

**FINAL COPY**  
**Torrance County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Commission Meeting**  
**June 11, 2025**  
**9:00 AM**

Commissioners Present:

**RYAN SCHWEBACH-COUNTY CHAIRMAN**  
**KEVIN MCCALL –COUNTY VICE-CHAIR**  
**LINDA JARAMILLO – COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

Others Present:

**J. JORDAN BARELA – COUNTY MANAGER**  
**MISTY WITT – DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER**  
**MICHAEL GARCIA – COUNTY ATTORNEY**  
**SYLVIA CHAVEZ – COUNTY CLERK**  
**GENELL MORRIS – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT III**  
**DONALD GOEN – PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR**

1. **Call the Meeting to order.**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Calls the June 11, 2025, Regular Commission Meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

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

**Invocation led by:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner

3. **Changes to the Agenda:**

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** Move agenda items 14A and 14B after public comment.

4. **PROCLAMATION: None**

**5. AWARDS and RECOGNITIONS: None**

**6. BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:**

**A. COMMISSION:** Request Review and Potential Appointment of Paden Christensen to the Torrance County Fair Board to Fill a Pending Board Position Vacancy for the Remainder of the Term (September 1, 2025, December 31, 2025).

**Paden Christensen:** I'm from Encino, New Mexico. I've lived there for about eight years and worked for the Singleton Group. It's called the Lobo ranch. Before that, I was originally from Tularosa, New Mexico. I spent my whole life there, growing up, and was involved in 4-H/FFA. I grew up ranching. My dad worked for the BLM. He works on the McGregor Range. There are 530 sections down there that he takes care of. I grew up on the ranch, and all aspects of ranching, wildlife, and maintenance. I came in this morning to talk to you guys about the Fair Board position. I've always been active with the Fair Board in Otero County. Even when I was little, I was always interested in it. I always like helping kids, especially with their fair animals. Some people have been pushing me for a while to come and interview for a job or for a position on the Fair Board. I've heard that you guys are going to be modifying the arena. I've got a lot of connections in the rodeo world, as far as team roping, ranch rodeos. I can put together rodeos and make them big. I thought I'd bring that to your attention. I'm married, my wife works for the early childhood center there on 66. I have two kids. My daughter is three, and my son is 15 months old, but they will be involved.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve the Appointment of Paden Christensen to the Torrance County Fair Board to fill a Pending Board Position Vacancy for the Remainder of the Term (September 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025).

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. COMMISSION:** Request Review and Potential Appointment of Paden Christensen to the Torrance County Fair Board for a Term Beginning on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve Appointment of Paden Christensen to the Torrance County Fair Board for a Term Beginning on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**C. COMMISSION:** Request Review and Appointment of Ronnie Reynolds as a Torrance County Representative on the EMWT Regional Water Board.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Mr. Reynolds contacted me. He wanted to be here today. However, he's in another meeting, but he showed an interest in being reappointed.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve the Appointment of Ronnie Reynolds as a Torrance County Representative on the EMWT Regional Water Board.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT and COMMUNICATIONS:  
(Comments limited to two minutes.)**

**Jess Lopez – VFW:** I'm a member, along with Mike Cage, of the Moriarty City Veterans Monument Advisory Committee. We've been discussing this with the City on renewing interest in getting Veterans' names placed on the Moriarty City Veteran Monument Wall. This wall sits in Moriarty near the water towers. We discussed several times what it would take to get an individual's name up there. We identified the area of Torrance County and its vicinity. At the end, it cost money to get this done. We kicked around many ideas. The City claimed that it's not big enough to support the project at this time. We found a company that would do the

engraving. The company in Albuquerque that was contacted by Chad Hamilton works in memory care in Albuquerque. They're willing to come up, bring all their equipment, to engrave the names and add a service medallion next to their name for the cost of \$200 per name. Our calculation, if we could get 100 names at \$20,000, that would shorten the stack of applications. They have been submitted, and the applicants are anyone with military service who came out of the Torrance County area. We've been collecting names from the City of Albuquerque, which has been collecting applications, and there are roughly 100 names that we can select from. Since 1980, there have been no names put on it since that point. I feel that with the proper outreach to private businesses, you can get \$20,000 pretty quickly. We were even discussing whether we could get the money, all the money, at once. Then there are a couple of guys I ride bikes with who are motorcycle crew motorcycle clubs. We were even thinking about having a fundraiser from Mountainair to Willard back to Moriarty, a fundraiser if you don't have a bike, it's a free donation that you can help support the people who have died serving our Country.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** This Commission is going to be supportive of it. I, in all honesty, think a little brainstorming with the Commissioners up here, with our County Manager, can put something together pretty quickly.

**Chad Hamilton – Resident:** A couple of meetings ago, it was announced that we can cut firewood off the side of the road. My question is on the legality of that. If we're out there cutting trees and the Torrance County Sheriff shows up, we don't have any kind of written permission to be cutting these trees down. What's going to happen then? Because a few years back, I was cutting some trees down, and my truck got impounded. We need written permission saying yes, Torrance County approved these people to be out here cutting trees off the easements of the roads. It should be stated that the County is not responsible for any damages or if somebody gets hurt. They do it at their own risk. When you told me the other day, go ahead and start cutting trees at Mi Ranchito Road. That belongs to the Salines, that man will come out there and shoot you as you're cutting his trees without permission.

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** We had discussed with Leonard some ways to approach this, and part of that was identifying specific roadways with the County right of way and issuing specific permission within those roadways. I could sit down with Leonard, furthermore, and have that discussion. The intent was to

identify specific areas where this would be allowed and then go to the proper permission approvals to get that done. Mr. Hamilton, we should have an approval process for you.

**Albert Beckwith-Resident:** I'm also a veteran. It's my fifth year in this role of coming here with the same question, why? The other night, Ms. Austin, my neighbor down the road, due to the speed on Ice Plant Road, about 50 feet of her barbed wire fence was taken down, which restricts any animal she owns from being able to graze in that pasture. We've asked for speed limit signs on that road. I've gone to Mr. Padilla and our Sheriff. All I get told is my hands are tied. Why are the hands tied? Why is there no posting on a paved road where people are doing 50 and 60 miles an hour? The fence had never been torn down before by anybody. All of a sudden, we have people that are trespassing on our properties, and we're told not to do anything to make me have to come out there and do my job. Well, if you're on my property, that's my job. It's got to stop. We have no police protection in McIntosh whatsoever. We do not get any what they used to call a close patrol. I was told five years ago that they don't patrol our neighborhood. I watch my neighborhood more than the police department does. I keep my eyes open for my neighbors and my friends, but we get no reply. We get no help whatsoever from law enforcement, and we don't understand. There's just as much dope out there where I live as there is in Moriarty and the surrounding areas. People are taking advantage of our roads, trespassing on our properties, dealing drugs out there, and having a blast. They're having a field day, driving up and down as fast as they can drive. Why? Why can't we get posting on a blacktop road that's not posted? I'm not understanding. We voted for people to be in the office to be able to protect us, and yet, it's not happening. Why do we have to live in a world like this when we have a police department that's supposed to be watching over us and protecting us? I know you're shorthanded, and I know it's a big area, but that's not the problem. We voted for people in office to do these jobs and take care of these issues.

**\*Comments by Zoom**

**Ian Philabaum - Innovation Law Lab:** Until recently, Gerald, detained by ICE at TCFD, sought to access the law library and was denied, as was shared at the last Commission meeting. He was put in solitary confinement by staff in retaliation for insisting on access to a law library, as detention standards required. A law library may sound like something technical or minor, but it's urgent for people who are detained. People face a very real danger of deportation and have thus been put at grave risk due to the lack of basic access to legal resources. After months of struggling to reach the law library, Gerald finally succeeded, but he reports here that there is no connection to legal databases and translation services as is required by detention standards.

Gerald, I'm from Cameroon. I'm a teacher by profession. I'm a master's university student, and I'm an economics researcher. I keep asking questions to myself, because in the same way, when I'm in class teaching, students will ask me questions, but when I'm limited with information and how to get access to information, it feels like I'm not existing in the world. When you relate to the law library, we need at least access to use a computer to do research about our case. Like, for example, I have a document that I sent to Cameroon in French. I could use the internet to translate it so it can be useful to the court. Every document needs to be translated into English in the United States. This access is not the computer we have there; you can only use what documents to type and print, that is all. Thank you.

The ongoing lack of access to an adequate law library at TCFD is one of the many examples of how ICE and CoreCivic are permitted to operate the facility with impunity. Thank you.

**PJ Podesta - Innovation Law Lab:** I want to warn folks that some details I'll share our graphic bodily injury. Recently, I received word from someone detained by ICE and CoreCivic at Torrance County Detention Facility that someone held in his unit had something horrific happen to him. A guard had slammed a door on one of the man's fingers, partially severing it. I won't comment today on the multiple factors that appeared to have contributed to this incident. I will share from speaking with Juan Carlos, who suffered this horrible injury, that he endured a long and extremely painful wait to get to a hospital. Where medical professionals informed him that the severed portion of his finger could not be reattached, one reason being that it was overly dirty before the staff placed it in a bag. If ICE had not taken Juan Carlos from the Community that he was actively contributing to as

he worked through his immigration proceedings, if he had not been sent to TCFD, A site of truly countless reports of harm and negligence. This would not have happened to him. Some in official roles have called reports from my colleagues and me exaggerations. Unfortunately, we need not exaggerate at all. We can simply surface reports from inside as we receive them, which are merely a snapshot, as it's usually not possible for us to speak with every single person inside TCFD. We've spoken with 1000s of people held at TCFD. The overwhelming message we get is resounding. This is a site of torture that needs to be shut down. One recurring question we get is, How can this place be allowed to continue to operate? If folks were not locked up in places like TCFD, immigration legal service providers such as my colleagues and I could focus on supporting folks with their immigration proceedings while being free in their communities, they would be much more able to participate in their defense with full access to evidence, and so forth. Others could focus on rural community economic development to support the community and get out of the trap of the prison economy that harms both workers and people locked up. The County has the opportunity to say that in this territory, we don't facilitate the harm of ICE detention. We treat each other with civility. We honor each other's dignity. Thank you.

**Jovanny Sebastian Hernandez:** Yesterday, the nationwide organization Detention Watch Network (DWN) reported that ICE's new operation at large will do the following: double ICE's lock-up quota to a shocking 3000 people per day. Deepen interagency police collaboration with the FBI, supercharged the already massive police force with up to 21,000 National Guard troops once approved, and weaponized the IRS to target people using tax information. "The chilling impact of immigration enforcement is profound, as people of every background will feel the absence of vital and valued Community members. The Trump Administration's enforcement operations the targeting detention and deportation of people, are intentionally and methodically designed to sow confusion, separate loved ones, and destabilize the Community. This current campaign will separate parents from the children, tear families and communities apart. Impact industries that run our nation, from childcare to construction to healthcare, as immigrants wonder whether it's safe to clock in." This is a ramp-up of the enforcement dragnet that has already separated hundreds of people from their loved ones and sent them to be locked up in places such as Torrance County Detention Facility. People detained and their loved ones have called for the Torrance County Commission to end its complicity with this machine since at least 2023. Torrance County doesn't have to continue this contract with the federal government and Core Civic to keep these painful separations. The time to stop this is now. Thank you.

## 14. DISCUSSION

### A. MANGER/TAFT: Alphabet Soup – A Summary of State Economic Development Incentives.

**Jill Sweeney - Economic Development Council:** We have lots of state economic development incentives here in our state, and we've had the opportunity to visit at the public meeting about Special Assessment Districts. I understand that you heard from Beth and Yuri at the State Economic Development Department, and you'll shortly hear from Grant Taylor from PNM on all of these varieties of incentives. Today we're going to talk a little bit about the primary incentives that I think could be used to support economic development in Torrance County, including IRBs, would you see their Industrial Revenue bonds leader, the Local Economic Development Act, projects, and affordable housing. There are lots of other incentives. Today, on those primary core incentives, starting with Industrial Revenue Bonds. In the renewable sector, with Pattern Energy, but also the IRB can also be used in a variety of other contexts, manufacturing and other manufacturing sectors, and other sectors that support the general public, so very broad use in Industrial Revenue Bonds. At a high level, an Industrial Revenue Bond is an economic development tool through which a County can provide certain tax abatements for the benefit of qualified projects in exchange for increased economic activity, including job creation. We'll parse that just a little bit at a high level. Those tax abatements are real and personal property tax abatements, and the abatement of gross receipts and compensating tax on equipment. Basically, a government can only give away what it has. Those things that a government doesn't pay taxes on can pass through a company.

An Industrial Revenue Bond, despite its name, which is sort of a misnomer, doesn't provide money. It provides the absence of money, the fact that a company doesn't need to pay taxes, frees up that cash flow, and then to be able to fill the gap in a project, to make a project pencil. They can use that money for construction, for other things. That's sort of the core, and then in exchange, the government can negotiate a payment instead of taxes. In spite of the fact that an entity is paying taxes, it doesn't mean that the government is relieved from its obligation to pick up the trash and provide other municipal services. Typically, a payment instead of taxes is collected to recover a portion of those abated taxes. If the company doesn't do what it has promised to do in the creation of jobs in staying open for a particular portion of time. All of those things are included in the lease, and the company is obligated through the process to provide that exchange and benefit and maintain its



promises to the County. At a high level, the process includes an in the event of Torrance County and informal application process in some counties. This event does have an economic development policy that includes a very specific application process. Torrance County doesn't have that at this time, and we can talk a little bit about the benefits of a policy that would allow the County to offer a little more information to companies that might be interested in the process, what that process looks like, all of those things up front. Once an application comes in, there's a negotiation process that includes the amount of investment the company will make in a project and the type of commitments that it will provide, and the duration of the tax abatement. Harkening back to our experience here with renewable energy projects, a lot of times, you see the par amount of the quote, unquote bond is some huge number. That's not the amount of taxes that are being abated. That's the amount of money that the company will invest in the project. If it's a \$300 million renewable energy bond, like we've seen in the past, thereabouts, with some of those Pattern deals. That's the amount that the company intends to spend in the Community, and the number on which those various tax increment abatements are calculated so although that number is, seems big, it's not money that the County is giving or investing, and it's not the amount of the tax abatement, it's the investment that the company is going to make in the basis for the calculation of tax abatements. Also, the payment and move taxes that come back to the County can be used for a variety of things. The process includes the local government considering an inducement resolution, which is a non-binding intent to go forward with the project. The important reason is that then that triggers the company's tax abatement and its ability to work with Taxation and Revenue Department at the state to get those certificates, those type nine nontaxable transaction certificates, so they can start to purchase equipment on a tax exempt basis, and then the government later considers an ordinance which approves the lease, the indenture, the purchase agreement, all those formal documents that contain the business arrangement between the company and the County, as well as the mechanics of the transaction, when mechanics are included in the document called the indenture. Also, a bond purchase agreement, which is how the company and the bond purchaser are going to work together in this environment. Sure that the mechanics of the lease and the payment of the quote, unquote rent under this lease back structure are made, and we have a lease back structure because, like I said at the beginning, the County can only give away what it has, right to facilitate that. The company transfers the property it to the County to be held in the name of the County, and equipment purchases are made as agent for the County. It doesn't pay taxes under our state constitution. This is a useful tool in attracting a variety of industries to come into a community.

The Local Economic Development Act, which is an exception to the anti-donation clause of the Constitution that allows the government to provide land, buildings, and infrastructure to a company in exchange for job creation and other economic development activity in the state, takes lots of different forms. It can be in kind, a grant, land, or a building. It can come in the form of real money. Unlike an IRB, which is the absence of money, a tax abatement can be real money. The donation of real money can't exceed more than 10% of the County's General Fund. That 10% does not include the donation of land and buildings. Very important sort of thing to think about as we go forward. In order to protect the investment of the County, a form of security from a bank or parent company is required. To take advantage of LEDA, the local government adopts an overarching plan ordinance that says we have this tool in our toolbox. We might use it in a variety of ways, and those ways keep expanding, as we discussed. Then, a project-specific ordinance is required to come before the governing body. There's a legal mechanism, but also a business deal that you all pass on, and then you negotiate. What are the outcomes of the project? What is the rationale for the County incentivizing this project? Is it jobs? Is it stable energy? Is it cleaning up a blighted area? What are the business terms of the exchange under the exception to the anti-donation clause? There's state-LEDA funding that companies can apply for where the County is a fiscal agent. There are local LEDA funds, as we discussed, where you can use a portion of your budget and or use an incremental Gross Receipts tax that might be spun off by a particular company in return for the company lots of different forms. There's now a Gross Receipts Tax share, and we've seen it used a couple of times for very large projects over \$350 million, should some plant choose to locate in Torrance County. So again, the project-specific ordinance is also supported by a project participation agreement if the state is involved in an intergovernmental agreement. Just like an IRB, the mechanics are included in those agreements, and we make sure that those agreements have in them protections for the County, not only security, but also annual reporting and compliance, so that you're sure that you're getting the benefit of the bargain that you made in incenting a particular project come to the County. Grant will talk a little bit more about the local option, Gross Receipts Tax, and how additional funds can be generated to be used in the LEDA arena.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Do we already have the ordinance? Do we need to relook at that?

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** We'll need to relook at that. There's an Economic Development Plan in place, but it only covers the southern part of Torrance County. I think that was done in 2020. General practices, you update

them every five years. But the plan's economic development is very similar to affordable housing. The plans are there; they have a unique purpose in that the plans are going to identify the needs of the community. As we talk about the ordinance and putting the ordinance in place, if you have a plan that details, we want to see manufacturing, agricultural support, those types of things, and then a project comes to the table, and that need hasn't been identified. There may be some questions as to whether or not it could be funded through LEDA, and it's the same thing for affordable housing. If you say we need more single-family housing in Torrance County, and a multi-family housing project comes in, if that need isn't documented in the plan, you can run into an issue with that. Evaluating those plans and making sure that they are up to date and that they really are meeting the Community's needs is pretty important. With the grant application to the EDA, that was one of the things we wanted to cover: updating a new comprehensive plan, as well as updating a legal ordinance.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** The concept is we come in with an ordinance, a LEDA ordinance, which is up here, which then allows us to attract, define, and bring in other ones, in which case a solar plant comes in, a new ordinance comes in, and that defines the parameters of that symbol.

**Jill Sweeney - Economic Development Council:** This lays the groundwork so that, if a project comes and says, we're ready to go. We can run a project, a plan, what we call the overarching plan ordinance, and the project is organized together at the same time. But you create more opportunities by going to the world and saying, "We have an Economic Development Policy Ordinance. This is how it works. Here's how we do it. Come to us, and it lets you be a little more proactive in attracting businesses, because they know what to expect, and they know that you're ready to work with them. Typically, when a company comes there, they're ready to move.

Let's talk a little bit about the Affordable Housing Exception. This may be a discussion for another day, but let's talk about the similarities at a very high level, and then we can circle back around because creating business is a little different than creating affordable housing. Just like we have an exception to the anti-donation clause for LEDA and businesses. We have an exception to the anti-donation clause for housing. We're going to talk about this is the similarity, so that exception to the anti-donation clause allows the County to donate that again, land, building, infrastructure, to affordable housing, that vacant building we're talking about, purchasing land for housing, all those things. It hasn't been used very much,

but in the housing crisis that we're seeing across the state is being used more and more. So again, developing programs. Those programs are in their infancy, being developed. Hand in hand with the Mortgage Finance Authority. How do we create a framework, an application process, all of those things to allow the County to participate and use that exception to the anti-donation clause to assist with housing? The Mortgage Finance Authority does a lot of affordable housing.

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** Federal money coming into a local government, they define affordable housing as 80% of AMI or below. Any type of federal voucher program you're going to, Section Eight, public housing, those types of things, 80% is the threshold at the state level for some time; the state defines affordable housing as up to 120% of AMI. Some of those middle-income households, and, just recently, I think the legislative session before last, are average income. AMI is the average median income, and that varies based on household size. HUD puts out numbers every year, so we can calculate them to say, if you're a one-person household, an eight-person household, what is, what's 100% of AMI, 80% of AMI for that household. Then there are some areas in the state where the state has even allowed local governments to go up to 150% of AMI, and that's like Los Alamos, Santa Fe those areas where you have \$750,000 home prices right now, but generally speaking, at federal level, 80% of AMI, and below state level, 80% to 120% depending on the jurisdiction, you may be able to go up a little bit higher than that.

**Jill Sweeney - Economic Development Council:** Depending on the type of financing and the involvement, HUD and Freddie Mac are the housing mechanisms. There are outside forces that control those, but we're also seeing local governments in negotiation with particular developers to set those standards a little differently, or to create gradations within a project. We're seeing local governments take a little more active role in supporting affordable housing in various ways. Again, that affordability mechanism certainly has to be in place for the term of any bond, but it can be longer, and that's your role in negotiating the business deal. How long will that be affordable? Will the County require that affordability stay in place? Mortgage Finance Authority also does 9% transactions, another type of tax credit transaction that is invisible to the County, because it doesn't require the issuance of bonds. It doesn't require your participation. Then we have the Housing Revenue Bond Act that applies even though it's called the Municipal Act. It says Counties, Cities, for this purpose, that allows us to provide tax exemptions, just like in an IRB, right, the absence of money for affordable housing projects where you're not involved in the project, or its financing, you agree to abate those taxes to cause that project to pencil and for that, that housing mechanism to come out of the

ground. I hope that I see the similarities in these programs, both those that create financing and those that create tax abatements and how they work and how they flow through our Constitution and to you as a government without the requirement to pay taxes and then how that flows, How you can use that to incent housing, manufacturing, renewable energies and others. We want to make sure that they're as simple and as efficient as possible to manage in the future for the County, but that they also are understandable and available, and are helping you to entice development in the County. Housing needs to be part of the equation, if not the leader.

**B. MANAGER:** Local Economic Development Act Local Option Gross Receipts Tax (LEDA-LOGRT)

**Grant Taylor:** I was at New Mexico State University doing my undergrad and graduate school, I worked for Dona Ana County, and I had the opportunity to be exposed to economic development. When I was 21 years old, I knew that economic development was what I wanted my career to be. Working for Gary Carruthers during grad school, when he was the Dean of the Business College, crystallized for me that I wanted my career in New Mexico and to try to make it better, even if one Community at a time. I have either worked directly or in support of economic development throughout my career, including eight years in Hobbs, which is where the genesis of this push comes from. Until more recently, I was an Economic Development Specialist for PNM, which does not provide retail service to Torrance County, but I've been very fortunate to have an employer that sees the benefit of trying to get communities to be more intentional, more deliberate, and to provide more resources for the work that's involved with economic development. This presentation starts with the presumption that there is consensus agreement among us that economic development is hugely important and also resource-intensive. I like to start with the baseline of a definition of economic development coming from the International Economic Development Council, that what we're trying to do with economic development is implement programs, policies, activities that are going to improve quality of life and economic wellbeing of Communities, primarily through the creation and retention of jobs and through a stable tax base. In New Mexico, we define a little bit more narrowly what we're after with economic development, we're trying to get economic based businesses, those businesses that are creating a product or providing a service that gets exported out of the state to customers out of the state who are then providing new money into the state. With manufacturers in particular, whenever they are creating a product, they are contracting with companies in your Community. Those

employees of that direct employer are going to restaurants, in retail, and they're using the dry cleaners. When you have an economic-based business, especially a manufacturer, you have this great multiplier effect. With the idea of economic development, whenever you're incentivizing an economic base employer, it's seen as an investment, because that employer is going to pay wages, taxes, or PILT, in some of those cases, and then contracts with local vendors, you're multiplying what that incentive was. Jill already touched on this topic, about the anti-donation clause, and that LEDA is an exception to that, allowing a Community, either a County or municipality, or the state, to provide public support for creating jobs. Currently, the state's GRT rate is 4.875. Municipalities are limited to having a total of two and a half percent added to that, and Counties one and a quarter percent to come up with an effective GRT rate.

What I'm talking to you about today is not necessarily new, but it has improved since 2019. In 2019, I was able to work with Senator Liz Stefanics and Rebecca Dow on introducing legislation to try to increase the increment that had already been put in place in the 90s, following the enabling legislation of LEDA for economic development projects. Long story short, Republican Representative Jason Harper rolled this idea into his earmarking bill that was House Bill 479, where Municipalities that got an increment increased to a quarter percent, for Counties increased from a sixteenth to an eighth. One of the things mentioned here is that with the revenue, if this were to pass in the community, the revenue generated from that GRT, the greater of \$50,000 or 10%, is what could be used contracting with an organization like area like LEDA, or in many cases, we have Communities that don't have any government development function. They could stand up an organization and look to sustain it. I want to make sure I'm clear on is that this: this clause does not preclude the Commission from using general fund dollars for other contracts. With this local GRT increment that is for uses permitted by the local Government Development Act for Counties, they can do up to what amounts to 12 and a half cents per \$100 in Gross Receipts. The way I look at it is when we go to a department store (very often), as we're paying out, we're asked if we want to round up our purchase to donate to a good cause. In this way, when somebody is at a department store, where they, for sure, are paying their GRT, they're being asked, would you like to round up 12 and a half cents per \$100 so that your kids, grandkids, have an opportunity to remain or return close to home. This is something that I've been studying for a long time, and have gone through a painstaking process of trying to estimate what is the revenue that Counties and Cities could generate if they were to pass, and at this moment of about 70 Municipalities and Counties were to pass this would create about \$230 million in new capacity that the state would have for preparing sites to make them more

marketable, to get them ready for development, for doing marketing and attraction to regions or localities. When there is a project where a company is saying, We like your Community, but we've got this gap for us to be able to make this investment, you can come in and close the deal. What does that mean for Torrance County? They should not be greater than one and a quarter percent. What that means for you right now is that you have capacity that if you want to ask the voters, or if you want to create your increment, you have the space to do it, because you've not exceeded that one and a quarter percent that you're limited to by statute. On an annual basis, this could generate more than \$600,000 a year that you have available to do those things that we just talked about.

I mentioned that I spent eight years in Hobbs. Since the 90s, the state of Texas has had an EDC tax. What that is, is an Economic Development Sales Tax; a Municipality can go up to half a percent. We're talking that the County is as an eighth, and cities at a quarter, and on an annual basis, collectively, those Texas Communities are generating \$1.15 billion in capacity that can be used for doing that marketing and attraction about the state or about their Communities. What my hope is, I mentioned before, if 70 Communities in New Mexico were to pass this, we'd be looking at \$230 million. I did add a couple of Communities that have already passed EDC taxes. They're about the size of Moriarty. One is Collinsville, in 2023, they generated \$117,000; Kruger Mill generated \$217,000. Just a quick reminder, what we were talking about for Torrance County is more than \$600,000.

The Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance was mentioned during my time at that organization. There was a consultant brought to the organization to speak with us on ideas and to talk about a book, and that book is Economic Development Is Not for Amateurs. The author, Jay Garner, points to the Texas example that this is the secret sauce, that you've got all these small communities that have passed this Economic Development Sales Tax, and then collectively, they're very powerful. With the idea of working in the area, whether you're trying to conduct economic development at the County government level or stand up a local organization. One of the other points that Jay Garner makes is that you want to market regionally, and so it makes great sense to work with the area, to be part of the region, the Albuquerque NSA, and then to have the capacity to sell locally to close the deal for your community.

There has been a theme over the last couple of years about site readiness, and Gary might have already talked to you about that. They've been a great driver, on the revenue generated can also be used for site readiness. In 2013 what was excellent is that LEDA was updated to say that you can provide public support, not only to a

manufacturer or business that's going to create jobs, but you can also provide public support to cultural facilities, arts and cultural districts and you can have a little bit more balance about creating quality of life for your residents because of that provision. Then eligible recipients again, you know, those multi, those big multipliers, economic-based businesses, manufacturers that want cultural facilities. You can see there are even facilities for farmers. Whenever I was working for the EDC of Lee County, getting a grocery store, getting Dollar Store, amounted to economic development, because you had a lot of ranching families that would otherwise go to the Midland, otherwise go to Lubbock, because they didn't have something close by in the way of just grabbing something quick, we might have to do that bulk shopping in other areas. And what that amounts to is retail leakage. This is one more way that Torrance County could capture dollars instead of losing them to other markets. Starting in 2022, the Governor and the Legislature will work together to reduce the state's portion of GRT. It used to be 5.125. I noted earlier that it's now 4.875, so a decrease of a quarter percent. You can see that in 2022, the effective GRT rate for Torrance County was greater than it is now. My argument is, what the state did is effectively give you some headroom to put back in, you know, an eighth of a percent for your benefit, for you to make those investments in economic development.

LEDA-LOGRT is just one idea about how you can resource economic development, but it is prescribed that if you were to go the LEDA-LOGRT route. It does have to be approved by a positive referendum. It does have to go to the voters, and they do have to approve it for you to enact it. You could do that as early as this November election. I would encourage everyone to do is you decide in July. It is no later than early August, because you have to do that at least 70 you have to pass a resolution at least 75 days before the election. Talking to Municipalities as well. According to the local election act, those Municipalities can either put that into the County-run election on November 4. They don't have to wait until next year for the Municipal Election or the next General Election.

Currently, on the state Tax and Revenue website, there is a model ordinance for Counties, for LEDA-LOGRT, same thing for Municipalities. Now, there is essentially an ordinance language if you were to go this route. I tried to do the same with the Secretary of State's office, to have a model ballot question, but they said that their preference is that each jurisdiction should work with their council to have that drafted and approved. Everything that I've talked about today is provided in the statute, not trying to be necessarily creative. It's all laid out. I'm here to make you aware of this tool; this topic, for me, has been a career-long passion project. I



do have some developed expertise and can offer technical assistance and moral support. I'm very lucky that my employer allows me to do this.

Where this all started for me was, I was working for the EDC of Lee County, a very well-resourced economic development organization. In 2009, the city of Hobbs gave \$250,000 to the organization. The County was giving \$460,000 to the organization. It's an anomaly in New Mexico, and when I attended the economic development basic course in Silver City, I had someone approach me saying, Well, our County just gave our new organization \$45,000, and we'd like for you to be the Executive Director. For me, it just was very, very clear that we have subcommittees that don't yet have the appreciation of just how intensive the work is, that it does require much more than paying a person to do that work or an organization to do the work. There's just a lot more involved. Starting in 2009, I had hoped that maybe what you do is get Communities to commit parts of their general fund to do this. Especially looking at the Texas example, it just seems like the right thing to do is to have a jurisdiction set up a savings account, basically, that has direct deposit. That's what LEDA-LOGRT does. Thank you.

**8. Department updates and Communication: None**

**9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. COMMISSION:** Request approval of minutes of the May 22, 2025, special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve May 22, 2025 minutes.

**Linda Jarmillo-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. COMMISSION:** Request approval of minutes of the May 28, 2025, regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve May 28, 2025 minutes.

**Linda Jarmillo-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:  
**MOTION CARRIED**

## **10. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. FINANCE:** Request for Approval of Amended Payables with Date  
Ranges of 05/22/2025 to 06/04/2025.

### **Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve payables.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **11. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE/AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE:** **None**

## **12. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:**

**A. CLERK:** Request Approval of Resolution No. 2025-23. A Resolution  
Appointing the Board of Registration Members for Torrance County.

**Sylvia Chavez-County Clerk:** I have a couple of resolutions in front of you today. The first one is for the appointment of my Board of Registration. These three ladies have been on the board for the last two years, and when we met back in March, I asked if they would be interested in continuing to be on the board of registrations. They all indicated yes. The three ladies are Michelle Jones, Gayle Jones, and Sandra Ness. By state statute, I do need to have each party represented. I do have a Democrat, a Republican, and an Independent on this board. I would just ask for the Commission to pass this resolution, and I will stand for questions.

### **Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-23.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. CLERK:** Request Approval of Resolution No. 2025-24. A Resolution Designating the Location of Polling Places for the 2025 Regular Local Election and the 2026 Primary and General Elections.

**Sylvia Chavez-County Clerk:** I have before you a request for approval. This is something that we have to do every two years in odd years. To designate your polling locations for the upcoming election cycle. I am doing this to include the 2025 Regular Local Election. We are changing the polling location for Willard because they came and inspected our polling locations, and there were a lot of concerns with the Willard Community Center. They told us it probably would not be a good idea for us to use it as our polling location. I went to the Village of Willard, and they offered another building that we'll be able to use. It is right where the Village offices are, next to the Fire Department. That is going to be indicated on one of the locations as an update for the polling location in Willard, and that should be considered the Willard Village Office at 712 B Dunlavy Avenue. That is a new site for our polling location in Willard, and that would be something that needs to be approved now for the Regular Local Election in November and moving forward for the Primary and General Elections. Hopefully, we can get some funding for the Willard Community Center to be ADA compliant. I ask for approval of our polling locations.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve Resolution No. 2025-24.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

### **13. APPROVAL/ACTION ITEMS**

**A. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Request Approval of Memorandum of Agreement Between Torrance County and The City of Moriarty Regarding Emergency Shelter Operations.

**Samantha O'Dell-County Emergency Manager:** This is slightly different than the agreement that we had last year in that we're making the Moriarty Civic Center a secondary location. The Lions Club is the first location, and that's an MOU that you had approved previously. We are including the rodeo arena in this for livestock. Instead of having this as an annual agreement, now it's ongoing, with the agreement to meet anytime that changes need to be made. One of the struggles with the Lions Club is that it does not have as much space, even though it has benefits. If we're talking about a large event, we may need multiple locations.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach- County Chairman:** Motion to approve.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. FINANCE:** Request Approval to Pay Prior Year Invoices to New Mexico Counties Commissions' Affiliate for Years 2022, 2023, and 2024 for \$300.00.

**Misty Witt-Deputy County Manager:** This was received by Commissioner Jaramillo from the Commissioner's Affiliate. You have not paid dues for 2022, 2023, and 2024. I believe that there was a change in staff, from what I understand, and I don't believe that invoices were sent out.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**C. ANIMAL CONTROL:** Request Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with the Friends of Estancia Valley.

**Danette Langdon-Animal Shelter Director:** This is the same MOU that you had signed previously, with some simple changes. They changed the term from ongoing to April 15, 2026, instead of an ongoing agreement. They did change the wording. We are now known as partners, and they are now known as the program. They did add invoicing requirements that they want us to invoice, and how they want us to invoice. Those are the only changes; everything else is the same.

**Michael I. Garcia-County Attorney:** It has an interesting phrase in it where it says the partners acknowledge that no contractual relationship was created by them, between them, by this memorandum. It's like saying there's not really any binding agreement, and probably harmless. I don't see a problem with it.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**D. MANAGER:** Request Approval of Amendment No. 1 to the Employment Agreement Between Torrance County and Misty Witt for the Position of Deputy County Manager.

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** As was discussed at our previous meeting, Mrs. Witt has gone through the probationary period as the Deputy County Manager. She did receive a very favorable performance evaluation, and this particular amendment is to adjust section two to increase the compensation associated with that contract up to \$100,000. I want to say for the record that I appreciate Misty for what she does for the County in terms of overseeing the Finance Department and all the other internal departments. I could not do what I do without her support. I think this contract amendment will adjust compensation, and it would also create a little bit of parity as far as pay rates for contracted employees in Torrance County.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to approve.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Seconds the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

#### **14. DISCUSSION**

**A. MANGER/TAFT:** Alphabet Soup – A Summary of State Economic Development Incentives. **Heard after public comment.**

**B. MANAGER/GRANT TAYLOR:** Local Economic Development Act Local Option Gross Receipts Tax (LEDA-LOGRT) **heard after public comment.**

**C. FIRE:** Consolidation of County Fire Districts.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** I want to open up some discussion about the consolidation. We've met with not only ISO and the State Fire Marshal, who have shown us how to move forward.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** We discussed this a little bit in the past, if I remember correctly. It solves a lot of the problems with ISO ratings. You briefly reviewed the pros and cons of it again.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** It doesn't come 100% clean, but the real benefit we get is when those fire funds come in. We have more control over those funds. There are a lot of duplicated services that I don't think need to be happening. We get a lot of duplicate equipment because we have different people using fire funds for their separate districts. The process would be, we would make a resolution disbanding all the separate districts, then in the same resolution, bring them all back together under Torrance County Fire. We would lock in our ISO ratings that are here right now. Speaking with Dale Boyles from ISO, we're in real jeopardy of regressing to like a 10 for the Indian Hills District. It's a 6/ 6x right now. The benefit of doing that consolidation is that we lock in those ISOs for one year, and then we have our job to do, to bring up staffing, bring up our training standards, and all those things. That's the real big benefit. If we stay in the system, we're in

right now, we're going to regress before we get the back-end support we need from paid staff and get more volunteers involved. The big pro is that we lock in the ISOs now.

I understand Commissioner McCall's concern, there are going to be some differences in ISO ratings, by where they're at now, but once we do consolidate and we get our first ISO evaluation, we will become one ISO rating. There is a way to possibly insulate the North end by separating the County into two separate regions. I did talk to the State Fire Marshal about that. We probably split the County in half, have a North End and a South End. That would give us some time to work on the south end to bring up their rating. That's an option that we can look at as well. I think that's the best option in the spirit of time, because it is going to take us a little time to get to bring up the Southern End. The North End is doing good. They've got a lot of volunteers that are responding, but in general, we're losing a lot of volunteers. We've got volunteers who aren't responding in the South End. I see it as the only way for us to truly move forward. Two separate ones give us two different opportunities for grants as well. It sort of makes sense to try and go for the separation. The Southern End is in big jeopardy. We've had volunteers that don't respond. We've got calls that are being taken by District Three in McIntosh. They're going all the way to Duran.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** The problem is that the Northern End has the most concentrated population, they don't have an issue with volunteers, and they're coming from other Counties to volunteer. We're at a disadvantage in my district. I think with all the improvements that you're making, maybe we can increase volunteers and all that, but I would like for it to be a total consolidation, instead of two separate ones, and we can all work together, because I know we can get more volunteers now that we've changed the PERA.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** I have to look at this in multiple ways, and you are correct, the northern part of the County is more populated, therefore it's not as bad. The northern part of the County also provides more funds through taxes for the same reason. At this time, we're putting more funds towards the Southern End of the County to get caught up. With all of that being said. What I'm looking at is, what is the right way to structure? We're here because of a time crunch. We're not saying we're not going to work on the southern part of the County. I am opposed to punishing existing good ISO ratings. In the meantime, it's still putting in efforts to increase ISOs, and can we get an estimate of what it is going to affect with ISO ratings in both scenarios? The assumption is that you mentioned Indian Hills. We're not going to get that up. It's in jeopardy of going to a 10; that's the worst, in

which case, that does affect insurance. I also need the parameters on where those insurance levels are. If it's six or seven, insurance companies don't care. If you get to an eight, they're going to change the fees. Does it change the cost of insurance to an individual?

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** It does to an extent. Some of them are not expensive. When we're talking about economic development, commercial buildings, it's about an ISO seven versus an ISO three; it's substantial for those business owners. I hate to say it, but it all comes with a cost. For us to get to where we need to be, we need more power, whether it's volunteer or paid. I've been collaborating with Commissioner Jaramillo down south, and we're trying to get a paid staff in Willard. Not only to supply the response criteria down there, but also to start doing some training to get more people active in the volunteer realm. People have so many responsibilities nowadays, it's difficult. Then, when you talk about that ISO form that I gave you, that breaks down what we're going to be graded on. The training is 240 hours a year to get you the most points that you can get from ISO for your training. The problem is, you have employee A, whether it's a volunteer or paid staff, employee B, who can only do 10 hours or 15 hours, and the other employee does that 240 hours; you're going to split that difference, so you're losing so many points. We have to be creative in how we separate the difference between firefighters who are volunteering and doing the work versus support staff, if they can't make those commitments. Our goal this year is 240 hours per member; there's going to be a lot of training going on. Those are the problems we deal with, and how we can be creative and fiscally responsible.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** When you say punishing your districts for the sake of my district, I don't think that's quite the right thing to say, because we're talking about saving lives. The Northern District is close to Albuquerque. It takes 20 minutes to get to Albuquerque, 30 minutes from your district. In my district, we're so rural, it takes an hour and a half for us to get to any hospital emergency service. We should all be in this together for saving lives, not penalizing anybody. If we can all work together, I think with all the improvements, I think we can get my district to start giving more volunteers, more professionals, maybe because we can house some people in Willard now, if we get it all in order.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** As far as the ISO rating is concerned, punishment may be the wrong term, but who pays for what is very much the right term, and just because we changed the district. What we're talking about is affecting the individual's fire insurance. We're not talking about changing the funding of the fire how we're running. We are still putting a lot more focus on



building the Southern End. My focus is not to change where we put the funding and the resources. My focus is not to change the ISO ratings on the districts that already have a good ISO rating.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** I don't think it harms the Southern End to do that. But then you could have the core of the top in the north, and we'd have to make those delineation lines. It's not going to necessarily; it's not going to mess with what we're doing down south.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** I want to see both options. The last thing I want to do is start gerrymandering the alliance. That's not what I'm talking about. We're looking at more logistics to manage based on our volunteer employee pool and response time. The way I look at it is how the population base, but they aren't getting the volunteers, then it's a different effort to get those volunteers within that district. It's clear the issue on the southern side is the population base, and so it's clear that it also needs more full-time, fully paid staff to compensate for that. That is not what we mean. I'm not saying don't do that, but in the meantime, to manage it, if we go ahead and bring the northern part of the County up, and they drop three points, and everybody up there is dropping another \$1,000 on their fire insurance. What do you think that's going to do to their attitude towards the Southern County? It's manageable. It's doable, but we need to see all the numbers.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** When ISO comes in, they'll either evaluate us as a whole, or can finagle it to get us a northern end, a southern end, two different regions. It's a complicated process. There are a lot of moving parts, but I don't think separating the two is going to harm the southern end at all.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Keep in mind, if we do nothing to leave it the same, ISOs are changing down here regardless, and this can buffer that a little bit while we put resources in. It can also highlight where the weak points are that can change your ability to say why we need volunteers. You live here. We're offering the training, we're offering the ability, we're offering the location and the equipment. You want a safer community, you want a lower ISO rating, please get involved.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** I'm going to keep pushing that paid staff out of Willard, because it makes sense. It's a corridor. We'll be able to work with our mutual aid partners in Estancia. We'll be able to slide up and back and forth on Hwy 41. It's a really good footprint for us to start with.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** I want to see some rough estimates on what our current ISOs, if we leave them alone, how is it going to change? What is going to change with two districts and one district overall? Is that like an act of God to figure those numbers out, or not too bad?

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** Once this process starts, then our work begins. Now we've got a year to get everything up to snuff in those documents and hit all those points as much as we can.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** When you go to fewer districts, essentially, if you have heavy volunteers in the north, their district just got bigger, correct?

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** No, we can keep the same districts. If you go into a regular city, 200,000 people, and they have 12 stations. That same concept. They're separate stations, but they're still under the umbrella of the municipality's Fire Department.

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Right now, we have six districts. Out of those six districts, say three of them are up north and three of them are down south. The three up north each have 20 volunteers. The ones down south have you 10. When you change to one district, those 20 volunteers now encompass the southern end, also the number of volunteers. The quality of training for the volunteers.

**Gary Smith- County Fire Chief:** They become all of our one department and have all the assets that were separated among separate districts, all the gear, all the equipment, the apparatus. They all became our custodians at that time. Then we would be able to disseminate those things that would give us, you know, a spare Reserve System, some other things like that too. Then all the volunteers would be under that umbrella of Torrance County firefighters.

**D. GRANTS/MANAGER:** Discussion on the 2027-2031 Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan for Torrance County.

**Luke Fields - Grants Administrator:**

*The ICIP was discussed using a previous list created by the Commission.*

**2026:**

1. County Fair Grounds are currently being worked on and will be moved further down the list.
2. Water collection stations for the Duran and McIntosh Fire Stations to have water storage capability and have catchment systems to catch rainwater.
3. County road improvements. Some of those have been completed. Roads can always be worked on.
4. New County Government Offices. We are moving forward with that process, moving the new location from Alan Ayers to the Judicial Complex, which is an active project and is currently funded.
5. We have purchased and equipped medical response vehicles. This is an emergent priority for the County to make sure that we can staff those into the future.
6. The Fire Department's Comprehensive Plan is going to be dependent on what was discussed earlier in the meeting.
7. Emergency Management Facility, which is for construction. We are also working on a study as to where the best place for the EOC and Emergency Management Facility should be.
8. Road Department Equipment. We need to get with Leonard and find out how much of that we've executed and what we're changing with the lease agreement.
9. Restoration Preservation of Historical Records. This is an important one for our Clerk's Office.
10. Animal Shelter Improvements are currently fully funded.
11. P25/700 system for radios. That's extremely important for everyone, from the Sheriff's Office to the Fire Department, and Code Enforcement, to make sure that we have full coverage for the entire County.
12. 24/7 Urgent Care, we really would like to move forward with that. We need to add to this a feasibility study on getting an operator, funding the operator, and long-term staffing of that facility.
13. Duran Water System Improvements: We completed the tank.
14. Arthur Park Lake and pool in support of the Town of Estancia's ICIP list.

**2027:**

1. New Regional Animal Shelter. Our current animal facility needs to be improved and possibly relocated. It's a big priority to make sure that we have something in the plan for the future, for that development as well.
2. Road Assessment. When we go out into the community, we talk to folks, and one of the first things they mention is the roads.
3. Multi-generational facility with a gym.

4. Mountainair Rodeo Grounds Improvement is almost completely shovel-ready. If we can get funding for it, and we can move forward with it, that's also a great economic development tool, because the key with that one is adding RV boxes to the rodeo ground so that people can camp without having to run generators, and they have water service available. That's great for the rodeos, but it's also great as a tool for allowing people to rent the facility and use it for family reunions or other events.
5. Duran Schoolhouse Feasibility Study. Is it reasonable to renovate it and get it up to standards, so that we could use it for a purpose?
6. Abo Water System, same as Duran.

**2028:**

1. Emergency Management equipment. It looks like we're hoping to increase some of our emergency response for Emergency Management.
2. Asset Management Plan for Torrance County. This is really important for several departments within the County to make sure that we are adequately managing our assets don't have losses due to disasters, that we're able to immediately know what assets we have, what needs to be replaced, and what the cost would be to replace them.
3. Road Department Water System upgrades. This is listed as Fire Station Water Systems, but it is actually for the new Road Department building to allow us to have a catchment system on that facility, and then water storage there as well.

**2029:**

1. New Fire Station for Torrance County itself, whether it's in Estancia or McIntosh.
2. Ball Field Development. This one is planned, designed, and constructed, but we probably need to do a feasibility study to find out where we need to put them, what the needs are. For that Community, because we do have facilities located in the Municipalities throughout the County, but this would be one that would be County-owned and operated.
3. Emergency Helipads. The idea is to add three helipads in the rural areas of the County, so that if there is a type of medical situation that needs to be evacuated quickly, we have those facilities in place that the life flight crews know exactly where to go, and the firefighters are trained to activate those health pads and receive and safely transfer the patients.

After discussions, the Commission decided to move Fairground Improvements lower on the list, because it currently has funding and is not a priority. The County

Administrative Office is kind of a done deal. It can be moved down on the list. Add Willard Fire Station to the top of the ICIP list. Move Emergency Management to the top. The ball field, the American Association of Little Leagues, or something, has a grant. Apply for that grant and see if you can get that funding from them. The Clerk's Office project and Mountainair Rodeo Ground should be higher on the list because they are shovel-ready. Add the Sheriff's Department Security. Animal Shelter Improvements, I think we need to be moving forward with the Regal Animal Shelter planning but remove the \$75,000 for the Animal Shelter. Remove the Duran Water System's fulfilled request for tanks. Radio System, \$245,000, is what we're going to be short of to complete the project. Arthur Park is supporting Estancia. Willard Community Center, added to the ICIP list to ensure ADA compliance. It is currently the plan to transfer the ICIP process to the Economic Development Officer to make sure that they're fully integrated with it when they're going out into the Community and they're talking to these businesses, so that if they find needs that are infrastructure related, they are directly involved with that process.

#### **E. MANGER'S REPORT:**

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** I mentioned this earlier in the previous presentations, the Deputy Manager and I did meet with AREA. We drove most of the County. We talked about the Community, what the needs are, as well as looking at some potential sites. We did give them some ideas. They're regularly putting out requests for site identification. We gave them a list of properties that the County owns, as well as some properties that the City of Albuquerque owns in Torrance County that are pretty significant in size, and some other considerations. They have that information available in Albuquerque. The City of Albuquerque owns two relatively significant tracks up near Route 66 and Hwy 217. I think one is 140 acres, one's 160 acres, and then they own a couple in the McIntosh area. It was through a land swap deal that they did with the State Land Office. They ended up getting these in their portfolio. They're actively looking for ways to use them or to sell them. I only talk to them about real estate and our taxpayer dollars. In discussions with them, they did say that, depending on its use, it is for affordable housing or economic development. The City would certainly be willing to discuss what we did with those, even if it was fostering a deal with a private organization for those purposes. Some options are on the table.

I have a meeting this Thursday with the representative from the Solid Waste Authority. We are going to do a walk-through of the Alan Ayers site, because we

will be doing the presentation to the Solid Waste Authority Board next week. We're also looking in the Tajique area for a secondary site for the transfer station at the next meeting. This is not a site that we own; it's a site that the land grant owns, and it would be for lease as well. The current lease expires at the end of the month. The land grant has proposed a new lease that would keep our current transportation functioning for another 12 months. That was on the agenda for today. We took it off because the land grant couldn't be here to answer Commission questions. There's another parcel that's about four acres, not necessarily in town, but not too far off. It takes time to get another site, so we could do a one-year amendment for the site that we're at. You may be able to terminate the lease into a new lease, if that's a much better situation, or keep the current location for a year and look at a different one. There are options on the table, I think, does this new site meet the Solid Waste Authorities' needs or not, because the County, looking through that process, we don't own anything viable in that area to meet their needs right now.

I want to let the Commission know everybody's invited to the Duran Fiesta on Saturday, June 21, at 1 pm at the Duran Community Center. I did make them aware that I would extend that invitation to you all verbally in the meeting. The last thing, and I did want a little bit of feedback from the Commission on this, is we're trying to schedule a Special Workshop with Jill Sweeney to talk about the Special Assessment Districts/Special Improvement Districts. Her firm has drafted an ordinance. It's in place, but they did want to sit down with the Commission to talk through that ordinance. Jill's team can meet on June 19th at 3 pm. I've received some confirmation, but not from everybody on the board, as to whether or not that particular date and time are doable. It'll be a workshop to review the ordinance and have Jill provide some deeper levels of insight into how this process works. I suggested three o'clock on the 19th because I will be in Clovis at the Convention, but I can leave before the closing session and the luncheon.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** I can be back here by 3 o'clock, and it's a business day, so it worked better on the 19th. Make it easier for me to come from Clovis.

**Jordan Barela- County Manager:** An update on the fairgrounds, we're in active contract negotiations with the contractor, and we're meeting today after this meeting to see if we can fine-tune some of the agreement language to get the ball rolling. The big variable right now is the \$700,000 that is set to expire at the end of this month. There are a couple of options on the table to do that. One of the options is using that funding for a down payment on the building or any materials for the building. From what we've been told, you have a minimum of six to eight lead

time, and that's in your best-case circumstances. In order to secure that, we could put a deposit, but that deposit does require the contract to be executed. We are trying to get the contract done, because we do need to have that contract with this vendor before we can put any deposit down. That's one hurdle. The second component of this is potentially appropriating some of those funds for panels inside the building. That's something that they have incorporated into the design so livestock can be housed there. We do have a vendor out of Texas that can provide those panels and do a general design for what that area is, as far as square footage and what we're housing there, what that would look like. They're part of tips, which is a contract very similar to CES. It's just national, and we're a part of that organization. That is another option that we're exploring to see. If we run into a tight issue with the contract, and it's complicated, the contracts, not a small one by any stretch of the imagination, that's another option.

Studio Southwest agrees on there. They're going to be getting us an invoice for everything they've done through June 30. That portion of the funding is spoken for. I think the variable right here is that there are two options, and both are time crunches. If we went to panels, we could get that done. If we went under contract, it's going to take everything in us to get that contract done in the next couple of days. Contract, variability, there is a materials deposit. It would be the deposit on materials. The architects are a party to that agreement through one of the exhibits. We've been reading through it; we've been looking at it. We found a couple of issues that we need to work through and negotiate. It's 130 pages and a multi-million-dollar project. It's complex to make sure that we're dotting all the I's and crossing all the T's, and we don't rush it and have an issue. Some money can be spent on the architect. We don't know what that billing might come in at yet. They're trying to do a calculation for us based on estimators.

## **F. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

### **1. Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman, District 1**

**Kevin McCall- County Vice Chair:** I've been working diligently. I've been in lots of meetings with lots of architects concerning the fairgrounds, and it is moving nicely. The burning question is, how to get rid of the \$700,000 in two weeks? Another thing I want to throw out. I've already talked to Jordan a little bit, and it's in discussion was the fire ban, if and when we could lift and then he said he's been in talks with the Chief. As it's turning green on the way down here, and Fourth of

July is coming, I want to know if we ought to approach that here shortly. I will not be here for the next meeting; I will be in England.

2. Ryan Schwebach- County Chairman, District 2

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** None

3. Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner, District 3

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** I've been meeting with Chief Smith in Willard. Going over the plans for that. I had no idea that there was even a second story. It is good quarters up there. It didn't have a stairway. I attended the Republican Lincoln Day dinner. It was great. I sat with Betty Cabber, Jesse Lucero and his wife, the Chief Deputy Assessor Linda Gallegos, Madam Clerk Sylvia Chavez, Kathryn Hernandez, our Treasurer. Stephanie Lord spoke, and a candidate running for Governor. The place was excellent. The venue was great. The food was great. They had dancing. It was a great fundraiser. Then I am going to be going to the convention in Clovis and meeting with my fellow Commissioners from other Counties. I will be going to the Fiestas in Duran. They invited me and asked me to speak. I will say a few words on behalf of Torrance County.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

16. Announcement of the next Board of County Commissioners Meeting:  
June 25, 2025, at 9:00 AM.

17. Signing of Official Documents.

18. Adjourn.

**Action Taken:**


**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** Motion to adjourn.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

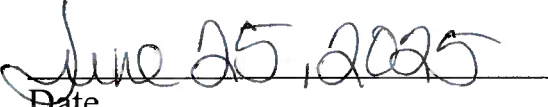


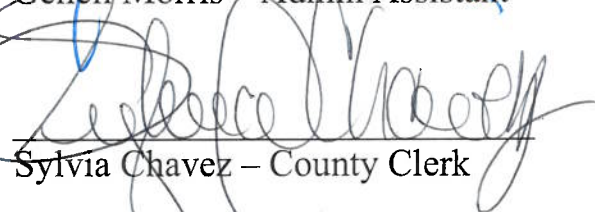
**Roll Call Vote:** Linda Jaramillo – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: - Yes:  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**The meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Schwebach – Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Genell Morris – Admin Assistant

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sylvia Chavez – County Clerk

The video and audio of this meeting are available upon request.