be included in the PERA pick-up.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Last year, the economic indicators I was looking at made me very optimistic, I was willing to roll the dice. We laughed a lot about Democrats, spending that money. I'm looking at economic indicators, and things going around the world. We have an election coming up, we have a war that is interfering with Black Sea shipping routes. We may have a complete change of economic policy after the coming election. I'm being very conservative this year. Last year, we gave a general wage increase of \$2 an hour. This year, I believe that all that would be prudent would be a cost-of-living increase. I'm going to be watching all of these increases in PERA. We don't want to lay people off. We don't want to cut hours. We want to provide services. I'm not going to be spending money as freely as I was advocating last year.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I appreciate the insight. I landed on a percentage of cost-of-living increase. Is the average cost of living data around 3.5%?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: In my research, it totaled 3.3%. 3.5% would be acceptable as well.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I was looking at 3.5%. A PERA pickup is the same thing as take-home money for these positions?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: For PERA pick up, the best result that we have is that it's immediate money that they see in every single paycheck. An increase in take-home pay.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: An increase in their compensation package overall. What they say in the private sector would be all these benefits are your compensation package.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: We asked department heads and elected officials. Which one did they prefer? It was unanimous for PERA pickup. This is an opportunity for us to use a part of recruiting to also state that this is a part of their benefits package.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Based on 3.5%, these numbers look different than I remember. I remember 3.5% and the dollar amount matched at 50% PERA pick-up.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: The information was from last year's budget cycle, and what was projected to be the cost-of-living increase, had you selected a \$1 amount. This is based on our current information. I don't know what the difference is between the two different amounts, because it seems like it should be the same, especially since back then it didn't include the \$2 increase that we had given last time, we also added more positions.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: These figures are based on the current approved salary schedule from FY24, plus vacant positions. This includes all positions. It also includes the increase in PERA for FY25, there will be a PERA increase on both the employer and employee.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Based on 3.5%, about \$239,000, equates to a little over 30% of PERA. We can maximize 75% by splitting the difference. 37.5%, which will be close to 3.5%, what does the Commission think?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes. Let's talk about the benefits of the PERA pickup versus the COLA percentage. #1 It could throw you into a higher tax bracket, which therefore they're going to take and if you get a COLA percentage, you're going to pay more to FICA and your health care, and so on. The PERA pickup is a much better pickup for the employees.

Elected Officials Increase-6%

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: The elected official increase has been proposed by many elected officials for a \$2 increase. Which doesn't quite max out the maximum that they can get. I have an issue with this one because if you put \$2 on all of them, the Commissioners would have been over the maximum amount. My suggestion was to take the \$2, which equates to 6% because we have to apply them to all.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: The public needs to know that it starts at the next election cycle. It doesn't start for those of us that are elected now. Ryan and I will be termed out, we are not voting for our race. What will be a 6% cost to the county?

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: For all the elected officials, that total cost increase would be \$23,190. That's salary only, not benefits.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Everybody good with that?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Deputy Fire Chief salary.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: We got a request from Chief Winham to review the Deputy Fire Chief's salary. The proposed increase is from \$55,000 annually to \$75,000.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This position has increased responsibilities and is warranted for a pay increase. The number I came up with was \$72,500.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: The number I came up with is \$75,000. With all the overtime the position will be over \$75,000. The flip side is the huge gap between the Chief and the Deputy Chief, as we found out last year, the Deputy Chief stepped in and did an exemplary job for many months. That's when I concluded that this job is worth \$75,000.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I'm not going to argue with your statement that it's underpaid. My question is, you said that it's taking more time. Why is it?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Management of paperwork etc. I looked at the previous salary that was applied to a minimum type of paramedic compared to what we have today, that's what my justification is, along with training skills in just what that position requires to operate appropriately.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Our fire service has a plan to expand available ambulances, the actual EMS. That's going to come with more work and more responsibility in this position.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: That is a salary position. That's another thing to take into account, to expect this individual to be on call 24/7, except for vacation, in which case someone is filling in for them. That position is always manned. That's how I came to that conclusion based on what we're expecting now versus what we expected many years ago. What are your thoughts?

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: The reason I asked that question is that for three years, we as a Commission have been talking to Fire and EMS about what is going to take serious money in the future. What is the future of the Fire and EMS sector?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: The positions we have now are maxed out and require a high level of education, experience, and management skills. I foresee those positions remain. As it grows, they need to be able to manage a new position, which would be a lower salary position, but specifically to complete the tasks. I don't see these two positions and responsibilities changing.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: What you're saying is if we bring another paramedic in, and under the Deputy Chief, we need a pay differential in there as well.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: That's correct. We know the scope of responsibility. I don't perceive the responsibilities changing. When we start dabbling into more ambulances, there's a lot of training. There's so much stuff in the works right now. No matter how you look at those two positions, we have to have qualified people. How does \$73,500 sound?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Dispatch Admin Salary

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: At the last budget cycle, the Commission had approved increasing the starting wage of dispatchers an additional \$4 an hour. The remaining upper-level positions were given the \$2 an hour, the same as the rest of the staff throughout the county. There was discussion since dispatches were very severely understaffed. The Emergency Communications Director was able to be here for the budget hearing. A request came after the approval of the budget. The Commission could meet with them to discuss possibly giving them an additional rate increase. They felt it was not fair that they weren't considered for the higher rate as well. The Commission stated that they wanted to revisit this at the next budget cycle, which is today. In discussions that we had individually, there were a couple of you who were considering possibly a \$1 an hour increase to the Emergency Communications Director position, to the day and night Supervisors position, and to the NCIC. As part of this discussion, I also want to let you know and introduce everybody to our new Emergency Communications Director Selena Carroll. Today is her first official day on duty. She can answer questions, as well. As management, I do have a recommendation of at least a \$ 1-an-hour increase for these positions. They are also receiving the PERA pickup, but this is the proper time that you asked to have this consideration before you. It will only be those that have higher-level supervisors for a total of five positions.

Selena Carroll – Emergency Communications Director: There are only three of us left who didn't get that extra \$2. I feel that it's only fair that across the board, everyone got that same raise. That's my personal opinion.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: The reason it happened was we were looking at recruitment and not the effects. Is that dollar amount fair for the positions?

Selena Carroll – Emergency Communications Director: I wouldn't say it's fair, especially because in these three positions, we have two people, Some employees have been here for 20 years, and I've been there for 15 ½ years. We bring a lot more experience to the table than anybody else who works in that department.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: When we start having these kinds of conversations understand you use the word fair. I understand that. I'm wondering about parity. If we have all of these different pay scales, then as I read in one of the documents, there was a comparison of another Department Manager and their salary back and forth. It seems to me that with all of these pay scales not being standardized across titles like the Executive Assistant, Department Manager, and Office Manager when we have dollars going back and forth, are we going to continue to make those gaps in wages? As we do this, are we creating more problems in the future and future budgets as the piecemeal raises?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Yes or no. Both in the Road Department and Dispatch, we played with some different types of incentives. What we are finding is people applying and then retention. We played with a longevity pay increase, is that still in place at dispatch?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: That was taken out. It was discussed in the last budget cycle; It wasn't something that they wanted to continue. It was good in theory because the cost of living wasn't going up as quickly as it has been lately.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: My recollection of the conversations I had before I was a Commissioner was we were going to a merit-based system with the Road Department rather than longevity. Qualifications and accreditations move you through. With the Road Department, you had to be here for two years to get a raise, but everybody was getting CDLs, and other qualifications, and moving on. The people in Dispatch are well qualified and have state accreditation.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm ok with the dollar, to right the discrepancy.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Regarding the impact on the budget, they have their budget set up, the money that comes in from the gross receipts tax for the 911 Communications earmark has to go to Dispatch. Then there is part of our MOA we have with our municipalities, a certain amount that the county has to contribute and transfer to their funding every year, which is \$260,000 a year. With that, there is plenty of money for them to pay for this increase staying within their budget. The General Fund does not have to subsidize additionally, to cover that dollar increase that you're considering.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This budget will not be passed today,

there's still time to discuss this with the County Manager. We are going to have a special meeting to pass the budget. This is necessary for us to direct Finance, as to what to present. There is still communication time.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: For clarification, the direction right now is to put in a \$1 an-hour increase.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Yes, but I want you to have a conversation with Selena to see what her thoughts are.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Animal Services increased its operating budget by \$5,450.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm good with that. Everybody's good with that?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Assessor. Pictometry/Eagleview Software added to fund 620 contract-over services for \$100,000.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I've seen results and think it's one of the best investments for assessing.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Where would that flyover be?

Jesse Lucero-County Assessor: As my Chief Deputy Assessor stated in her annual report and reappraisal plan. Over the wind farm area. Every time an IRB is entered. The company is sending files, but we are missing information.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Does your flyover tell you how big of a megawatt generators are?

Jesse Lucero-County Assessor: We have a formula we use in appraising these windmills. We didn't have any information. There's no information out there that you can get to appraise a windmill, nobody is going to give it to you. Our formula is used on the megawatts and that's how we're currently appraising each windmill. Every windmill marked off one acre and it's a \$6,000 valuation. What we're doing has nothing to do with the payment instead of tax. My concern is we're not capturing all of the windmills, that's been based on a discussion that I've had with GIS.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: What do you think?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Road Department: Base Course. \$160,000.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I did visit with our superintendent, Leonard Lujan. I found out that it wasn't a double trip cost because he's going to get a purchase order, that will stay open for the duration of the budget. As he needs the material, they will crush it for him to have it ready. It's a one-time pick-up and goes straight to the project. So it's not stockpiling.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This is an open PO, coming from vendors.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Yes.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: I'm trying to stay ahead of the game. We purchased a base course I haven't been using it and want to get some more. I talked to the contractor; we will open a PO. They'll crush everything I want. It'll be in a pile and then as I haul it out, they'll bill me for it as I do projects. When we get calls on an emergency that we have to get done right now, new projects want to work on, we will have material ready to go and don't have to wait.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This is not bringing the crusher to us?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: No.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Up to \$160,000?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Yes.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Everyone good?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Road Department: \$350,051 Micro-surfacing.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: This is to micro seal the majority of the roads off Hwy 41. If approved we will micro seal Ice Plant Rd on top of the chip seal we are working on, the road should be good for three to five years.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: \$350,000 will get how much of our existing chip seal roads micro sealed?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Pumpkin Patch Rd, Ice Plant Rd, Valdez Rd, Cemetery Road, and one more. A total of nine miles.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Are we working on a plan to get all chip-sealed roads, micro-sealed?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Yes, that's the goal, because the micro is going to help us try to level out the road. Chip seal will follow whatever is there, micro will make it more level. It's not going to make it perfect, but it starts to level off all the imperfections on the road. It will make it a harder surface to last longer, then we can come back afterward and chip over that too.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Why did you choose these miles? Is it a percentage, is that the most needed?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: For the last couple of years I've gotten \$300,000 for road projects. I figured this year I do a micro seal because we did roads up north, now I figured I'd get the middle part of the county.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: You're looking at this in the aspect of the minimal upkeep on past investments?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Yes.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: As a Commission, we need to be looking at nine to ten miles a year to maintain the roads. We need to do this; I think it's foolish to let past investments go to waste.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Road Department: 2 New Vehicles. \$101,860.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Two 2500 four-door Chevy pickups.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: How many in total?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: I'll need these two plus four more to replace the whole fleet. The fleet is 17 pickups. We currently have 16 employees, 17 positions, and nine graders.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I think one for the year. From the fact, you have six and two.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: I'm trying to get a couple of three-quarters ton pickups and a couple more later. That will be the last of the half-ton pickups. All my blade operators don't need three-quarters to pickups because they're going straight to the blades. The guys doing culverts need to pull equipment.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'd say one also at this time, based on the department has a bunch sitting here.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: It looks like money is going to come through for \$200,000 that Janice and I were able to secure you for a new truck. That's not in today's budget. Know that there's another \$200,000 coming from Capital Outlay state money.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Are we all good with one pickup?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Road Department: Purchase 3 blades for \$350,260 per blade total of \$1,050,780.00.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: We looked at all the options. It was cheaper, it will save money by purchasing. We have three years left on the lease for our blades. I think now that the county is doing better we need to start looking at purchasing our machines and get out of the lease. I talked with CAT. They will buy us out of our lease for three machines if we purchase three new CAT machines. It will lower our lease payment by about \$60,000, on the remaining six that we have. If we start now and then I will ask again next year by the time the lease is out we will own all of our machines. We can work our way into owning our nine machines, then it saves us \$300,000 more into our budget to do more road projects.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Are we going to do the maintenance in-house?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: They will come and do the maintenance, oil changes, etc. The machines have a 5000-hour extended warranty. That will put them at almost six years before they are out of warranty.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Is this part of our contract, emergency field repairs?

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: Yes. The difference is, we run joystick machines right now. A joystick machine in a 140 all-wheel drive is \$385,000. If I go to a rack machine it drops down to \$350,000. If we continue buying them we will get one machine almost for free. It will cost \$80,000.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I know you want to stay with CAT. John Deere has done many things around the community. Have you asked for a price from John Deere?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I'd like to comment that we can't take into consideration what somebody does individually with their business in the community. It would be appropriate for us to get quotes. As far as pushing vendors because of that, we don't generally do that with our finances.

Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent: If we were to purchase from another manufacturer, CAT would not buy out their contract.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Is this something the Commission wants to put into the budget?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: These are new blades. I understand the service agreement. The return on the lease is a bonus that I didn't understand before, my answer is yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I'm good with the \$1,000,050. Yes.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Clerk: book repair \$40,000.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm assuming this is for some of the old books?

Linda Jaramillo-County Clerk: Yes.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Did we get some restored?

Linda Jaramillo-County Clerk: No, we didn't.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I thought we funded some in the past?

Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant: The previous grant application was denied.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This needs to be done. Is everyone good with this?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

NMSU Extension Officer requests \$103,827.00 additional dollars.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: This is just a slight increase over last year's request. This is the total amount that they're requesting for the budget cycle. It's \$2,500, more this year.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Is this fully staffed?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: They are not fully staffed. They did get an agent hired but she will not begin until September. There is a vacancy that they'll be advertising.

Debbie Mayberry - Program Director: Yes, we did hire someone. She will be an excellent addition to our group. She has a master's in agricultural education. It's a slight increase for the next year. The money comes from three different sources county, state, and federal. That is your portion of it. It pays for our salaries, part of the benefits, and part of the operational cost.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: There is no carryover on this budget.

Debbie Mayberry - Program Director: There is not, it doesn't stockpile, I don't see it on my line item, I only see it for the current year, so I don't know of any other funds.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: This is a question that Commissioner McCall asked me to check into. You mentioned operational costs, the request I received had it just for salaries. With it being only salaries, the question came up, if you have vacancies, then you're not paying that money out, what is done with the cost savings? Does it return to the county as a rollover into the next fiscal year? In previous years when they were severely understaffed, this Commission did request a reduction in their contribution based on those vacancies. At that point, the requested amount was reduced based on the vacancies. We are recommending at the Manager's Office, and also discussing with Commissioner McCall and with Debbie, that this decision is not made until we're able to get additional information from the District Manager, as to what can we possibly return to the county, an agreement if they do not utilize the money?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I agree. Do we manage the other portions of the money? We have zero control over whether it's fully staffed.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Commissioner McCall did point out that operations are included. That is my error maybe that's where they roll it over into operations.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: It's a concern of mine with a vacancy and no salary being paid out. Where are the funds that we have allocated for that? I need to know before I give you direction.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I agree with Commissioner McCall. Are we good?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

USDA requests for \$45,750.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: That is the total contract amount. There is a slight increase, around \$2500. The total contract amount is \$45,750. This is for the Taylor grazing.

Tracy Sedillo-Deputy County Manager: It's for animal damage control/predator control.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm good with that, are you all good?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Animal Services: additional staff member – Kennel Assistant.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: This is before you because this is one of those positions that we were checking what the Commission would like to do. It was unclear as to the direction of the Commission. The Animal Service Director stated there are times when they have one or two Kennel Assistants out at the same time. Animal Control Officers are required to go in and do the cleaning, which means they are not able to respond to calls for service. She was considering this additional Kennel Assistant position to help ensure that the animals get the best care and make sure everything is properly cleaned. This is a position that requires

an extensive amount of training to make sure that it's done properly. Initial discussions with her where she was willing to accept whatever the Commission would give her. She needs extra help. Some of the considerations would be finding a full-time position, a part-time position, or using a Float Clerk that we trained specifically for that position, who has availability and willingness to work in Animal Services. We're seeking the direction of the Commission and how you would like to handle it.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm leaning towards a Float clerk or a part-time position. I don't like putting in a full-time position if the need is not there in 12 months.

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: We are taking more calls every year. We had 163 calls for service from January to March 18. We've got 159 since March 18 to now. We have three officers; we respond to almost every call. We used to prioritize calls. We would typically not respond because we didn't have the manpower. If we have somebody who doesn't show up for kennel assistance, we have to have an officer cover. We have a Kennel Assistant who's going to be out on maternity leave, and that's already going to put us back. We're going to have to have an officer to clean for her schedule. We don't have backup when a Kennel Assistant is off. It's getting busier.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: At the Commissioner Affiliate Retreat, this is a problem all across the state, with increasing numbers of calls for service because counties are required to take municipal animals if the municipality doesn't have a shelter. What are the restrictions on a part-time employee? Is that a 30-hour-a-week maximum or is it monthly or quarterly? When someone is out on maternity leave, and the part-timer goes to a 40-hour week, how does that work within the state requirements that we could use that part-time more hours without moving to a full-time position?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: My understanding is that if we utilize a part-time position at a higher rate, we will be required to pay PERA for that position. That does not make them a full-time employee. In other words, they would not pick up insurance, or those kinds of benefits, because they're still working part-time, working extra hours. Generally, we have part-timers at 19 hours and under as far as hours a week, but there are times that they may be required to work more. On those pay periods that they do, that would be a requirement of PERA that we report it and pay towards their PERA.

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: It's a labor-intensive job, it's not just cleaning. Our Kennel Assistants take phone calls and write calls up in the ASM, they're responsible for data entry, behavior and medical observations, medicating, animals vaccinating, and socializing. There's a lot of training, everything has to be done properly because we have to clean to prevent things like parvo outbreaks, distemper, etc. We need people who are trained properly so they can be observant of medical and behavioral problems and let us know.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: New Mexico Counties at the next Executive Board Meeting, we are going to discuss, getting more money, or money's available through the state to help all these counties out. We are going to have to go to the state and get some grants.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Are the majority of the animals we deal with coming from negligent pet owners?

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: Most of them are strays, we never find an owner on them. We believe that a number of them are dumped. We have some animals that come in and we can reunite them with their owners, but a majority of them are not ever reunited. We have to work with them to try to get them adopted and to find the best placement for them. It's like a pandemic in itself. We are full all the time. We're constantly overwhelmed with animals.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I think we are going to have to go with a full-time position.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I disagree, I think we should try a part-timer. You never know when you might find someone wanting to work 20 hours a week. Another option is the student program this summer.

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: We have participated in it for the past three years, and we had the same student for the past three years because it requires a lot of training. With part-time we don't see a lot of applications when we advertise this position. I don't know if we would have much interest in a part-time position.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Is there a potential to contract certain tasks to a contract entity? Cleaning kennels, not the animal care or answering phones.

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: We've never looked into that it's always just been in-house. I don't know how we would go about that. I don't know if any companies would do that. Most shelters have dedicated Kennel Assistants who are responsible for things like that.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Anything over 20 hours, if they're staying consistent at that rate, then we have to report it. This is why we do 19 hours.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: My thought would be to go with Commissioner McCall and see how part-time works. How much demand there is and if we will need to increase those hours to a full-time position.

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: We would be willing to do that. We can use the help. If we find someone interested in working part-time we will take it. I would like to maybe be able to offer them a full-time position in the future if they do well.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: May I give direction specifically to what you're looking at? It appears to be part-time, but I would just like to have that solidified for the budget.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: What does it cost for a full-time Kennel Assistant?

Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director: \$35,360 annually, \$16.50 an hour to start with a 3% raise after they become euthanasia certified.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I'm in favor of a straight part-time and then reevaluate.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Since they have the same responsibility with it being part-time, they would have the same rate of pay as the full-time position with fewer hours. They would not receive benefits either. Would you like to do something different with those hourly rates?

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I would, I think to entice, that we up the pay a little more than it would be full-time because you're not getting full-time benefits.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: It needs to match overall compensation with the full-timers.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: It will by the time you add the benefits because this person is not subject to benefits.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: If we're looking ahead and this could become a full-time position, I would like to bring to the table some of the considerations that I'm thinking about. If a full-time position was warranted, I as a County Manager, depending on the timeframe, could transfer somebody into that position. I want to make you aware that if we advertise that position, it's going to be a lower rate of pay because it's going to need to match up with what the Kennel Assistant is doing full-time.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I think we're going to have to go with \$16.50. 50 cents addition, that would apply after euthanasia certification. Then we will reevaluate based on reports from Animal Control whether that person needs more hours.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Agree

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Agree

Fire Department PERA Fire Plan.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: This is on the list only because of the expectation that the Commissioners expressed during the course of the year that this was the time to bring up the Fire Plan. Since the Fire Department has unionized, we will save this discussion for contract negotiations at that time. I didn't want the Commission to think that we had overlooked this.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I know this is going to be collective bargaining and negotiations. Can we get an idea of what this is going to cost us?

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: My opinion on the PERA Fire Plan, as a Commission, we have discussed this but because of the unionization, I'm not putting any numbers until we have those talks.

Sheriff's Department: three new vehicles for 300,000.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: This was presented in the individual budget meetings with quotes from the Sheriff's Department. They have recently received three vehicles with ARPA funding, but this would be for three additional Sheriff's fleet vehicles.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: How does fleet maintenance work within the Sheriff's Department?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I got a list of what would normally be known as Junior Monies that the Legislators had to spend one-time appropriations. They're called Grow Special Appropriations. Representative Stephanie Lord did appropriate through this funding, to Torrance County \$160,000 towards the Sheriff's Office. The requests at that time were for four Sheriff's Office vehicles.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: In addition to the ARPA?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Yes. This was completely different funding from the state.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Is there a plan for fleet maintenance?

Officer Stocum: I've only been at this a little over a year. I have to replace five or six vehicles a year to keep up. We're behind but catching up. Right now, I have to have 19 vehicles a day up and running just to keep us functioning. I have a total of 47 vehicles right now that are under my control as the fleet for the Sheriff's Department. Of those 19 are spoken for, and 11 of them are a secondary assignment for Marshal Service, undercover, unmarked trash, transport van, and backup units. Those are all the high-mileage units. The only one that isn't a high mileage unit on there is the transport van. It's an older van but we hardly ever use it, but we need a big transport van, sometimes. The Marshal's task force vehicle is on the secondary assignment. That is because it was paid for by the Marshals. I have three ready for repair. Four marked units are ready to issue. Two sittings that have collision damage and are probably totaled. Three new ones waiting for outfitting and, five that are waiting for disposal.

To break it down by mileage: I have six vehicles that are 50,000 miles or less, that's including the three new ones that are being outfitted. Nine that are 50,000 to 100,000. Two that are 100,000 to 150,000. At 150,000 miles, the cost of

maintenance doubles. I have nine vehicles that are 150,000 to 200,000. I have vehicles that are 250,000 plus, and seven that are unusable. These are ready for sale, or the two that are damaged. Once we hit 150,000 miles, we're looking at major repairs. For the new units we got we're trying a different brand because the previous vendor did not provide units promptly. We bought three Fords. Those three Ford Expeditions have a five-year 150,000-mile warranty. I like this because at 120,000 to 140,000 miles we're dumping transmissions and engines. If I'm lucky, we will dump the engines and transmissions while they're still under warranty and get new engines and transmissions and get another 100,000 miles out of those vehicles.

The other problem I'm running into with vehicles is that technology is changing. The windshield costs have gone up and I will need an increase in the budget for repairs. We have windshields now that tell you that it's raining. Of course, that costs more. If somebody's driving a vehicle it can tell you that it's raining and to turn on the wipers. Vehicles are getting smarter, we're getting dumber. Tires are getting more expensive because they've gone from a 17 and an 18-inch to a 20-inch, brakes are almost doubling in price because now they're putting sensors in the brakes. So again, if you can't hear the little screech or warnings going off, they now have a sensor to tell you, you need breaks. These are the problems I'm having. The maintenance, we're doing every 5000-mile oil change. I think that is the bare minimum we can do. I don't want to push these units any further than 5000 miles, they are driven hard.

We do have plans in place if someone is abusing a vehicle. If they're going through a lot of breaks or tires, they do get written up. If you would like I can provide a maintenance schedule. What happens is that they put in for maintenance, that comes to me, and I approve it. I have a document that I add it to, and I keep track of the oil changes to make sure they're within their 5000 for oil changes. I made sure they're getting as much tire life out of those tires, and not going through brakes. If they are then I look at the vehicle abuse.

My goal is to have the 25 regular vehicles, four to six good pool cars that can be issued at any time, and a few regular if we need to set an old trash vehicle somewhere for surveillance. Some of these old vehicles are very handy because nobody believes they're still police cars.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: On the liquidation of all of these vehicles, that money goes straight back to purchasing new vehicles?

Officer Stocum: My understanding is the money goes back to the County General Fund. The only vehicles that would not go back to the General Fund, which is not included in the 47 are the dermal vehicles, like the Humvees, those that have to be tracked. After those are sold, they're on the list as gotten rid of. After those are sold, the money has to be tracked the first time to a law enforcement purchase. So we could use the money from some of the dermal sales when we can get a sale going, to purchase vehicles or like right now to equip the vehicles. I have one being equipped right now and two waiting to be equipped, it's between \$25,000 and \$32,000 to equip one. I don't have the money right now to equip those two. We are looking at \$90,000 to put a vehicle in the field equipped and ready to roll.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm inclined to look at two.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I'd say we give them \$150,000 because you got \$160,000 from the state.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm good with that.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Agree.

Sheriff's Department: entrance upgrade. Up to \$75,000.

Misty Witt-County Finance Director: As far as I'm aware, we do not have a firm quote, that's why we put up to \$75,000 to have a buffer.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I think that will solve a lot of issues. I'm good with that.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: Yes.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes.

Sheriff's Department: back parking lot paving.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: The Sheriff's Department is looking to build a new Sheriff's station at some point. The reason that they want some kind of change in the parking lot is rodents and mud, and parking vehicles out there. Chip seal will be considerably less than micro. At some point in the future, we'll be leaving the building. Chip seal will keep the vehicles clean.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm okay to look at it. I would like more details. I don't think we need to go over the top on that, because I don't think there's going to be long-term buildings in the grand scheme of things for the Sheriff's Department.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I can visit with Leonard about this and then we can finalize it at the interim budget.

Seniors Service meal program requesting 50,000.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I spoke with Senator Liz Stefanics this morning by phone. As part of the Special Appropriations with the GRO, I spoke about earlier, she appropriated \$200,000 for Senate District 39, Senior Center food support in San Miguel, Torrance, Valencia, Lincoln, and Santa Fe Counties, provided that the appropriation be expended in fiscal year 2025. She wanted all of the money to go into her district. When I spoke with her, she said that she is expecting every county to get at least \$20,000, or \$30,000. We will be receiving this money that is to be utilized during this upcoming fiscal year. It's specific for food for Senior Centers.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: We provided you a spreadsheet that shows actual expenditures of what PMS is going through. It breaks down revenue and expenses based on the current fiscal year. This current fiscal year, PMS is projecting a shortfall of a little over \$125,000. We receive notification of state and federal allocations. There is going to be about a \$40,000 projected increase from FY24 to FY25. I haven't heard anything about any additional monies from the state, as of yet. We have made requests out to United Way and a few other places to help us with additional funding. One of the requirements is triple A, which is the Area Agency on Aging, they oversee the budget, specifically for the aging and long-term services department. We are required to request funding from our local governments. Right now through Torrance County, we receive a commitment of local funds. That takes care of the utilities, building maintenance, some of the communications, and janitorial services, in the amount of \$10,000. That \$10,000 is the only money that we can reflect on the budget to the Area Agency on Aging as revenue money. It's an exchange of money, the other part of the money goes into the budget, but there's no exchange, we don't see how much the utilities cost. If there's additional money

coming, that can go towards food, that would be fantastic. That is what we need. We can't continue to operate in the negative. So the local commitment of funds is fantastic. We will continue to try to ask for any other additional local funds that are available from the municipalities as well as the Commission.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Annually we are required to provide PMS with the type of contributions we give them with the majority of that being in-kind. I know you're familiar with our grants. We will be paying this money anyway for utilities, those types of things. He is talking about additional support outside of our in-kind contributions.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: I don't want to say that it's just in kind, it reflects an expense in the budget. PMS's primary function is clinical, medical, dental, behavioral health, telehealth, Head Start and Early Head Start services. They are nonprofit. The senior services are a small portion of what PMS does. There are only three counties Torrance and McKinley and Catron County, where we provide direct services to the seniors. Neighboring Counties have senior service programs that are run by their city or county. PMS is contracted out by Torrance County, to provide services within Torrance County. There are three centers within Torrance County, Moriarty, Mountainair, and Estancia. The services that are provided at the three centers in Torrance County are congregate which means they go in house to receive a meal. The second one is home-delivered services. The third one is transportation services. PMS is having a tough time filling positions, to get things running up to par. Even at running lower staffed and lower numbers, the food costs are still sky high. Where a lot of this comes into play is on the home-delivered side, because they have to package and seal them. There is a need for additional funding. Anything that we receive is greatly welcomed.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: How many seniors are we servicing here in Torrance County?

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: The projection for this year is about 24,000 home-delivered meals. We are looking at 12,000 congregate meals. That's taking the averages over 10 months and calculating that out by 12 to get us through May and June.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Many of these are now home service, primarily since COVID. Is that correct? When does somebody just call up and request this service?

Lisa Lujan - Presbyterian Medical Services: Yes, that is how that works. As our community ages, we're getting more and more calls for our seniors needing home-delivered meals. We're short three cooks. At the end of the month, I'll have one cook for two centers, to provide roughly 150 meals a day. We are doing all the cooking in Estancia for Moriarty and Estancia, having to package that with very expensive packaging and transporting that back to the Moriarty center to hand out to the congregation. Then the driver goes on and delivers. All of our routes take roughly three hours to deliver. Not because of consumers it's the mileage.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: We're pushing the limits on that with the standards of the Area Agency on Aging because that's supposed to be around two hours. There are time constraints on how long that meal can sit in the container. There are a lot of variables that we have to look at when putting everything together.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: How does PMS function under whom and under what contract? Why are we not on a contractual agreement where you give us a cost and you take care of Torrance County senior citizens?

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: The spreadsheet provided gives a projection and what it is our actual income statement that shows actual expenses, year to date through March. I gave a budgeted revenue of what we receive which is federal and state money. We did an average of what the monthly expenses are, calculated that out by back over 12 months, and took that from the 12 months' projected expenses versus the fiscal year budgeted numbers. We came up with a projected \$125,000 loss. Coming into this job, I've asked "Have you always operated in a negative?" The perspective on this is that, when doing your taxes, you should want zero, you don't owe and don't receive. PMS part of the decision that has to be made. How far in the red does PMS want to continue to run? How does it affect services? Right now, there's nothing that's coming, with the exception of the \$10,000, for the janitorial that we can show, as far as local commitment, because that's actual money that we receive from the county. The other monies are huge, the buildings, the expense of the utilities, etc., it's just not a revenue that we can show in the budget for the state and the Area Agency on Aging.

The Area Agency on Aging represents the state. They go through the prior year, units of service. We put forward projected units of service for the interim budget, and projected services for FY 25. We do this going back in off about a three-year history of what each location served to structure their budget. We had 15,000

congregate meals, which is up or down from the previous year, with the average allocated money based on that. Same thing with home delivery and transportation. For example, this year has been a little bit down in the numbers from FY23 to FY24. With all three of those services combined, the allocation difference from congregate is going down \$800.00 for Torrance County PMS services, and home-delivered services are going down \$500.00. Transportation going down about \$3000. However, the state is going to be up a little over \$40,000. Depending on what is allocated federally, they allocate that money to all the service providers throughout the state. After that, they are able to make those determinations.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Based on meals served, they give you X amount of dollars regardless of what those meals cost. What you are proposing is not a one-time fee of \$50,000. We're talking about a continuation of funds to support this program.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: We are looking for recurring revenue.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: That would be evaluated every budget cycle. They will be looking at actual costs that they have for the previous year and trying to project into the next year. The Commission could have set up every year to give \$50,000, but if we're having this as a budget item, then the expectation would be for them to present to us the same type of spreadsheet that you just received, that talks about their finances.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: This budget that you presented shows a \$125,000 shortfall. PMS is saying this is what you get from us and go out and find additional funding.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: That isn't what PMS is saying. On the very first page state local contracts invoiced on the spreadsheet. That budgeted amount of \$412,670 is all the revenue that lists out the revenue that PMS receives, to provide congregate home delivery and transportation Services. The subsequent sheet shows all of the PMS expenses that are incurred throughout. That is what PMS is bringing to the table for those additional expenses to pay. There's a lot more detail in the Excel workbook that is provided to the Area Agency on Aging. It breaks down things even further. All that is calculated into what the average cost per meal comes to. We are tasked with providing that meal cost to be somewhere around \$8 a meal, it's a little bit higher for home delivery just

because of the supplies that are needed. The money we receive is listed under local contracts.

I've never seen a budget operate this far in the red. I believe that it has warranted some of the discussion. What do we do? Where do we go from here? I don't know how long PNMs has provided the services here. I know, it's been quite a while, about 20 years. I think this time they are saying we need help. We can't keep running this in the red. Several programs within the state do this. PMS does not want to limit services.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: In this county, we look at other counties to see what you're spending. I'm wondering, what are other counties spending that you're not contracted with? What are they spending on long-term aging?

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: They did mention other counties provided services. I can't speak to those countries. In one of the County Manager Affiliate Meetings, we had a Deputy Secretary from Aging and Long-term Services, specifically talk about Senior Centers. There were County Managers who expressed that they own and operate their Senior Centers. There is a lot of money that counties are paying into those services.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: How much is the congregate meal?

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: \$12.50 a meal. Any revenues that we receive drive down the amount significantly. We're projecting approximately \$8 is what we're going to start asking as of July 1.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: Have you gone to the municipalities?

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: You're the first stop but planning on it.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: The municipalities need to be brought in on this. We need to look at this differently than just allowing the state and the feds to put money into taking care of our own. I'm not saying PMS is good or bad. They're the organization that is doing it. I think it's probably the wisest way to do it. I wanted to develop that relationship more with them to understand the overall planning.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I think having a contract in place would be beneficial for PMS, to know how to plan their budgeting, and then also for the county to have an understanding of how much we're contributing and making that contractual agreement. I would still like to see what amount you would like to put into the budget for this year, and then we can work towards having a contract in place.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I'm hearing \$30,000 because they have \$20,000 coming in, that hits \$50,000.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I hesitate because we're your first stop.

Lisa Lujan - Presbyterian Medical Services: My understanding was all these Senior Centers were part of Torrance County. PMS stepped in to help fund some of this process approximately 20 years ago. This has been an ongoing process for roughly 20 years. Now, we're at a point where, with the increase in food, keep in mind, my employees get minimum wage. We are only asking for food.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: There was a time when Torrance County owned and operated all of the Senior Centers. A determination was made, this included centers in Willard, McIntosh, and Encino had senior centers as well. Then the decision was to close down some of the Senior Centers, maybe the cost evaluation and the number of people that were congregating. They close down some leaving us with Mountainair, Estancia, and Moriarty. At that time, PMS come in and take over services. I don't know if we've ever really had a contract, they just came in and said, "We will help you." I appreciate all that they've done through these years. They have not come to the county and asked for anything. Originally it was the county that was providing all of these services. In talking about getting help from the municipalities, there are other counties where the Senior Centers are owned and operated by the municipalities. That's not the case in Torrance County if they're willing to help with offsetting some of the costs. Commissioner McCall, I think specifically to the question that you asked, regarding you have the \$50,000 that you don't have to go to the municipalities. They're short \$125,000.

Greg Smith - Fiscal Manager for Presbyterian Medical Services: From our standpoint, the contract is a must-have because that's how it's worded. That's what we have to be able to show to the Area Agency on Aging.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I think the \$30,000 number is an easy number to do, based on the 20 and the 50%. I want to expand this. That's not a hard number. We're not passing anything here. This is for the point of discussion. In light of what I've heard today, we need to set up a meeting with the powers that be at PMS. We need to have a much better understanding of the overall system within Torrance County.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: We asked Amanda Lujan our Grants Administrator to look into grants that could assist with this as well.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: We have scheduled a Special Commission meeting for May 16th at 1:00 PM to approve the Interim Budget.

13. DISCUSSION

A. FIRE: Torrance County Fire Rescue update.

Jim Winham - County Fire Chief: I want to update the Commission, and the community on where we're at and where we're going. Based on the data that we have researched, up to date compared to last year, we're about an 18% increase in call volume, the majority of that, close to 80% is EMS-related calls, transports, etc. We've seen less than 20% in structure fires, car accidents, etc. The vision we want to set forth for Torrance County Fire Rescue is Service Excellence. We want to have a high aptitude of expertise and technical ability, throughout the ranks from both the on-call paid and the paid staff, the on-call, and the volunteers, especially in the command staff. We've looked at certain certifications, qualifications, and training, and we were sorely lacking in a lot of those areas, especially in NIMS, and ICS, they have to May 30, to get those completed. Starting next week, the ICS 300 class for the command staff, anyone who is a Lieutenant above has to attend that class, a week after that is the ICS 400, which will finalize all of them and their required certifications.

We're taking a bottom-up approach. We want to support and enhance ideas from the field. Staff that are doing this day in and day out have the best ideas of how it should work. We get their input, collectively as a group and put it together and

leave no stone unturned. "This is the way we've always done", are words not allowed to be said in our Fire Department. We will figure out if there is a better, more efficient way, by listening to all the ideas around the department. We want an organization that embraces change and new ideas, not only from the field, and the command staff, but from the community. We are planning on sending out a questionnaire as to what they think about the Fire Department, what they know, good experiences, bad experiences, etc. We will follow up with as many of those as we can. We will use that information as we build our strategic plan for the next three years.

Also, from the field, they need to be able to undertake the changes that we're making daily. From simple things like wearing your PPE to standing outside of the hot zone. One of the biggest ones is putting wheel chocks in and backing, anytime we go back we have a spotter. How we operate, standardization, you could go to one district and have a completely different outfitted fire apparatus, compared to another district. We're standardizing the equipment. We have one department one mission, and one goal. So regardless of your status, volunteer on-call paid, or career, we're all one department we see each other as equals, and we work together. That's the same with our partner organizations and municipalities. Community Services is a big aspect of what we want to do. We understand and we teach them, when we interface with the community, we have to know what the ramifications and the impacts are. You're only as good as your last complaint. Most complaints go through 30 to 40 people when you do a great job, sometimes only two or three people hear about that. That is something that's being consistently discussed with all our members.

Recruitment, we want to have a steady stream of recruits. We want to look at an internship program, maybe with the high schools, even though they're not in our jurisdiction, but it doesn't have to necessarily be Torrance County, it could be Estancia Fire, Moriarty, Mountainair, etc. We could work as a team together to get more people interested in the fire service and EMS service. Our doors are always open for community engagement. We have been working with Emergency Management, they've done a great job with Wildland. We don't want anything big to happen here. That's how we're going to work going forward.

EMS is ripe for improvement. There's been an increase in call volume across the nation, but there has not been an increase in acuity. They're not sick patients but still the same patients that we've been running. Roughly 2% to 3% is a true

emergency. Do we need to roll a large apparatus and an ambulance hot to every type of call? If it was a stubbed toe? Do I need to run 30 miles in an emergency that's wear and tear on the apparatus that's putting the public in danger and putting our members in danger? Those are things that we want to look at and do the right way with community involvement and teaching. There are very few calls that the speed of an ambulance arriving is going to make a difference. We're the exception, we have to go to Duran and make it an hour and a half ride down there. That's a different situation but if we're going very close speed doesn't make that much difference. We may look at doing basic life support vehicles only, instead of having an advanced provider but have the opportunity for them to call in advanced life support if they need them. For your very low-access type calls that don't require Paramedic Services, we can keep those available in the county, and even your intermediates. There is the CARE program, which was something that was started in a couple of other fire departments. They help take care of the homeless, which could be an opportunity for us to look at.

The Community Paramedic Program is something that we'll look at probably in the next year or so. It is part of the enhancement of EMS, increasing our area of responsiveness of responsibility. There also may be an opportunity for certification as a flight paramedic within our department, those are things that we will have to look at as we go forward. PCG, which is a consulting group out of Washington, DC, and I worked with them in Oklahoma. This counseling group helps with direct costs for EMS. For example, Medicare/Medicaid pays a flat rate, let's say they pay \$200. Your unit hour costs for transportation maybe \$500. We have a long mission time; it takes us at least an hour to go to Albuquerque and back, depending on where we're at. What this program does is we do our operational costs, which include salary, gas, maintenance, dispatching time, etc. It is forwarded every quarter to the federal government, and they pay you back for your direct cost of these Medicare/Medicaid patients. The last service I worked at; we were making \$2 million every quarter. That was because of the call volume itself. I don't have preliminary numbers yet, but we are talking \$100,000 at least, a quarter. That's a program that's federally mandated. It could go away at any time it started in Oklahoma's Republic ambulance services. There are some departments in New Mexico that are doing it right now.

Member development, which is extremely important, is more of the soft skills, and people skills that we need to work on. We want to work with this all through the ranks. We want to have a clear concise program, what the skills need to be, how to

develop, and also develop an educational process for those members to get there as we go forward. It's not only your technical ability, but it's how we talk with and how we get along with people. It's what the community wants to see in their Fire Department.

These are my expectations. I very rarely ever say mine, it's always us or we. I came in and these are three very simple P's. These are the expectations that are expected of every member regardless of rank, or position. They will be Professional at all times. That's defined as they're conducting themselves with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. They communicate effectively and appropriately, always finding ways to be productive and proactive. They are Proficient in all their tasks. Their skill, be at hazmat, be putting on their SCBA, PPE. They're always practiced, accomplished, educated, and talented. We have a great group of talented individuals that we're training to get to that proficient area. The last is probably the most important one is we are Polite to everyone that we serve or come in contact with. We don't have bad days. People do not expect their Fire Department to come out and be rude, upset, laugh at them, etc.

Everyone in the department knows where I sit as a standard starting point. We started with a vision, and we started with three P's. I think it's important that anytime somebody new comes in, you have an opportunity to do a reset. I've done a lot of setting, looking, watching, and asking questions. In fact, they hate the term when I start out with why do we do it that way? That doesn't mean it's wrong. I want to understand why we're doing it and if there is a better, more efficient way. I've listened, planned, and collaborated with them. In fact, in the last five minutes, we just sent out the questionnaire, on a new patch. The department gets to vote on the new patch. We look exactly like the Albuquerque Fire. I feel like a copycat, so part of our rebranding without spending a lot of money does not mean we're going to take everything and take all the decals off. As we get new apparatus we will start putting newer decals on so we can look like Torrance County Fire Rescue and not Albuquerque Fire.

First-year priorities, recruitment is a big one, our community engagement and member engagement, EMS enhancement, and member development and training. We're doing more training this month, in May, than I think the department has in a long time. ICS classes, we had a turbine exercise scheduled for 20th-21st that got canceled. We have a prehospital trauma Life Support class that will be on the 22nd and 29th, Firefighter One, and Two, we have two full-time members in it right now. Starting in June, we will have six more members in Firefighters One and Two. In

October, we'll have another six members in Firefighter One and Two who will have to get those credentials. We'll have our yearly training plan. Yesterday, we started what we call operational-ready inspections, where the on-duty crew had to put on their SCBA and bunker gear, and they had to do it within a certain timeframe. Then today, they will have to pull the hose and do a forward lay, a reverse lay, and have water spraying within 120 seconds. Everybody goes through that; I'll have to do that too. It's important that we know everybody knows what they're doing, and how to do it correctly.

This is the new mission statement for our department that we're proposing, and it is very simple. It's to the point, and it's why we exist. "We're protecting life, health, and property in the environment". That's how we make decisions. That's what we do and why we exist this also includes EMS. In our true north, which is protecting lives and property, and buyers' medical emergencies, we're professional, courteous, and on time. We will maintain the highest level of public service, reducing the rate and severity of emergencies to continuous training, public education, fire prevention, disaster management services, and in conjunction with our partners. We will maintain the public trust bestowed upon us, we will adhere to the highest ethical standards and all that we do. All future Academy members will have to know that by heart.

That's our process of defining our strategy of direction and decision on allocating our resources to attain our strategic goals. This is what I've shared with our command staff with the purpose and the values deployed placed in the implementation, analysis, strategy formation, our goal setting structure, control, and feedback, and getting the right people to give us the information as we go forward with that. One quick thing here, the key to the process is getting a cross-section of feedback to the organization, county commissioners, decision makers, mid-level management, labor representatives, etc. If I bring you a strategic plan, and you have no input in it, I may not be as apt to follow that as I would be if I were part of that planning process. That will be part of it as we go forward.

Our year one objective summary here, increase ISO, with hats off to Deputy Chief Sanchez and a couple of other members who had the ISO the night before the inspector came. District Three remained at the same ISO level; they did not go down. District Two remained at the same ISO level, we had some issues because we did the bare minimum training the previous year, and water is always the big issue. We are going to increase the training. The new NFPA standards, and here's a new CFR coming out right now, talking about fire brigades, that changes regulations and training, which that along with our new bunker gear, maybe a

change in that coming up next year. Member credentialing and training are extremely important, so we have the right credentials, annual training plan, and standards of cover, which is how we respond, where we respond, and what we do. EOP is our Emergency Operating Procedures and AOP is Administrative Operating Procedures that do not supersede the County Personnel Ordinances, they are the rewrite of our standard operating guidance, fire officer program, and promotional opportunities, We'd like to do our academy in-house, which we'll start with the basics. Special operations, which will include technical rescue, as of the first of this month, will have four members in the department that have confined space, ropes one, two, three, and four, high angle rescues, and trench rescue. We are working on hazmat, search, and rescue. Arson investigations are something that we're looking at, instead of having to wait two to three hours plus. We will be contracted through the state of New Mexico. We started getting Arson dogs, which you get granted through state funds, they're not cheap, around \$75,000 for a dog. They pay for the training; you have to take care of the upkeep of the dog, and they eat like two or three pieces of food a day. That's how they're trained. It sounds terrible but the dogs are fine.

For fire alarm assignments, we dispatch District Three structure fire and smoke alarms. We're putting this in place with the dispatch center, if it's a structure fire then this is the apparatus we're going to send, two engines, a tanker, a rescue, a chief, or a command officer. If it's an alarm, why send a big apparatus, maybe send a BLS ambulance with two firefighters on it to check it. Once they get there, smoke showing, they can fill out the assignment. We will know who's staffing when they're going to be there, and what apparatuses will be on scene within a certain timeframe.

Our goals and objectives are short-term. The Commission must understand this is improved firefighter safety SCBA FIT test within 60 days, this will be done June 28th. We already had the equipment, it's now in my office, everyone is asked to come in and make sure their SCBA fits. The flow test for all the SCBAs is being conducted since there are so many of them and will be completed by July 31st. Medical eval within 90 days to make sure that they're able to go into an IDLH or Immediate Danger to Life and Health area. All apparatus third-party safety checks are within 90 days. We have a contract with a certified vehicle person that can be taken care of while they're doing their PMs. We have almost completed it; all structures and wildland gear have been inspected. We wanted to do that within 30 days. We have a lot of stuff north and I know a lot of populations north. We are looking at what we need to send further south. How can we help our partners down

there? Another thing is when there is a red flag warning, we have a brush truck and Tinder being manned.

ISO classifications to improve, and station coverage for improved response times. We had a rule when I first got here, the career crew could not respond to the fire until they waited 10 minutes. I think it was to not deter either the volunteers from coming in, but we changed that, that 10 minutes means a lot. That's the time travel. We're looking at methods for making sure that we have coverage for stations and setting minimums for people to do that. In the organizational structure and command structure we're still looking at the central finances are each District Battalion Chief's responsibility for what they purchase. We're changing that to central finances. In other words, before you purchase something, it has to come across the desk before it goes through the process. Why are we buying this? Is it standard? Do we need it? We've updated several job descriptions thanks to HR, and the County Manager for helping with those administrative functions, and our operating procedures. We're probably about 35 to 40%, it takes a lot of research. You want to go in and make sure that we're using the best practices and that it's standardized within MPA regulations, etc. Standardization transition to the single Fire Department doesn't mean anything other than we're all going to be the same on internal and external communications on how we communicate, talk with everybody to make sure that they're getting the word out, and we have the order to log now, anything that changes goes out on a piece of paper and the oncoming crew has to sign it. The officer on duty has to make sure they sign that, are well versed, and have an opportunity for them to come and ask questions for clarification on how it works.

The question was asked by the Commission, how far can you go on the stipend increase? It's 20% of your lowest-paid firefighter on an annual basis. We had our eligibility standards, staffing needs a target, and volunteer recruit profile. In June we are going to do an Oath of Office swearing-in and a badge presentation. We'd like to have you there, if it's possible if you can work that into your schedule, to provide that oath, and maybe the swearing-in of all of our members, and there will be a badge for promotion. Once they take that oath of office, they're held to it. We're going to make a little pomp and circumstance with it, with a barbecue, and make it fun for them. Centralized tracking of all our training records, the legal consequences, and ISO ramifications are scary. I'm making everyone aware that, if you don't have the credentials and experience to do that, then you shouldn't be in a command position because somebody's going to get hurt. We have the in-service training program, minimum job performance requirements, the SCBA, water 420 seconds recruit training program, fire officer training program, everybody knows

how to operate each apparatus, everyone's NIMS compliant, additional training hours per month, and driving. In pre-incident planning, which we've worked on quite a bit. The big one that's not on here is accountability. There is a tablet; we have the money in our budget, around \$2,000 it's called Tablet Command designed by Firefighters, and has an accountability portion. It also has your pre-plans, it has maps, and I can track every apparatus. What they're doing and what they're assigned to. I can text message them, etc. We are excited to get that into service. For additional funding sources, we talked about the ETAS and the CPE. That's the direct money from Medicare government patients. We're also designing cost recovery for motor vehicle collisions. With some of that being billed to their insurance, but hazmat incidents on anything that we clean up, we can bill for that also.

Seasonal wildland crew is something that we will look at next year. They pay quite a bit of money for that, for example, a command vehicle with a boss in it is \$100 an hour. It more than pays for itself. At a type six with three people on it, that costs quite a bit of money. Once you pay for your overtime, there's still a lot of money to be made on that. There is federal/state and other grant funding for operations we have put in for the Safer grant and an FG grant is competitive. I feel confident about it. We should know what is coming up in the next couple of months, and how that comes forward. My thoughts to increase our ISO is a supertanker. It's 20,000 gallons, it's an 18-wheeler, equivalent to seven of our tankers. One truck would carry everything. We would get close to the scene, one South, one north, and use a dump tank and a pump. It's nonpalatable water. That will fix a lot of our water issues. They're not that expensive, compared to a tender, and fire apparatus. That's something that we're studying and looking at right now.

Regional Training Academy can be a moneymaker. We're teaching a class on two weekends, it's free for our people, we just had to buy the books. Anyone that's outside the county that wants to come in, we would charge them a regular rate. EMS transport increases some of that with a CPA, increasing the number of calls or the area that we go to. Shift commander is not a new position, just the title. We have a grant for a drone, which is for search and rescue and thermal imaging, of wildland fires. The only hiccup that we have with it is the new Rules Federal Government Rules and experts on this. Our Rescue Task Force, which we will eventually look at including other Fire Departments to make use of our team that's deployable predominately for the county for major incidents, silos, turbines, etc. I intend to do this monthly from now on. It'll be a more statistically related number of calls, types of calls, and issues we run into. Thank you.

B. COMMISSION: Discussion regarding Torrance County Fair Board issues, including clarification and explanation (Johnny Perea, Fair Board Vice Chair).

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: I appreciate you taking the time to listen to me today. I know the last thing you all want to hear is more conflict, and drama, regarding any issues, especially the Fair Board. I thought based on Mr. Schropp, last attendance at our Fair Board Meeting and some of the comments he made. I wanted to explain my position on what was being said. The circumstances you are aware of led to, I don't want to say conflict, acquisitions, and so forth as to what caused this and my proposal to change sale numbers for those kids. My intention was, and still is to help more kids, whether that is being said out there or not. My intention is to get more kids' financial benefit from what happens at the sale. The timeliness of it, maybe the radicalness of my proposal. I don't know if that was wise or not, but I'm not going to apologize for it. I will apologize to you all, and the Fair Board members for the result of this. For my proposal, I will not because I'm not going to apologize for trying to help more kids. I believe that's my intention of being on this board. We all know what can happen especially in positions like this. It's been difficult, and it comes from places you all would not expect from anywhere, from FFA teachers to parents. We have dealt with that before. We were questioned by Commissioner Schropp on having a Rules Committee. Apparently, he thinks that is a good idea, maybe it is. At the last Fair Board Meeting, he came off at us like we were just operating like a bunch of idiots and had no rules. I will be the first to say that's wrong. These are all the rules of our affairs. Have you been through these?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: No, I have.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: We have rules and the statement I made at the meeting the other day was wrong. I should not have said that. I said it, and it reflected on the whole board. What I said was, "This is how we've always done it". That was not a good statement to say, that doesn't reflect what we do. The procedure is we take the time, as happened in the last meeting to go through all of these and try to decide what still fits and what doesn't fit. The best we can do is try to change those, whether it happens now or at a certain time of the year. I apologize to the Fair Board for saying that because it wasn't a good thing to say, this thing has gotten very emotional and that's why I said it. One thing that was

questioned was the Open Meetings Act. It has been said that we violated that several times. Our agendas were a little bit vague. Our County Manager has worked extremely hard to help us correct that, I appreciate that. I know Marcie appreciates that. There was no bad intention there. We weren't trying to hide anything. I guess the positive of this is we have a lot of attendance at our Fair Board Meetings. They are very well attended.

Commissioner Schropp rubbed me the wrong way. I think he got that at the last meeting because I came up very defensive towards him. I'm not going to apologize for that. I have been doing this and volunteering for a long time. The attitude he takes towards us, like, we can replace you guys tomorrow, they'll be people knocking down our doors to get on this. Whether he believes that or not, I don't believe it. It's an unfair thing to think that we can wipe you guys out of work. Just because we don't think we're doing the right thing now or what is on our agenda. So much of our stuff is done on a volunteer basis. I have some questions for Mr. Schropp. You talked about being involved in the horse part of things and seemed to be pretty knowledgeable. Is that correct? What is the most important thing to horse people, especially performance horse people? Would you not agree that it's the ground?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Yes, a safer arena.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: Have you been over to our arena and seen the condition our arena plow is in?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: No.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: That answers my next question in that we don't have an arena plow. Do you know how that happens? Volunteers, volunteer their equipment and their time and that's not cheap equipment. When you're pulling a \$12,000 piece of equipment with an \$80,000 tractor and hauling it on a flatbed over here with a \$80,000 pickup, that's an undertaking, and it's an undertaking that we're happy to do. But again, there seems to be this attitude that you guys don't do anything. I'm speaking for myself. When we had a rodeo, a bull wiped out the whole back part of our shoot area. What do you think happened there?

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Volunteers stepped up.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: Volunteers stepped up and worked most of the night to fix that. I could go on and on, as to what we do, we do it without hesitation. We talked about the Open Meetings Act; I don't know how many hours Marcie has to spend developing an agenda and she's happy to take that on. I bet she gives 15 hours a month in what she does. My final point is you made a point-blank statement. I don't know if it was at the last meeting, but I saw in a publication that you were asking for the dissolution of the Torrance County Fair Board.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I don't know where you saw that. I've never made that statement to anyone.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: Okay. Well, wherever it came from, it was published in The Independent. Maybe it's not an accurate statement. I spent almost 30 years on the Fair Board. That's volunteering a lot of time and some money, It doesn't matter that it's just the fact that somebody will take it to the point now and say, thank you. Mr. Schropp at the last meeting, you said you had to leave early. You walked out that door, and only me and Albert saw this. You stood out in that hall and stared at both of us for some time.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I was staring at Mr. Chavez, and you happened to look in there? I'd like to explain my position to you.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: I asked you a question about that because I took it as you're trying to intimidate us. If you were trying to threaten us, if that was an invitation, so to speak. But if it was please let us know. Because I mean, either he or I would be happy to indulge you.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I was pointing out the problems with the meeting procedure. First off, I have no problems with the way you all change the rules. I listened to both sides when people called me about why your rule changed on the sales. I'm neutral on all of that. The problem as I see it is that this is not being done with transparency. The people who were calling me after the February 13th meeting were telling me that they were blindsided by the rule changes. If you were complying with the conditions of the Open Meeting Act, those people wouldn't have been blindsided. That is part of the reason that the Open Meetings Act is so that people get input. That is the reason for my suggestion. As to the Rules Committee, my mentor said, the smaller the steaks, the sharper the knives. People are calling me up with these complaints in this politicking that's going on. I'm staying out of that. If this is being done according to the requirements of the Open Meeting Act, they have no complaint. Everything is

upfront, they have a chance to look and comment, and then the Fair Board will make their decision. I want to tell you something else, that I appreciate your service. I appreciate everybody in the Fair Board's service. I appreciate everybody who shows up with equipment to help. That's not what I'm talking about in this thing. I'm talking about the law, as you remember, last year when you wrote to the State Fire Marshal's office with your complaints, the law is the law and we will comply with it, I didn't say obey it. I said comply. Because there are a lot of ways to work around the Open Meetings Act and comply with it and not burden yourself with additional workload or time.

One of my leadership classes talks about people resisting change for three reasons or a combination of reasons. They don't see the value, they think it'd be more work, The Open Meetings Act will explain to you that it's a template on how to address all of those things and it is also a template for transparency in your decisions as you work with the participants. As the Sheriff was talking earlier about treading a fine line between forcing deputies to do things. I was hearing from the participants, some of whom are constituents of the Third District, and some are not. They were talking about pulling out of the show. This is a little bitty show, and we can't afford to be losing participants. We can't afford those folks to be bad-mouthing us, it shows around the state because this Commission would like to see the fair grow and have a true County Fair. Horse pulls on Saturday night, called the New Mexico Draft will bring all of their equipment and their whole program, carnival rides, food, games, and things that will attract, As Commissioner Schwebach said, "We are an agricultural community". The county fair is very much a part of that. Not all of the 15,000 people in Torrance County are AG people. We can pull people in in other ways. That's not going to happen instantly. That is my vision for the show. It's up to you all to determine how to make that happen.

Transparency will ease the way that all of the competitors can see a smooth transition in rules from year to year. We're going to attract participants, exhibitors, and competitors from outside of Torrance County. My criticism is not the policies or the personnel. My criticism is that we have to comply with the Open Meetings Act, whether you like it or not, it's the law. If we continue squabbling around inside of this stock, this board is going to want to get sued, but that's not the worst case. The worst case is people will lose faith in the Fair Board and quit participating in the fair. None of us wants that.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: I appreciate your comments.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: As I was speaking during the meeting, Albert slammed his paperwork on the desk at one time and gave me a hard look. That was immature but that was where that came from.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: As far as the Open Meetings Act goes, we're trying very hard to rectify that. As far as that change goes, none of those who are complaining to you now have been there. We had heard from the Farm Bureau in previous meetings before I proposed the change giving us very passionate proposals to try and get more kids into the setup. We probably have one of the strongest sales in the state. I'm comparing that to Artesia, and Farmington and I think that is attributed to Marcie's hard work. Some of my hard work the Fair Board. Kevin and Ryan's hard work, and several others. There are tons of people that make that happen. All I was going with was that the people you heard from were going to take away some of their sales slots. That's not my intention. I am 100% not a proponent that everybody gets a participation ribbon.

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I was involved in that first meeting on February 13th. If you wanted to take it to a court of law, what you did was published properly, and it would hold up to the Opens Meetings Act. The question of that potential change, in my opinion, needs public input, and by all rights and reasons you did not have to redo it, but you did. When we start talking about agendas in open meetings it doesn't take much once you get the process. That goes twofold. One is when you don't have participation until something rubs them the wrong way. They're going to hoot and holler. If you have standard procedures, if you have the Open Meetings, they have to participate or they have to be quiet. That's how it works. With that being said, I respect what you guys have done, I respect what you're doing. I would like to help facilitate in the future because ultimately, you want participation, but you want healthy participation, healthy ideas, and healthy common concepts, we're able to facilitate this fair. More volunteering more help. In my role as a County Commission, my intention has always been on a concept to provide a location and to provide finances to ease the burden of the fair. That's what I see going forward to accomplishing this. You are on the right track. I appreciate what you're doing.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I wanted to let the Commission and the public know that the Fair Board has worked very closely with the County Manager's Office, on every single agenda since the first agenda and on the February meeting that we talked about, has been reviewed and approved by the County Manager's Office, either Tracy or I, or sometimes both of us, reviewing it,

making sure it meets the Open Meetings Act standards. I also want to let you all know that behind closed doors, I do have meetings with Fair Board members, they are coming to me and they're asking for ways to improve things, and how can we do this better, and they are extremely receptive and open to all of my recommendations to improve things. As I'm having these discussions with them, I'm seeing that what they have been doing through the years has been with the best of intentions, there may be ways to fine-tune it and make it a little bit better overall. I think ultimately, less work in the long run. As far as the rule changes go, in particular, we had a lengthy discussion about the process and procedure to get those done. There have been a lot of proactive conversations and changes that have occurred with the Fair Boards, with my office, and with me in particular. I appreciate those conversations and the receptiveness and openness that they have for the ideas that I have to improve things as well.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: I appreciate you all listening to me, I do appreciate your support very much, because you guys had traditionally been 100%, behind us. My kids all went through this program, they appreciated the same thing. I want to clarify because a bunch of this was caused by me I'll own it.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: I listened to the accounts of the February 13, 2024, meeting skeptically but with an open mind. I explained to the people who are calling me on both sides, I've explained to the concerned parties calling me that there is a process that has to be followed, not only in conducting meetings and drafting rules but in correcting inequities in the process, whether they are perceived or real. The first step in this process was the involvement of this Commission and the County Manager and providing guidance directly to the Fair Board as to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. The second step was respecting the input of the participants in public comment as is required by law and is the standard form used by this Commission. If the first two steps were not honored, bringing the inequities up to this Commission to public comment at Commission meetings, those reports would be the third step with a discussion item before the full Commission as the final step. We now have a discussion item here, where we can hash all this out. We are all willing to work together here to make this work. I'm not looking to be cutthroat, or throw you over the side, I'm looking to make a fair show that is enjoyable for the kids participating, and one that we can keep building on and keep it going for another 30 years.

Johnny Perea - Fair Board Vice Chair: I appreciate that comment, but the abrasiveness that you displayed at the last Fair Board Meeting led me to believe otherwise. That's why I'm addressing you today.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I'm a third-generation livestock shower, I raised the fourth generation. Ultimately, Fair Board should be exactly what the two of you are standing in front of us, parents, and grandparents they get what it is, but you don't have a dog in the fight. For the longest time, Ryan and I were asked to be on the Fair Board in Santa Fe County. I refused. I did not want to be involved in that if my kids were shown. I applaud you for doing what you're doing. I should be doing the same thing. I understand livestock shows, I should be getting back to Fair Board but I'm not. I commend you for doing what you're doing. Keep up the good fight. Keep your heads up. Try to keep the public and the students in mind when you make decisions.

Marcie Wallin – Fair Board Chair: We have gone through the Open Meetings Act. We didn't have a problem with that. We sometimes don't think we're along the correct lines. We've got two excellent people out there who help us clarify. What is disheartening is not the fact that we have to do that, but to have communication at a Commission meeting by Commissioner Schropp standing up and publicly stating that we didn't follow the Open Meetings Act, this is not good publicity for anyone. I think we can all improve communication, myself included. I think that anyone who makes a statement should have the correct facts before they make such an abrasive statement and I think that probably goes both ways. That's what I'm asking of you, Mr. Schropp.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Okay, I've heard you.

C. MANAGER'S REPORT:

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: I announced that we have a new Emergency Communications Director, Selena Carroll. We also hired a new Facilities Director, Richard Lesperance. He will be starting later this month. He is coming to us from UNM, has 10 years of service there as well, and has his contractor's license. He owned his own construction business.

In the previous Commission meetings, Commissioner McCall referenced how we went to the legislature this past Legislative Session. We hurriedly got together some projects and talked to Legislators regarding what typically is known as Junior Funding Appropriations. They restructured it this year to be the GRO Special Appropriations. Those were all being done through the Mid Reagon Council of Governments. I wanted to give a big thank you to the Senators and Representatives who gave us funds for Torrance County. Senator Schmedes gave Torrance County \$200,000 for programmatic costs and resources for the Torrance County Road Department. Senator Stefanics had four of them at \$200,000 each, which is to be equal; I would assume split between all six of her counties, which include Torrance County. The first one is for emergency medical technician resources, for Senate District 39. That is to be expanded this next year. For her in particular, she was told that this money could be split across two years. If you gave a nonprofit \$200,000, the appropriation could be \$100,000 for one year, and then \$100,000 for the next year because she was keen on the county to be expanded or given out for the fiscal year FY25. The next one will probably be at the heart of this Commission as well.

She is also giving money to NMSU agricultural education programs for proper Cooperative Extension Service just for programmatic cost resources for agricultural education programs. She does state that that includes all the FFA programs within her district. She knows they may not get as much money. When you think about all the high schools within that district, there are going to be quite a few, but at least everybody will get something. The next part is what we talked about earlier today, which is the Senior Center food support for \$200,000. The last one is for rural libraries, operating in material support, \$200,000. We are very appreciative of our Senators giving those allocations to us. As stated earlier, we have Representative Lord who gave \$160,000 to our Sheriff's Office that we had requested for vehicles. I know Commissioner McCall, asked if I'd had these and whether or not they made it through, we finally did receive information from MRCOG stating that we did get those appropriations, and the timeliness of getting it through budget discussions I felt was very imperative and useful.

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I also wanted to follow up with the GRO money with aka Junior money. There were other Legislators that participated in a Capital Outlay. Don't be confused. There are two pots of money if you will, GRO and Capital Outlay. Ambrose Castellano also gives money; I do not know the amount.

D. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

- 1) Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman, District 1

Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair: I had a ride along with the Cabinet Secretary of Department Transportation, I had a council on May 3rd and May 16th is our new ride along.

- 2) Ryan Schwebach - County Chairman, District 2

Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman: I do not have any updates or discussion.

- 3) Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner, District 3

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Last Friday, Ann and I gathered, and loaded cow-calf pairs for a neighbor on horseback. It was the first time in 18 months that we've been able to do that together before and after her back surgery. It reminded me of visiting with our fellow County Commissioners at the NMAC Commissioners Affiliates Retreat. We were all over the County, South County Guys. As I reported to this Commission at our last meeting, the BLM final rule on conservation leases needs to be addressed by two to speak. Neither of the two speakers addressed the BLM Final Rule. They spoke about how to come up with the workings of government sketchy legal filings, and the global climate working to destroy the cattle industry. I advised everyone in attendance to read the executive summary of the rule just the same as I've advised this Commission. There were 27 Commissioners from 11 counties present. Most of the counties represented at the meeting were south of I-40. At the afternoon roundtable, I listen to the issues that are of concern to the County Commissioners and their constituents. Our politics were very different. But the things of concern to them are valid concerns where we do share common ground. Mexican gray wolf management, border related crime, water, and renewable energy. For those issues, we decided to send resolutions to the New Mexico Association of Counties Executive Board, asking the Governor and the Legislature to recognize counties as

stakeholders and keep county governments better informed. Ranchers in the Mexican gray wolf recovery plan are aware of the New Mexico Game and Fish management plan so that they can make decisions on capital investments.

I listened to the Council of smugglers, human traffickers, and high-speed chases through small communities just like Estancia where like Torrance County law enforcement resources are spread thin. Many of the counties represented are at the beginning stages of the renewable energy boom here in New Mexico and are trying not to make the mistakes they have seen in other counties. Of course, with the Artesian aquifer ruling by the OSE, there are many questions to be answered. The counties south of I-40 are facing different problems than those in the north, and we need to support each other. This was the first Commissioner Affiliate Retreat, and it was very worthwhile to attend. Joy Esperson is going to request an exception to the Open Meetings Act be made so the Commissioners from the same county can attend and not have to announce a quorum or a special meeting. Hildago County attorney was of the opinion that they could all be there. All three of them were there as long as they didn't discuss county business. It was very valuable to have more of us represented in those kinds of things. I think that's a worthwhile thing to pursue.

Janice Barela-Madam County Manager: Clarification on a comment that Johnny Perea stated earlier, it's stating that in the Independent, there was an article in which Commissioner Schropp stated about clearing the board. The quote was, "The decisions that were made may need to be vacated because it wasn't done properly regarding the Open Meetings Act." He may have interpreted vacating the decision that was made as vacating the positions on the board. So that was what was said in that article.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Thank you for that. I would never do something like that to blindside people.

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: A Special Commission meeting will be held May 16th at 1:00 pm here at the Commission chambers.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

15. **Announcement of the next Board of County Commissioners Meeting:**
May 22, 2024, at 9:00 AM

16. **Signing of Official Documents.**

17. **Adjourn.**

Action Taken:

Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: Motion to adjourn.

Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner: Seconds the motion.

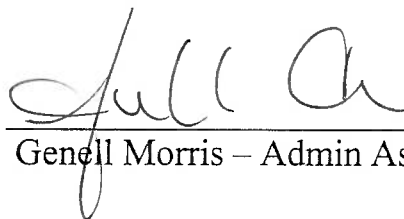
Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 03:52 PM

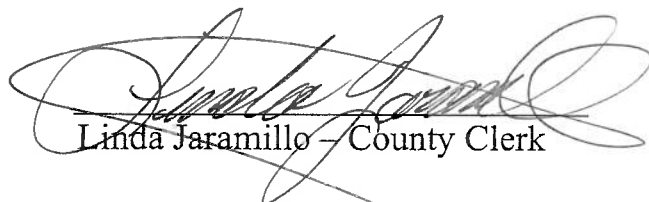


Ryan Schwebach - Chairman



Genell Morris – Admin Assistant

05/12/2024
Date



Linda Jaramillo – County Clerk

The Video of this meeting can be viewed in its entirety on the
Torrance County NM website. (torrancecountynm.org)