

MINUTES
Special Meeting
LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, May 30, 2024

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Luna County Board of County Commissioners met in special session at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2024, in the Commission Chambers of the Luna County Courthouse, Deming, New Mexico, for the purpose of conducting any and all business to come properly before the Board.

Call to Order: Chair Chandler Called the Meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance and the salute to the flag of New Mexico.

Roll Call: Deputy Clerk Toni Esparza called Roll. The following Board Members constituting a quorum were present:

Ray J. Trejo, District 1
Colette M. Chandler, Chair District 2
John S. Sweetser, District 3

New Business:

- **Second Amended Resolution 24-05: IPRA Designee and Procedure:** County Manager Chris Brice stated that this resolution is to show the change in the responsible parties for IPRA requests. Mr. Brice stated that this responsibility has been passed onto Executive Administrative Assistant to the County Manager Mayra Hernandez and Grant Department Deputy Director Yossie Nieblas. In order for this responsibility to change hands a resolution has to be put in place for approval. Commissioner Trejo motioned to approve the Second Amended Resolution 24-05: IPRA Designee and Procedure. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sweetser and was unanimously approved following a roll call vote.
- **2024-2025 Preliminary Budget:** Mr. Brice stated that since the Work Session of May 16, 2024 there have been no changes made to the Preliminary Budget that was presented at that time. The only outstanding item is the appropriations that were presented by the different community groups and a final recommendation needs to be made. Chair Chandler asked for recommendations from the Commission Board regarding the funding requests that were received. Mr. Brice recommended the Deming Cesar Chavez Charter High School receive \$25,000 instead of \$30,000, and Dag Ship receive \$35,000 instead of \$50,000. Mr. Brice stated this is the first time that the Columbus Historical Society has requested money from the County. Chair Chandler stated that she feels that instead of paying for three students that it should only be for two. Commissioner Trejo stated that he feels that the Commission Board should take a second look at Wildlife Services (USDA). Commissioner Trejo stated that USDA Aphis is requesting \$45,000 from the County. He stated that he only recently found out that there is a contract. Commissioner Trejo stated that there are a lot of deliverables that have not been met. For example, the uncertainty of community outreach by Wildlife Services, with the schools, with the County, etc. Also,

a concern for Commissioner Trejo is that there has not been any representative to speak on behalf of the USDA Aphis and no data has been received by the Commission Board. There is to be a quarterly report and this report has yet to be seen. Commissioner Trejo also stated that this program is federally funded, and would like to get more information before giving the money. Chair Chandler stated that she agrees with Commissioner Trejo and would like to have more information before fulfilling the funding request. Commissioner Trejo stated that he would like to table this for the time being to have more time and receive more data before deciding on any kind of funding. Budget and Procurement Director Joanne Hethcox stated that this could be removed from the Preliminary Budget for now, and she would talk to Mr. McDougal to ask him to provide the requested report. Chair Chandler stated that Ms. Martin had given an amazing presentation on behalf of the Columbus Historical Society. Chair Chandler stated that she realizes that these are graduate students and that this is a part of their graduate requirements, but she did not think the County should not have to pay for an extra student if one was not needed. Commissioner Trejo agreed with Chair Chandler and stated that they should only pay for two students instead of three. Ms. Hethcox stated that for the two students the appropriation total would be \$15,559 which is 2/3 of the amount originally requested. Chair Chandler stated that with the changes that have been made to the budget request from the Columbus Historical Society from three students to two students, and tabling the request from USDA Aphis until the questions are answered the Commission Board will go ahead and accept the Preliminary Budget with these changes. Assessor Michelle Holguin stated that she had a meeting yesterday about her budget and there were a few things that were unsettled for her. Ms. Holguin stated that she realized that this was late, but that it took her some time to get everything that was needed and requested of her, as well as having time to speak to her affiliate chair. Ms. Holguin read a list of her concerns as far as her budget is concerned. Ms. Holguin stated that according to the State Statutes the County is required to support the need for an Appraiser position as well as the GIS position she requested. Ms. Holguin stated that she felt that after yesterday's meeting her department's needs were not taken into consideration. She stated that she had spoken to her Affiliate Chair and that it is very important for every department to have a scheduled meeting prior to any Preliminary Approval of the budget to insure all department needs are being heard. Ms. Holguin stated that the Statutes attached support her request for an additional appraiser and GIS employee. She, also stated that she has an issue with her employee wages coming out of the one percent reappraisal fund which has depleted 46% due to wages and over expenditures which exceed revenue collected as was explained in the meeting yesterday. Ms. Holguin stated that reappraisal costs are high as well as equipment for reappraisal and the department needs to save and be conservative for these costs. She stated that she has expressed her need to have these wages moved to the 401 General Account last year and this year her request was ignored. She stated that her highest paid employee wages are being taken out of the of her one percent reappraisal fund and that when she asked why it was too late to make any adjustments. She stated that when she expressed that more is being taken out of her one percent fund that her department is receiving, she was told yes. Ms. Holguin stated that she feels this is not

good practice when she was told the wages were originally taken out of the one percent due to insufficient budget for the General Fund. Ms. Holguin stated that since the General Fund is no longer insufficient, as it had been agreed upon to her understanding, this change has still not been made. She stated that the One Percent fund should not be supplementing the General Fund and that is unacceptable and is stated in Statue 7-35-3.2. Ms. Holguin stated that some administrative budgets are being increased by over \$1,000,000 while other departments are left with flat budgets. She stated that there are new positions and high increases for staff of administrative departments in addition to the five percent increase that all employees are receiving, while other employees are consistently being left out, and her requests and positions are being denied. Ms. Holguin stated that all County employees are valuable and should have the same opportunities as others. She stated that the Assessor's Office is responsible for providing revenues for the County to run. Estimated taxes for the upcoming Fiscal year are \$8,000,000 and yet she is still not being approved for what is needed to adequately run her department. Ms. Holguin requested that the Preliminary Budget be tabled so that she would be able to properly present her budget to the Commission Board as stated in Statue 7-38-38 - 1D. Chair Chandler stated that what was asked was that the GIS position that was requested be referred to the GIS Department. Chair Chandler stated that it was her understanding that a GIS Department was required but not necessarily under the Assessor's Department. Commissioner Trejo stated that asking to table the Preliminary Budget at this point which includes many departments and the County's need to go ahead and start moving forward tying up loose ends for the end of the Fiscal Year is not in order. Mr. Trejo stated that there is some time to make some additional changes to the budget as per the Assessor's Office. Chair Chandler suggested to move forward with the Preliminary Budget realizing that there is another month to make additional changes that need to be made. She stated that it is the Commission's best interest to move forward at this time with the budget and realize that there is still time to make any adjustments if needed. Commissioner Trejo motioned to approve that 2024-2025 Preliminary Budget realizing there is still time to make any adjustments. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sweetser and was unanimously approved following a roll call vote.

- **Acceptance of Credit Cards and Electronic Transfers:** Mr. Brice stated that this essentially assurance to the state that the County is accepting credit cards and electronic transfers through ACH. He stated that typically this is done with the final budget and this resolution is submitted but this year it was asked for with the Interim Budget. Commissioner Trejo motioned to approve the Acceptance of Credit Cards and Electronic Transfers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sweetser and was unanimously approved following a roll call vote.

Upcoming Meetings/Events (unless otherwise specified):

- ICIP Public Hearing Work Session: June 7, 2024 at 9am
- Work Session: June 10, 2024 at 9:30am

- Regular Meeting: June 10, 2024 at 10am
- New Mexico Counties Annual Conference: June 17- June 20, 2024
- Luna County Offices will be closed; Juneteenth National Independence Day: June 19, 2024.
- ICIP Public Hearing: June 27, 2024 at 5:30pm

Executive Session:

- **Executive Session pursuant to section 10-15-1H(2)NMSA 1987 limited personnel matter pertaining to the County Manager’s Contract and LCSO Deputy.** Chair Chandler entertained a motion to move into Executive Session pursuant to section 10-15-1H (2) NMSA 1987 personnel matter pertaining to the County Manager’s contract and LCSO Deputy. Commissioner Trejo so moved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sweetser and was unanimously approved following a roll call vote. In returning from Executive Session, Chair Chandler asked for a motion to accept the two changes that had been made regarding an increase to the County Manager’s salary which was increased to \$150,000 per year, which is the same as what the City Manager is getting at this time. Also, the County Attorney is going to negotiate a severance package not to exceed \$50,000. Commissioner Sweetser so moved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trejo and was unanimously approved following a roll call vote. Chair Chandler entertained a motion to return from Executive Session where there were no other matters discussed except for those few limited personnel matters and the pending litigation, which there were no changes to that. Commissioner Trejo motioned to return from Executive Session where no other matters were discussed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sweetser and was unanimously approved.

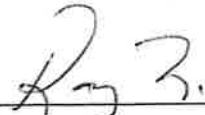
Adjourn: Chair Chandler adjourned the Meeting at 3:18 PM

ATTEST:



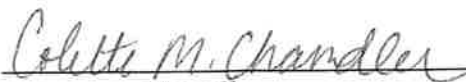
 Berenda McWright, Luna County Clerk

LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS




 Ray B. Trejo,
 Commissioner, District 1

Approved: 6-10-24



 Colette M. Chandler, Chairperson
 Commissioner, District 2



 John S. Sweetser
 Commissioner, District 3

