

San Juan County Commission
Regular Meeting
August 27, 2024

Chairman Beckstead called the San Juan County Commission meeting to order on August 27, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers located in the County Administration Building, 100 S. Oliver Drive, Aztec, New Mexico. Commissioner Lanier gave the invocation and Chairman Beckstead led the Pledge of Allegiance. Those present were:

CHAIRMAN	John T. Beckstead
CHAIRMAN PRO-TEM	Terri D. Fortner
MEMBER	Steve Lanier
MEMBER	GloJean Todacheene
MEMBER	Gary McDaniel
CHIEF DEPUTY ASSESSOR	John Kuhn
CLERK	Tanya Shelby
TREASURER	Carol Taulbee
UNDERSHERIFF	Cory Tanner
COUNTY MANAGER	Mike Stark
DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER	Steven Saavedra
ATTORNEY	Joe Sawyer
DEPUTY ATTORNEY	Ellen Wayne
EMERGENCY MANAGER	Mike Mestas
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR	Dawn Knuppel
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	Kim Martin
PARKS & FACILITIES ADMINISTRATOR	Steven Dansie
PARKS & FACILITIES DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	Michelle Murray
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATOR	Nick Porell
ADULT DETENTION ADMINISTRATOR	Daniel Webb
FIRE CHIEF	David Vega
HOUSING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Charlotte Stanley
PUBLIC RELATIONS & FILM MANAGER	Devin Neeley
PROJECT MANAGER	Porter Smith
PRESS: Tri-City Record	David Albright
VISITORS:	21

Presentation

1. Special Recognition - FEMA Advanced Professional Series

Mike Mestas, Emergency Manager, recognized Office Coordinator, Dawn Knuppel for completing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Advanced Professional Development Series which is 360 hours of courses.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner to call to order the Canvass Board. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Canvass Board

Tanya Shelby, County Clerk, reported that a Special All-Mail Election for Bloomfield Schools General Obligation Bond question was held on August 20, 2024. There were 8,361 ballots mailed, 1,485 were returned. The bond passed with 983 votes for the question and 498 votes against the question. A motion was made by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner, seconded by Commissioner Todacheene to certify the Canvass. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner to adjourn the Canvass Board and call to order the Regular Meeting. Upon voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Mike Stark, County Manager, stated that there were no changes to the agenda. A motion was made by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner, seconded by Commissioner Todacheene to approve the agenda as presented. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes July 23, 2024
2. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with New Mexico Dept. of Agriculture for Nonnative Phreatophyte Removal and Riparian Restoration
3. Approval of FY25 Budget Adjustment #1-Resolution No. 24-25-20

A motion was made by Commissioner Todacheene, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner to approve the Consent Agenda. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Lower Animas Valley Recreation Trail, Alternatives Evaluation

Nick Porrell, Public Works Director, presented the following information regarding the Lower Animas Valley Recreation Trail Alternatives Evaluation:

- The purpose of project is to create a safe and enjoyable non-motorized connection between existing trail systems in the City of Farmington and Aztec to support alternative transportation, recreation, and quality of life initiatives in San Juan County.

- San Juan County, Farmington, and Aztec have prioritized outdoor recreation and alternative transportation in their local and regional planning documents.
- In 2019, discussion began of a dedicated pedestrian and bicycle trail connecting Farmington and Aztec. The former Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad alignment between the cities was identified as a priority alignment and the project was presented to the Commission in March 2021.
- Funding for the project was received from New Mexico Economic Development Department Outdoor Recreation Division in the amount of \$250,000 with a match split between the County, City of Farmington, and Aztec; the contract was awarded to Souder Miller & Associates on October 4, 2022.

The trail was designed to be along the 8-mile alignment of the former Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGWR) right of way between Farmington and Aztec. Following the decommissioning of the railroad in 1960, the right of way was transferred to San Juan County, City of Farmington, and Aztec. It was identified early in the design phase that San Juan County had offered the former D&RGWR right of way for public sale in 1976, which resulted in approximately 2 miles of the right of way being sold to the adjacent property owner; that portion of the alignment, located east of the Aztec city limits, is no longer publicly owned. Four alternative routes within the study corridor were evaluated for project suitability: NM 516, the former D&RGWR right of way, County Road 3050, 3500, 3520 (Old Aztec Highway), and County Road 3000 (Southside River Road). Route suitability was evaluated by the following criteria: character/aesthetics, connectivity, ease of implementation, environmental issues, safety, and user accommodation. A public meeting was held at the Flora Vista Fire Station on May 9th, with 49 citizens in attendance and 39 written comments/emails were received ranging from support to opposition of the project. Those who opposed the project had concerns of safety, property infringement, vagrancy, cleanliness, and maintenance. Those who are supportive of the project cited the benefits of outdoor recreation, history, culture, physical/mental wellness, and tourism/economic development for the region. There currently is no construction funding for implementation of the project; the Commission, City of Aztec and Farmington would have discretion over future construction funding applications within their jurisdictions. Commissioner Lanier, on behalf of the current Commission, expressed that there will be no taking of private land.

2. Consideration of Resolution No. 24-25-19, Approving a Travel Policy and Procedure for San Juan County Employees

Kim Martin, Chief Financial Officer, explained that the San Juan County Travel Policy was updated and approved by the Commission on February 20, 2024; however, it is necessary to add verbiage to clarify airline fees associated with assigned seating and baggage. The County will pay for assigned seating; however, an upgrade to business class or first class will be at the employee's expense. The County will also cover the cost of one checked bag. Ms. Martin requested approval of Resolution No. 24-25-19, adopting the updated Travel Policy. A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Fortner to approve Resolution No. 24-25-19, Approving a Travel Policy and Procedure for San Juan County Employees. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

3. Report on Inspection of Detention Center

Joe Sawyer, County Attorney, requested that the Commissioners inspect the detention center in preparation of a report to be presented at a regular County Commission meeting as required by NMSA 1978, §33-3-4, Inspection of Jails and Detention Centers, which provides that the governing body shall conduct an annual site visit to inspect the overall conditions at the detention facility and present an inspection report at a regular meeting of the governing body. The last report was submitted on August 15, 2023.

Report from County Manager

Mike Stark updated the Commission on the Four Corners Freight Rail feasibility study which will conclude in 2 to 3 months and announced that the information regarding the project is at fourcornersfreightrail.com.

Reports From Elected Officials And Department Heads

Chairman Beckstead stated that the stacks at the San Juan Generating Station in Waterflow were imploded on August 24th. Chairman Becksted also expressed concern over the loss of jobs and tax benefits to residents in San Juan County. The County is continuing to make efforts to bring more opportunity and projects to our area.

Mike Mestas, Emergency Management, updated the Commission regarding the recent flooding on June 21st and the reimbursement submissions to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mr. Mestas announced that recently, another monsoon storm affected areas within the County and there were reported power outages and flooding of homes.

Comments / Input From The General Public

Garry Jensen, Barbara Gilbert, Andra Stradling, and Radene Coleson expressed several concerns regarding the proposed Lower Animas Valley Recreation Trail including safety, crime, and vagrants and requested additional public notice postings for upcoming meetings.

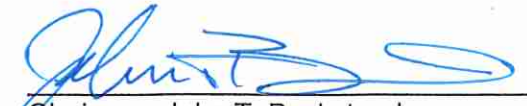
Mike Stark, County Manager, stated that the Commission agendas, meetings, and minutes are on the County website with the option to sign up to receive email notifications of upcoming meetings.

Adjourn

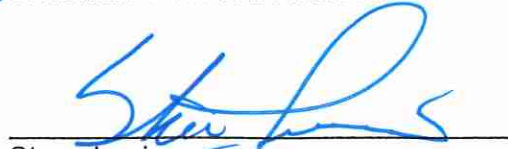
Being no further business, Chairman Beckstead adjourned the meeting at 4:55 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 17TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2024

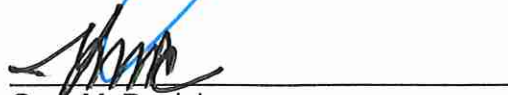
BY THE SAN JUAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:


Chairman John T. Beckstead


Chairman Pro-Tem Terri D. Fortner


Steve Lanier


GloJean Todacheene


Gary McDaniel




Tanya Shelby, County Clerk