

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Thursday July 18, 2017**

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Luna County Board of County Commissioners met in work session at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 18, 2017 in the Mimbres Valley Learning Center in Columbus, New Mexico, for the purpose of conducting a Work Session.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Smrkovsky called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance and the salute to the flag of New Mexico.

ROLL CALL: Chief Deputy Clerk Berenda McWright called roll. The following Commissioners constituting a quorum were present:

**Linda M. Smrkovsky, Chair, District 2
John S. Sweetser, District 3**

DISCUSSION ITEMS: The Luna County Board of County Commissioners were presented the following Work Session Agenda items for discussion amongst the County Manager, Staff, and attending members of the public. *(*Note: Items were presented for discussion only and no actions were taken.)*

- a. **Mimbres Valley Learning Center- Columbus:** The discussion regarding the best use of the Mimbres Valley Learning Center in Columbus was led by Community Projects Director Jessica Etcheverry and Mimbres Valley Learning Center Director Kenneth Leupold. Ms. Etcheverry urged the public to get the word out that the building is available. She also announced that all of the computers are being updated with new software to allow for more training classes. Mr. Leupold stated that several of the other branch campuses for Western University have closed. He gave an update on different classes that are available and announced that online classes, video classroom classes and desktop video classes are available. So far the enrollment does not justify face to face classes.
- b. **Senior Services-** The discussion regarding the senior services that are available was led by Luna County Manager Ira Pearson and Columbus Mayor Phillip Skinner. Mr. Pearson explained that the senior center that is located in Deming can provide the same services in Columbus only if the seniors being served qualify. In order to qualify they must do an assessment. The issue with the Senior Center in Columbus is that it is being used more for a community center. Mr. Pearson requested the community help get the word out to the seniors about the assessments and figure out the best use for the center. Mayor Skinner stated that the Heart of Columbus shut down sixty days ago and the Village needs a senior program at this time. Currently the senior center building is open five days a week from 8:00 to 1:00 providing coffee and internet. The citizens of Columbus are also using the building for Friday Night Socials.

There is a committee of volunteers in place making the decisions. Representatives of the Deming Senior Center informed the public that they can provide in-home visits to do the assessments and that homemaker, meals and companionship services are currently provided in Columbus. The use of the kitchen and the certification requirements was also discussed.

- c. Law Enforcement-** The discussion regarding law enforcement in Columbus was led by Ira Pearson. Mr. Pearson informed the public that Luna County is applying for a COP's grant that will subsidize extra patrols in Columbus for three years. He stated that funding for the Sheriff's Department has been cut over the years. He stated the County and the Village are working together looking for ways to provide consistent law enforcement services needed in Columbus. Assistant County Manager Glory Juarez informed the public of a Tip Soft program that is available for their use. The Tip Soft program sends out emergency alerts to users as well as accepts tips of criminal activity.
- d. Economic Development-** The discussion regarding Economic Development was led by Jessica Etcheverry and Mayor Skinner. The different projects discussed included.
- Columbus Electricity is building a line that will provide power to the new Port of Entry. The line will also be available in the Columbus Industrial area.
 - The Algae Plant brought in by Sapphire Energy has been shut down for a couple of years and was recently purchased by Green Stream Farms. The new company is farming algae as crop and shipping it to Mexico.
 - During the fall Work Force Development is offering Hump Day Trainings in Columbus. A wide variety of classes will be offered.
 - Deming Public Schools is implementing a program called See the Change which has had a positive outcome for other schools in raising the schools ratings. The program brings Physics to the Middle Schools.
 - American Magnesium Project is re-submitting their application to the Bureau of Land Management.
- e. Transportation Corridor Study:** The discussion regarding the transportation Corridor Study was led by Mr. Pearson and Mayor Skinner. Mayor Skinner announced that a kickoff meeting was held with the engineers and representatives from the Village of Columbus, Luna County, the City of Deming, Deming Public Schools and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. He stated that preliminary work such as surveying has begun. Mr. Pearson stated that the Village of Columbus and the Council of Governments were awarded \$500,000 to do a 36 mile corridor study from the Mexican Border to Hwy 26 in Deming. The study will include as many stakeholders as possible and find solutions to the problems. Mr. Pearson encouraged the public to attend the steering committee and public meetings.

PUBLIC INPUT: A public comment period was entertained. The different items brought forth by the residents of Columbus for discussion included:

- District 2 Commissioner involvement

- Southline project concerns about location and public input
- Stockyards having competition and not shipping much cattle
- County participation in the monthly Columbus Coalition Meetings
- Film project in Columbus
- Wilson and Company Engineers establishing an office in Columbus

ADJOURN: Chair Smrkovsky adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

**LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**



 Andrea Rodriguez, Luna County Clerk

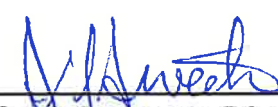
VACANT

 Joe L. Milo, Jr., District 1

Approved: August 10, 2017



 Chair, Linda M. Smrkovsky, District 2



 John S. Sweetser, District 3

