

**Final
Torrance County Board of Commissioners
Regular Commission Meeting
January 14, 2026
9:00AM**

Commissioners Present:

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

Others Present:

**JORDAN BARELA-COUNTY
MISTY WITT-DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
MICHAEL GARCIA- COUNTY ATTORNEY
SYLVIA CHAVEZ-COUNTY CLERK
MACKENZIE CARLSON- ADMINASTRATIVE ASSISTANT 1
DON GOEN – PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR**

1. Call to Order- Chairman Schwebach called the meeting to order and led the Pledge.

2. Invocation-Commissioner McCall delivered the invocation, praying for wise decisions and protection of law enforcement and first responders.

3. Changes to the Agenda -Chairman Schwebach announced Item 14(C) was struck from the agenda.

4. Proclamations- None

5. Awards and Recognitions- None

6. Board and Committee Appointments- None

7. Public Comment- County Clerk Chavez announced there is no in-person public comment.

Public Comment (Zoom)

- **Speaker:** Aron Torres (on behalf of his detained brother at Torrance County Detention Facility – TCDF):
 - Asked Commission to:
 - Maintain required staffing levels at TCDF due to “regular problem with staffing shortages.”
 - Consider replacing Assistant Warden Ortiz, alleging:
 - Policy violations.
 - Encouraging staff to violate policy.
 - Contributing to staff resignations and staffing shortages.

- **Speaker:** Tiffany Wang, Innovation Law Lab:
 - Provides pro bono legal services to ICE detainees at TCDF; said they’ve connected with ~2,000 detained people since 2019.
 - Read written comments (from Nov.) of a current detainee describing:
 - Unit 2A:
 - “Worst conditions” and lack of hygiene, limited cleaning products.
 - Mold in bathrooms and interior walls.
 - Roof leaks
 - one incident where feces backed up through floor drains and detainees were not moved until the next morning.
 - Subsequent transfers to units 5C and 7B:
 - Slip and injury due to roof water leak; difficulty obtaining x-rays.
 - After complaints, alleged retaliation, loss of hot water, and AC set so low that detainees were extremely cold.

- An ICE agent allegedly stated things would not be fixed until contract renewal.
 - Detainee characterized his status as “illegal detention” and “kidnapped.”
- Wang emphasized:
 - County recently extended a long-expired ICE contract through March.
 - County acts as “go-between” for ICE and CoreCivic (private prison corporation).
 - Innovation Law Lab will continue bringing detainee testimony to the Commission.
- **Speaker:** Ian Philabaum, Innovation Law Lab:
 - Highlighted case of Jose Ramon Pirella, detained at TCDF since August 2025:
 - Sole guardian of his 6-year-old son; both fled Venezuela in 2023, processed at the border, and complied with all immigration court requirements.
 - ICE detained Jose, separating him from his son; son now lives with church community in Houston and reportedly suffering severe emotional distress.
 - Jose has a language disorder; neither ICE nor immigration court allegedly provided accommodation; he was ordered removed in a hearing where he was not fully understood.
 - Philabaum framed the case as:
 - Example of due process failures and ongoing psychological harm.
 - Deportation order “predicated on a conversation in which Jose was not understood.”
 - Requested:
 - Continued community support for Jose’s release.
 - Public to visit Innovation Law Lab Instagram or links in Zoom chat to join advocacy.

8. Department/Program updates and Communications- None

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a) December 10, 2025 Regular Commission Meeting

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve minutes; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes
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- b) December 30, 2025 Special Commission Meeting

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve minutes; Seconded by Vice-**Chairman McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes
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10. Consent Agenda

- a) Request Approval of Payables with a date range of December 4, 2027 to January 7, 2026.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve Payables; Seconded by Vice-**Chairman McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Commissioner: **Linda Jaramillo**
- Question: Asked about a payment of \$2,463.93 made to Chris Archuleta for “rent of building.”

- Misty Witt -Deputy County Manager Response:
 - This is a long-standing rental agreement with Mr. Archuleta
 - The building is used to house ambulances and EMS staff
 - The expense is not new and has been ongoing
 - The payment was recently noticed, not newly incurred
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11. Enterprise E-Feets Program

- **Presenter-Jordan Barela**, County Manager
 - Noted preliminary discussions on applying the Enterprise Fleet Program to first responder vehicles, particularly the Sheriff's fleet.
 - Goal: Determine best, most economical way to maintain a reliable, safe vehicle fleet for the Sheriff's Office.

Enterprise Presentation – Current Fleet Challenges & Lease Concept

- **Presenter: Christine** (Enterprise Fleet) – with **Cesar** (Account Manager) & **Gabby** (Government Marketing Manager via Zoom)
- Key points:
 - Scope: Enterprise applies its national rental-fleet management model at local government level.
 - Current Torrance County fleet (overall, not just Sheriff):
 - ~50% of vehicles over 10 years old → higher fuel & maintenance costs, safety concerns, reduced resale value.
 - ~20% missing Electronic Stability Control (ESC) – described as “#1 safety feature since the seat belt.”
 - Financial concept:
 - Shift dollars from operations (fuel, maintenance) to capital (new vehicles) via open-ended “equity” leases.
 - Example:
 - Buying: \$60,000 truck with \$100,000 annual capital budget → 1–2 vehicles.

- Leasing: Same budget can often support 5–10 vehicles, depending on terms.
 - Enterprise holds title, County gets all equity on sale of vehicles; Enterprise manages acquisition and remarketing.
- Lease structure:
 - Open-ended, flexible terms: typical 24, 36, 48, or 60 months.
 - No fixed mileage penalties; term & residuals based on actual expected mileage.
 - They may:
 - Recommend early replacement if mileage or market conditions warrant.
 - Or recommend extending leases if mileage is lower or market weak.
- Law-enforcement specifics:
 - Patrol vehicles have heavy use and upfit; life-cycle modeling is different from admin units.
 - For high-mileage units (~50k miles/year):
 - Likely 3–4 year replacement with full or near-full financing (writing residual to ~\$0 to avoid negative equity).
 - At lease end:
 - Sheriff's Office decommissions vehicle (removes law-enforcement gear).
 - Enterprise picks up, inspects, and sells via auction, wholesale, or dealer.
 - All sale proceeds above remaining book value return to the County.
- Scenario raised by: **Chairman Schwebach**
 - Example: Ford F-150 4x4 patrol unit, assumed \$60,000 price, 50,000 miles/year.
 - Questions asked:
 1. Lease vs purchase total cost over 3–4 years.

2. What is “optimal” mileage to turn in? (assumed ~150k miles in 3 years, or ~200k in 4 years).
 3. What happens at lease end if resale is less than the residual value?
 4. Can the County buy out early and keep the vehicle in-house?
 5. Can upfit costs (lights, cages, consoles, radios, etc.) be rolled into the lease?
- Enterprise responses (**Christine & Gabby**):
 - Will not quote exact monthly payment on the fly; need full spec and term.
 - For 50,000 miles/year:
 - Would likely fully finance over 3 years (no residual), especially for patrol:
 - Any sale price at end of term becomes net equity to the County.
 - If upside-down at sale (sale < residual book value):
 - County responsible for negative equity, hence they set residuals conservatively.
 - Upfit:
 - Option A: Lease vehicle plus upfit (paying interest on both).
 - Option B: Lease vehicle only and pay upfit in cash.
 - Some upfit (e.g., truck bed storage boxes) can be reused across replacement vehicles if dimensions remain compatible.
 - Maintenance Program:
 - Enterprise offers “maintenance management” for ~\$6/month/vehicle:
 - Tracks all service events.
 - Negotiates repair pricing with dealers.
 - Uses data to flag “money pit” vehicles and recommend replacement.
 - Sheriff’s vehicles:
 - Can continue using existing local mechanic (“Bo”).
 - If Bo doesn’t use Enterprise software, Sheriff’s Office can manually log services into the Enterprise system for tracking.

- Warranty & Repair Delays:
 - County has faced 2–4 week repair waits (or longer) due to parts delays.
 - Enterprise described:
 - Prior case where a dealer said 8-week wait for a part; Enterprise’s national team sourced the part from another state and got unit back on road in ~1 week.
 - Encouraged Sheriff’s Office to call Enterprise when facing extended downtime.

- Towing:
 - For non-Sheriff fleet on maintenance plan, towing is included.
 - For Sheriff units not on that plan, County pays towing but can still access Enterprise roadside network.

- Sheriff’s Fleet Manager: **John Stocum**
 - Explained current reality:
 - High-mileage patrol units (some 45–60k miles/year, with one deputy exceeding 60k).
 - Historically significant upfit delays (6–8 months) due to:
 - Nationwide supply shortages for cages, consoles, sheet metal, etc.
 - Local upfitters prioritizing large agency orders (e.g., BCSO, State Police) over Torrance County’s small batches.
 - Current fleet strain:
 - After a recent wreck, down to 3 available pool units, several over 200k miles.
 - Some older units repurposed for range/trash truck, evidence transport, and road department usage.
 - Emphasized:
 - Critical priority is safe over-the-road patrol units; admin staff can drive older or “junkier” units if necessary.

- Concerned about warranty work and responsiveness from non-local upfitters, based on past experiences.
- Enterprise responses:
 - They work with multiple upfit vendors:
 - Wack (Albuquerque) – decent recent track record (~3–5 months on builds).
 - Advanced Communications – offers 90-day guaranteed turnaround for Enterprise clients; won't accept a job they can't complete within 90 days.
 - Will coordinate upfit logistics:
 - Once a vehicle's VIN is generated, Enterprise can have upfit vendors pre-order parts and design builds (often in 3D).
 - Payments:
 - County pays lease while at upfit, same as if they owned vehicle and paid cash.
 - On warranty support:
 - As a large, repeat customer, Enterprise can help “pull rank” with vendors when warranty repairs lag.
 - Gave example of sending a tech from Albuquerque to Southern Colorado to fix a failed siren on site.
- **Sheriff David Frazee:**
 - Formed an internal team (Undersheriff, fleet manager, executive assistant) to study Enterprise proposal.
 - Initial stance: “Not in favor” of applying Enterprise leasing to Sheriff vehicles due to:
 - Unclear answers on costs and risks.
 - Concerns about being upside-down at lease end.
 - Operational control over maintenance and upfit.
 - Stated the Sheriff's Office is open to discussion and wants what's best for the County, but currently skeptical.

- **Fleet Manager John Stocum** – Financial comparison:
 - Example 1: Existing Enterprise quote – Ford F-250
 - Purchase price: \$50,300.
 - Open-ended lease (5 years): \$1,011.44/month.
 - Total paid over 5 years: \$60,686 (principal + interest).
 - At end: \$400 service/termination charge.
 - Residual (“reduced book value”): \$9,000 (Enterprise clarified as remaining funded balance, not a buyout price).
 - Example 2: Current Sheriff unit – 2023 Chevy Tahoe
 - Purchase price: \$52,952 (state contract).
 - Age/Mileage: just under 3 years, 122,000 miles.
 - Valuation research:
 - NADA, Edmunds, KBB, CarMax used for estimates.
 - Retail (fair-good condition): \$35,102.
 - Wholesale (fair): \$28,760.
 - After accounting for dents, interior holes, hard seats, and gov/police use:
 - CarMax offer: \$15,800.
 - Another buyer offered \$9,800.
 - Upfit not included in those values.
 - Concern:
 - If Enterprise sets a residual too high and actual resale is closer to \$15k (vs. residual like \$9k or more), County could be at risk for negative equity.
 - Warned that high-mileage, heavily used patrol vehicles depreciate faster and more harshly than generic models suggest.
- Enterprise clarification (**Gabby**):
 - For vehicles doing 45–60k miles/year, they would:

- Adjust lease term (likely 2–3 years).
 - Lower or eliminate residual (fully finance to \$0) to avoid negative equity.
- Confirmed:
 - If upside-down at sale, County would owe the shortfall; hence their conservative residual approach.
- Emphasized:
 - County controls sale timing.
 - County retains all equity.
 - County could also self-fund/leverage Enterprise only for acquisition & remarketing if they wish
- **Fleet Manager John Stocum** showed an existing internal system:
 - Monthly bills are itemized by license plate and mileage, tracking services and costs.
 - Has created a more disciplined preventive-maintenance culture (e.g., deputies face consequences for missing oil changes).
- Stated:
 - If Enterprise doesn't disrupt their maintenance system, he's "okay with whoever we buy from" as long as:
 - Units arrive upfitted, safe, and on the road quickly.
- Enterprise (**Gabby**) on integration:
 - If Sheriff continues with current shops, Enterprise can:
 - Offer Auto Integrate (shop software) to feed service data into their system.
 - Or Sheriff can upload data periodically.
 - Will use the data for proactive replacement recommendations.
- Concern from **Fleet Manager John Stocum**:
 - Past issues with Wack (Rio Rancho) and other non-local upfitters:
 - Long delays for warranty repairs.

- Small customer (Torrance) often “bumped to back of line” behind large orders.
- Values local Edgewood upfitter who:
 - Serves multiple agencies (incl. State Police).
 - Responds quickly to warranty and service issues.
- Enterprise (**Cesar & Christine**):
 - Noted:
 - Enterprise holds title, driving substantial volume to upfitters.
 - Upfitters have incentive to keep Enterprise satisfied (and thus County benefits indirectly).
 - Will:
 - Use local vendors when requested.
 - Provide alternate vendors if timelines or quality from current vendors are unsatisfactory.
 - Assist in coordinating warranty work, including dispatching techs if needed.
 - Clarified:
 - County is not “married” to one upfitter; they can mix and match so long as equipment and warranties allow.
- **Vice-Chair McCall**:
 - Raised cash flow and budget constraints:
 - Historically relied heavily on capital outlay/grow money/junior appropriations from the Legislature to buy vehicles.
 - Those funding avenues have largely dried up, putting more burden on the general fund.
 - Pointed out:
 - Sheriff’s request for five new units might not be supportable under current capital budget unless alternative funding (like leasing) is used.
 - County must be cautious not to overextend financially.

- **Fleet Manager John Stocum:**
 - Noted:
 - During this fiscal year's budget process, he indicated they could "limp by" with 3 new vehicles, but none were purchased yet.
 - Past replacement cycles:
 - From Crown Vics to Ford trucks to Dodge units to Chevy Tahoes, with varied reliability.
 - Recent success with Tahoes and Ford products, partly due to better maintenance.

- **Chairman Schwebach – Summary & Direction:**
 - Key goals:
 - Newer, safer, reliable patrol fleet for deputies.
 - Reduced downtime from upfit and warranty delays.
 - Maintain Sheriff's operational control over day-to-day maintenance.
 - Observations:
 - Enterprise relationship functions more like a partnership with a nationwide dealer/fleet manager.
 - Main advantages appear to be:
 - Acquisition power & pricing (manufacturer ordering + dealer stock searches).
 - Resale/remarketing strength.
 - Logistics and vendor leverage, especially for upfit and parts.
 - Requested:
 - Enterprise to:
 - Prepare detailed scenario quotes for:
 - Five Sheriff patrol units (likely Ford trucks/Tahoes).
 - 3-year, high-mileage scenario (target ~150k miles/unit).
 - Include:

- Estimated monthly payments.
 - Projected resale values at 3 years (using today's market).
 - Options for County buy-out at 18 months or at term.
- Provide comparative upfit cost & turnaround proposals:
 - One using local Edgewood vendor.
 - One using Enterprise-recommended vendors (Wack, Advanced Communications).
- Sheriff's Office to:
 - Work with Enterprise on exact vehicle specs and upfit needs.
 - Provide existing maintenance/repair data to Enterprise for more precise life-cycle & cost analysis.
- Intent:
 - Bring back apples-to-apples comparison (buy vs lease, local vs Enterprise-coordinated upfit) at a future commission meeting for potential action.
- Sheriff's Office & Enterprise – Closing Positions:
 - **Fleet Manager John Stocum:**
 - Stated he is comfortable moving forward “as long as”:
 - Sheriff retains control over maintenance and choice of local vendors.
 - The approach reduces red tape compared to prior proposal versions.
 - **Sheriff Frazee:**
 - Reiterate they remain cautious but open and want what's best for the County.
- Enterprise team:
 - Agreed to prepare detailed quotes and support the Sheriff's immediate vehicle needs where possible (including checking for available units on lots within their network).

12. Adoption of Ordinance/ Amendment to County Code

13. Adoption of Resolution

a) **MANAGER:** Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-01, A Resolution Adopting the Regular Meeting Schedule of the Board of County Commissioners of Torrance County for Calendar Year 2026.

- **Presenter: County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Explained:

- Commission previously approved the 2026 County Calendar on Dec. 10, 2025, which defined all regular commission meeting dates.
- This resolution formalizes that schedule for Open Meetings Act compliance and public posting.

- Key Points:

- Regular meetings: 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.
- Exception: November meeting moved to Thursday to accommodate Veterans Day.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve Resolution; Seconded by **Vice-Chairman McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes
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b) **MANAGER:** Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-02, A Resolution Confirming Torrance County’s Open Meeting Act Compliance for Calendar Year 2026.

- **Presenter: County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Purpose: Update annual Open Meetings Act (OMA) compliance resolution; make notice practices more explicit and realistic.
- Noted revisions from prior version, including:
 - Clear definition of “notice” as:

- An agenda listing date, time, location, and all action/discussion items.
- Regular meeting notice methods (Section 2(A)):
 - Announce next meeting date/time/location at the current meeting.
 - Post annual schedule resolution on county website.
 - Post agendas:
 - On Commission agenda subpage.
 - In calendar of events, with full packets 72 hours in advance.
 - Physically on public bulletin board and manager's office at least 72 hours in advance.
 - Provide notice to newspapers and broadcast media that have requested written notice.
- Special meetings:
 - Same notice methods as regular meetings except no full-year schedule.
- Emergency meetings:
 - Maintains statutory standard (no prior notice required if true emergency but must justify).
- Remote participation:
 - Clarified that Commissioners may attend remotely if needed but:
 - Must be audible.
 - Must be able to participate in roll-call votes.
- **Commissioner McCall:**
 - Confirmed resolution meets or exceeds state law.
 - Asked which prior above-and-beyond requirements were trimmed.
 - Barela: Noted removal of impractical mandates like publishing special meeting notices in newspapers (impossible to meet 72-hour rule due to 5–7 day lead times).

Motion: Vice-Chairman McCall motioned to approve Payables; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

c) **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-03, A Resolution Adopting the Torrance County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- **Presenter: Emergency Manager Samantha O'dell:**

- Background:
 - Hazard Mitigation Plan was funded via grant applied for by prior Emergency Manager in Oct. 2021.
 - FEMA has now approved the plan pending local adoption.
- Purpose:
 - Required for:
 - Emergency Management Performance Grant (pays part of salaries).
 - Hazard mitigation / preparedness grants.
 - Fire Management Assistance Grants after major wildfires.
 - Plan will be in effect 5 years after adoption.

- **Commissioner McCall:**

- Confirmed no direct funding attached today; adoption is prerequisite for future funding.

- **Commissioner Linda Jaramillo:**

- Asked:
 - Main hazards for Torrance County?
 - Whether plan addresses wildfire risk in mountain communities and coordination with Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

- **O'dell:**

- FEMA requires assessing multiple hazards: wildfire, high winds, thunderstorms, etc.
- Participating entities (e.g., East Torrance SWCD, Central Tri-County SWCD, municipalities) join plan so they can also seek mitigation funding (e.g., tree thinning, fuel breaks).

- **Chairman Schwebach:**

- Clarified Soil & Water districts can work on public and private land, but:
 - Work is subject to their boards, funding sources, and landowner cooperation.
 - This plan helps them justify and obtain mitigation grants as it reflects county-wide recognition of wildfire risk.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve Resolution; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

d) **FIRE**: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-04, A Resolution Approving an Increase in Assistance Chief Stipend Pay, Removing Station Pay and Increasing in the Pay Per Call for Volunteer Firefighters.

- **Presenter: Fire Chief Gary Smith:**
 - Proposal:
 - No change to overall line-item budget for volunteer stipends; only reallocation:
 1. Assistant Chiefs’ stipends:
 - Increase from \$50/month to \$1,000/month for two Assistant Chiefs.
 - Rationale: They now oversee three districts each (North/South), with significantly increased responsibilities.
 2. Eliminate “station pay”:
 - Previously volunteers could receive \$75 for sitting at the station on standby, even without responding to a call.
 3. Increase pay-per-call:

- Raise per-call pay to \$100 to reward actual response rather than time at station.
 - Net impact: Should reallocate within the same budget, not increase total spending.
- Commission discussion:
 - Confirmed Fire Chiefs Association supports changes.
 - Chief Smith affirmed field leadership is on board and understands role changes.

Motion: Vice-Chairman McCall motioned to approve Resolution; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.
- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

Break – 10:31AM

Return from Break- 11:06AM

14. Approvals/Action Items

- a) **TREASURER:** Request Approval of a Payment Processing Agreement between Torrance County and CSG Forte Payments, Inc. for Credit Card, Debit Card and ACH Transactions.
 - **Presenters: Serena Trevino (Delinquent Tax Specialist)** with Treasurer’s Office & vendor rep **John Rodriguez (CSG Forte)**
 - Request: Approve new payment processing agreement with CSG Forte for:
 - Credit/debit cards and ACH/e-checks across:
 - Treasurer,
 - Clerk,
 - Planning & Zoning.

- Animal Services, and other credit card-taking departments.
- Serena's rationale:
 - Main reason to switch back to Forte is operational efficiency and reconciliation, not pricing:
 - Current vendor causes:
 - Complex, time-consuming reconciliation.
 - More manual work and balancing issues.
 - Forte's platform:
 - Easier for staff to manage daily.
 - Simplifies reconciliation; reduces errors and follow-up.
 - Better aligns with workload and staffing.
 - Pricing:
 - Compared current provider vs. Forte.
 - No price increase anticipated; fees are "in line."
 - Transaction fees passed to constituents, no new direct County cost.
- Commission questions:
 - Why did County leave Forte in 2022/2023?
 - Answer: Pricing at that time.
 - **Commissioner McCall:**
 - Asked which cards Forte accepts (Visa, MasterCard, etc.).
 - Confirmed fees are paid by users, not County.
 - **Clerk Sylvia Chavez:**
 - Reported:
 - Her office previously used Forte and had no issues.
 - Was unhappy with the switch away.
 - Supports returning to Forte.
 - Planning & Zoning: Also supported the switch.
- **Vendor (John Rodriguez, CSG Forte):**
 - Noted:
 - Forte began as ACH verification company; very strong in:
 - Account and routing verification.
 - Blocking bad-check writers before payment posts.
 - This significantly reduces returned payments.

Motion: Vice-Chairman McCall motioned to approve; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

b) **TREASURER:** Request Approval of an Unauthorized Purchase to Master's Touch, LLC in the Amount of \$3,066.63 for the Printing and Mailing of Delinquent Tax Notices.

- **Presenter: Serena Trevino**

- Issue:

- In May 2025, delinquent tax notices were printed/mailed by Masters Touch LLC.

- At that time:

- No requisition or PO was issued.

- Treasurer's staff believed delinquent notices were included within the annual tax bill mailing contract, so no separate PO was requested.

- Vendor did not send invoice at time of service.

- Invoice only arrived during 2025 regular tax bill cycle, revealing the unpaid amount:

- \$3,066.63.

- Correction:

- Asking Commission to approve payment of this after-the-fact (unauthorized) purchase.

- Treasurer's Office has implemented new internal controls:

- All mailing services (including delinquent notices) will now require:

- Pre-service requisition and purchase order.

- Better tracking of separate billings from the vendor.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Yes

- **McCall** – Yes

- **Jaramillo** – Yes

c) **MANAGER:** Request Approval of a Letter to Bank of America Removing Misty Witt as a Primary Authorized User on Torrance County's P-Card Account.

Removed

d) **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Request Approval of a Contract Between Torrance County and Motorola Solutions to Upgrade Consolettes at the Torrance County Dispatch Center to be Compatible with the State Radio System.

- **Presenter: Emergency Manager Samantha O'dell**
 - Request:
 - Approve a contract with Motorola Solutions to upgrade dispatch consoles so the Torrance County Dispatch Center is fully compatible with the State radio system.
 - Financials:
 - Contract total: \$157,950.
 - Funding:
 - \$150,000 from State Homeland Security grant (reimbursable).
 - Remaining \$7,950 to be covered by Dispatch budget.
- Confirmation:
 - County Attorney has reviewed the contract.
 - Commission had previously discussed the need; this item is the execution step.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

e) **CLERK:** Request Approval of an Amended Job Description for the Bureau of Elections Clerk Position to: (1) Amend Job Duties, (2) Establish Minimum Experience Requirements, (3) Establish Special Conditions of the Position, and (4) Setting a Pay Range Based on Eligible Experience.

- **Presenters: County Clerk Sylvia Chavez, Chief Deputy Clerk Senaida Anaya**

Purpose of Changes

- Position: Bureau of Elections Clerk.
- Goals:
 - Clarify job duties (Elections + general Clerk's Office support).
 - Establish minimum experience requirements.

- Create a pay range tied to qualified experience.
- Add special conditions for oversight.

Job Duties & Experience

- Position will:
 - Handle election administration (including contingency if a new Clerk lacks experience).
 - Provide backup assistance to other Clerk's admin staff when not in an election cycle.
- Minimum qualifications:
 - At least 2 years progressively responsible experience in:
 - Elections, precinct work, or closely related equivalent.

Pay Range Structure

- Hourly range: \$19.75 – \$25.75/hour (approx., as discussed).
- Mechanism:
 - Meeting minimum (2 years) → start at bottom of range (19.75).
 - For each additional year of directly relevant experience, pay increases by \$1/hour, up to max (~8+ years experience → 25.75).
- Clerk confirmed:
 - Position is already budgeted but vacant.
 - Due to vacancy, there is sufficient funding for the remainder of current fiscal year.
 - Next FY budget will need an ~\$8,000 increase (at top step) to fully annualize.

Oversight / Special Conditions

- **Jordan Barela:**
 - Employee will report to the County Clerk as department head.

- Special condition:
 - County Manager’s Office will review and approve:
 - Evaluations,
 - Disciplinary actions,
 - And may intervene directly in supervision if performance issues arise

Commission Discussion & Action

- **Commissioner Jaramillo:**
 - Asked whether this special-condition oversight is applied elsewhere.
 - Barela explained:
 - Manager’s Office normally acts as “impartial third party” on grievances, not daily supervision.
 - This position is singled out for extra oversight due to critical, technical nature of election administration.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – No
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Result: Approved, 2–1

15. Discussion/Presentation

- a) **MANAGER:** Finance Update and Discussion on the Transition of the Deputy Manager/Finance Director
- **Presenters: Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Misty Witt, County Manager Jordan Barela**

Current & Near-Term Finance Work (Misty Witt)

Misty reported on key projects she is finishing before her departure:

- UNM Economic Study:
 - Received draft scope of work and cost from UNM.
 - Intend to seek MFA grant funding to pay for study (avoid general fund impact).
- Business Incubator / Trades Training Project:
 - Continuing development of concept:
 - Partner with incubator organization and local businesses.
 - Manager Barela to send a survey to target businesses for needs assessment.
- FY25 Audit:
 - Submitted and pending Office of the State Auditor release.
 - Once released:
 - Auditor (TKM) will present to Commission.
 - Commission will need to formally accept the audit.
- Mid-Year Budget Work:
 - Major budget review underway; target:
 - Have a Budget Adjustment Resolution ready for the Jan 20 special meeting.
 - Sending mid-year budget reports to departments.
 - Scheduling department budget meetings for:
 - Remainder of FY26
 - Initial FY27 planning.
- DFA Q2 Reporting:
 - Will complete Quarter 2 DFA reports before transition, working with Treasurer's office.
- Outsourcing Payroll:
 - Third-party payroll provider has built the system.

- Next step:
 - Run parallel test payroll vs. in-house.
 - If results match, provider will fully take over payroll by end of January.
- Grants Support – New Mexico Grants Administration:
 - NMGA (funded by Mr. Cobb, not County) now:
 - Assists with grant and appropriation tracking.
 - Creating tools/templates and recommended workflows.
 - Misty, Jordan, and Grants Manager Jody will:
 - Meet with NMGA to:
 - Train on Tyler system.
 - Build a training manual and workflow.
- Outstanding Strategic Work (post-transition):
 - Final ARPA reconciliation and reporting:
 - Funds fully allocated; must finalize by Dec 2026.
 - Finance & Purchasing Policy:
 - Has compiled templates from other entities; still needs to be drafted/adopted.
 - Personnel Ordinance:
 - Committee is already actively working on revisions; needs completion and adoption this year.

Structural Gap – Deputy Manager & Finance Director

- **Jordan Barela:**
 - Misty's departure leaves two roles to fill:
 1. Deputy County Manager (administrative oversight).
 2. Finance Director/Accounting (technical and statutory finance).
 - Deputy Manager position is currently advertised; discussion of applicants was reserved for Executive Session.

CPA Firm Concept & Cost Options

- Problem: Hard to recruit experienced government accountants.
 - Even large cities (e.g., Rio Rancho) have multiple long-vacant finance positions.
- Consideration: Contract with a CPA firm to handle high-level financial functions, and possibly more.
- Scope Examples (from handout “15(A)”):
 - High-level only:
 - DFA monthly & quarterly reporting.
 - Annual budget (interim & final).
 - Audit prep, financial statements, state responses.
 - Cash flow analysis.
 - Advisory oversight of Treasurer’s office (reconciliations, internal controls).
 - Expanded scope:
 - Some or all daily finance functions:
 - Reviewing/approving journal entries, reconciliations.
 - Supervising AP/AR routines and closing processes.
- Cost estimates (pre-RFP “ballpark”):
 - High-level only: ~\$120,000/year.
 - High-level + some daily work: up to ~\$200,000/year.
 - Would require RFP; TKM (current auditor) declined due to conflict (audit vs. consulting).
- Offset ideas:
 - Misty provided sheets showing:
 - Current Finance salary schedule vs.
 - Hypothetical reduced in-house positions (e.g., fewer positions or lower grades) to free budget capacity for CPA contract.
 - Similar concept for Treasurer’s Office:
 - Restructuring some staff could partially offset cost while gaining higher-level oversight.

- Benefits cited:
 - Continuity: CPA firm remains regardless of:
 - Turnover in elected offices (e.g., treasurer, clerk).
 - Turnover in internal finance staff.
 - Risk reduction:

b) MANAGER: Discussion on Establishing Commission Budget Priorities for the FY27 Budget Cycle

- **Presenter: County Manager Jordan Barela**
- Purpose:
 - Introduce the idea of formal Commission budget priorities for FY27 (and beyond), to:
 - Guide department budget requests.
 - Provide a transparent framework for funding decisions when requests exceed available revenue.
 - Align budgets, ICIP, and legislative asks with a multi-year vision.

Manager Barela's Proposal

- Explained that many local governments:
 - Use a Strategic Plan with 3–5 broad priorities (e.g., public safety, infrastructure, economic development).
 - Then derive budget priorities from those.
- Torrance County:
 - Does not have a formal strategic plan yet, but can still:
 - Adopt a budget-priority resolution specifically for FY27.
- Example priority areas (non-exhaustive):
 - Public Safety: Sheriff, Fire, Dispatch.
 - Roads & Infrastructure: Road maintenance, capital projects.

- Economic Development: Business support, job growth.
- Cultural/Historic Preservation: Local heritage, community identity.
- Benefits:
 - Provides clear direction to department heads before they build budgets.
 - Helps Commission justify why some requests are funded and others are deferred.

Commissioner Kevin McCall's Comments

- Supported exploring a priority-driven approach.
- Noted recurring pattern:
 - County often receives \$10+ million in one-time capital/operating requests.
 - Actual budget can only support ~\$1–2 million.
- Observed problems:
 - Departments sometimes assume that submitting requests means they are likely to be funded.
 - Leads to disappointment and tension when large cuts are made.
- Sees advantages:
 - Priorities would:
 - Make clear which sectors (e.g., Public Safety, Roads) are the focus in a given year.
 - Influence how the ICIP (Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan) is ranked.
 - Strengthen legislative funding requests by showing a consistent multi-year vision.

Chairman Ryan Schwebach's Comments

- Shared historical context:
 - Early in his tenure:
 - Department heads tended to under-request, bringing in “what we can limp by on.”

- Commission lacked visibility into true needs (e.g., aging vehicles, staffing gaps).
- Commission then encouraged:
 - Departments to fully present their needs and wants.
 - Result: better information, but now:
 - Many things presented as “must-haves”, making prioritization harder.
- On priorities:
 - Sees value in:
 - Commissioners explicitly saying, for example:
 - “Public Safety is our #1 priority this year.”
 - That tells Sheriff, Fire, Dispatch to expect greater focus.
 - Emphasized:
 - Needs 30,000-foot financial view:
 - Projected revenue vs expenses.
 - Trends like a Q1 ~\$900k deficit.
 - To understand where cuts or constraints might be needed across departments.

Deputy Assessor Linda Gallegos’ Input (Department Perspective)

- Said department heads usually see the whole County financial picture only:
 - At budget time, and not always with context.
- Emphasized need for:
 - Transparency and communication from the Manager’s Office on:
 - Overall budget health.
 - Audit findings and their impact.
 - Major unplanned costs (e.g., lawsuits, accidents).
- Reason:

- Helps department heads:
 - Explain to staff why they might only get a \$1 raise instead of \$2, or
 - Why equipment/vehicle requests are delayed.
- Reduces morale issues by tying decisions to clearly explained constraints.
- Suggested:
 - Regular budget/finance briefings (e.g., around quarterly reports) for department heads.

Manager Barela's Follow-Up

- Acknowledged:
 - Last year's mid-budget briefing to senior staff was helpful but came too late.
- Stated intent:
 - Use:
 - Quarterly financial reports, and
 - This priority discussion,
 - To better inform departments early in the budget cycle.
- Proposed timeline:
 - Use the months before May–June (main budget season) to:
 - Draft a set of FY27 budget priorities.
 - Gather department feedback (possibly via survey).
 - Combine with updated financial snapshots.

Outcome & Next Steps

- No formal action or resolution taken at this meeting.
- Consensus direction:
 - Staff will:
 - Develop a draft list of budget priorities for FY27 (e.g. Public Safety, Roads, etc.).

- Pair it with:
 - Current fiscal data (revenues, deficits/surpluses).
 - Input from departments on their needs and constraints.
 - Bring the draft back to the Commission for discussion and possible adoption at a future meeting, ahead of the FY27 budget cycle.
-

c) **MANAGER:** Discussion on the Tajique Transfer Station and Related Procurement

- **Presenter: County Manager Jordan Barela**
- Current site: Existing Tajique transfer station sits on land grant property under a lease that:
 - It has technically expired, with an extension only until end of June 2026.
- Goal: Secure a long-term, legally solid site for the transfer station before the current lease extension ends.

Procurement & Site Search Efforts

1. Direct Negotiations with Landowners

- Manager Barela reported:
 - County contacted nearby private landowners around Tajique to explore:
 - Direct purchase of property suitable for a transfer station.
 - Results:
 - Owners either refused to sell,
 - Or were unwilling to sell for this intended use (solid-waste/transfer station).

2. Public Notice / Letter of Interest (LOI)

- To broaden the search, County:
 - Issued an LOI seeking owners willing to sell suitable property.
 - Published LOI in:

- Santa Fe New Mexican
- Albuquerque Journal
- Ran notice for approximately 30 days.
- Response:
 - No new viable private sellers came forward.
 - Only substantive response came from the Tajique Land Grant, which had already made a proposal.

Land Grant Proposal – 4-Acre Hwy 55 Site

- Land Grant Representative: **Andrew Gutierrez, President:**
- Offer:
 - Lease a 4-acre parcel on Highway 55 for use as the County transfer station.
- Andrew’s details & commitments:
 - Land grant has already obtained about 500 yards of asphalt millings to help improve the site surface.
 - They are prepared to:
 - Begin the zoning process within the land grant’s jurisdiction to:
 - Officially allow a transfer-station use on that parcel.
 - Emphasized:
 - Terms previously discussed with the County are still on the table,
 - But some details still need to be ironed out (e.g., exact lease language, responsibilities).

Legal & Improvement Considerations

- **Manager Barela / Legal Counsel Michael Garcia:**
 - Explained that:
 - Because this is a government-to-government lease (County ↔ Land Grant),

- The County is legally allowed to:
 - Invest in improvements on leased land, such as:
 - Spreading millings,
 - Grading, fencing, utilities, etc.,
 - As long as terms are clearly set in the lease agreement.
- Commission's concerns (earlier discussions referenced by Chairman Schwebach):
 - Historically wary of:
 - Placing significant improvements on short-term or weak leases.
 - Key issues to address in the new lease:
 - Lease term and renewals (ensuring enough duration to justify improvements).
 - Which party is responsible for:
 - Site surfacing (using millings).
 - Utilities, fencing, drainage, and other capital improvements.
 - Access and maintenance over time.

Commission Discussion & Direction

- **Commissioner Linda Jaramillo:**
 - Noted:
 - The County appears to have exhausted all realistic alternatives through:
 - Direct negotiations,
 - LOI and public solicitation.
 - Expressed support for:
 - Moving forward with the land grant lease on the 4-acre Hwy 55 site.
- **Chairman Ryan Schwebach:**
 - Agreed:
 - Acknowledged prior concerns about improving leased land, but:

- Legal has clarified this is manageable in a government-to-government context.
 - Recognized:
 - The land grant option is the only viable path remaining under current conditions.
 - Emphasized:
 - The need to spell out:
 - Improvement responsibilities,
 - Zoning obligations,
 - Long-term operational certainty in the lease.
 - **County Manager Jordan Barela:**
 - Asked explicitly for Commission direction on whether to:
 - Pursue the land grant lease, or
 - Continue searching despite poor LOI results.
 - Outcome – Direction (no formal vote needed):
 - Consensus of the Commission:
 - Instructed Manager Barela, to:
 - Negotiate a lease agreement with the Tajique Land Grant for the 4-acre Highway 55 parcel, including:
 - Lease term and renewal options.
 - Allocation of improvement responsibilities (millings, grading, utility hookups, fencing).
 - Compliance with required zoning processes on the land grant's side.
 - Bring back the proposed lease for Commission review and action before the current lease ends in June.
-

d) **CLERK'S REPORT:**

- **Presenter: County Clerk Sylvia Chavez:**

Upcoming Special School Elections

- Two all-mail special elections:

1. Estancia Municipal School District – General Obligation Bond

- Election period begins: Feb 17, 2026.
- Election Day: March 17, 2026.
- Voters: 2,991 registered voters in that district.
- Process:
 - All voters receive:
 - A pre-notice mailer about 3 weeks before ballots.
 - Then an official mailed ballot, all mailed by Feb 18.

2. Corona School District – Capital Improvement Tax Question

- Mailing begins: Feb 23–24, 2026.
- Election Day: March 24, 2026.
- Voters: 71 voters in that district.
- Also all-mail election with advance notice.
- Vendor: AES Election Services handles:
 - Ballot printing.
 - Mailing.
 - Much of the logistics.
- Clerk expects to hire limited election board mainly near Election Day.

Historical Records Scanning Project

- Project: Digitize old deed/record books (pre-1985) to:
 - Reduce wear on large books.
 - Improve accessibility for title company's and public.

- Status:
 - Local Albuquerque vendor selected (after finance helped secure new vendor).
 - Vendor coming in next week to take 10–15 books as first batch.
 - Focus first on:
 - 1950–1985 range (most frequently searched historic records).
 - Timeline:
 - Vendor has indicated entire project could be completed by end of February.
 - Integration:
 - Vendor will work with existing recording software vendor so scanned images are searchable within current system.
 - Current digital index starts in 1985; goal is to bring older books into same system.
 - Clerk thanked:
 - Finance Department and Commission for funding this long-needed preservation effort.
-

e) MANAGER’S REPORT:

- **Presenter: County Manager Jordan Barela**
- Special Commission Meeting – Jan 20, 2026
- Will schedule and post a special meeting:
 - Date: Tuesday, Jan 20, 2026
 - Time: 9:00 a.m.
 - Location: Commission Chambers
 - Anticipated agenda items:
 - Budget Adjustment Resolution (mid-year).
 - Authorization letters to:
 - Remove Misty Witt from bank/financial signatory roles.

- Add other authorized officials (including Treasurer's staff).
- Annual Commission reorganization:
 - Chair/Vice-Chair selection.
 - Committee appointments (e.g., Board of Finance, others).

Possible Financial Workshop – Rob Burpo

- Financial advisor Rob Burpo will be in NM on Jan 20.
- Manager asked Commission whether to:
 - Add a workshop segment that day for Burpo to brief on:
 - Admin building loan balloon payment.
 - Future PILT revenue strategies and options.
- Commissioners agreed Burpo's presentation would be valuable; staff will:

Place it on Jan 20 agenda if logistics allow.

f) COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:

1) Commissioner McCall, District 1

- Fairgrounds Project:
 - State-appropriated funding in place.
 - Over-excavation work and imported soil either underway or imminent.
 - Project moving along well.
- Administration Building Project:
 - Recent working session with architect:
 - Reduced building to ~27,000–27,500 sq. ft..
 - Focus of reductions:
 - Common areas (hallways), not core department functions.
 - Architect toured:

- All departments,
 - Measured vaults, storage to ensure new design meets or slightly exceeds existing functional areas.
- Example adjustments:
 - Commission chambers slightly undersized in new plan vs. current:
 - McCall asked architect to size chambers back up to current dimensions.
 - Treasurer's Office area slightly increased to relieve "squeezed" layout.
- New estimated total project cost: ≈\$16.3 million
 - Down from prior higher estimate by about \$1.2 million.
- Farewell to Misty Witt:
 - Publicly thanked Misty for:
 - Tremendous work,
 - Many extra Friday hours,
 - Raising the professional level of County finance.
 - Regretted that not everyone appreciated her efforts.
 - Wished her success in future endeavors; said she will be greatly missed.
- Legislation & Detention Facility Concerns:
 - Referenced a KRQE Channel 13 story:
 - Democratic legislators targeting private detention facilities, including Torrance County's.
 - Bill appears "poised to pass" this session.
 - Warned:
 - When facility closed previously, County had to:
 - Hire 5 transport officers.
 - Buy 5 new vehicles for inmate transport elsewhere.
 - Closure again would:
 - Fundamentally change County's fiscal structure and city economy.

- Noted Sen. Peter Wirth spoke about:
 - Possible federal retaliation in loss of federal funds if New Mexico attempts to push ICE out via this bill.
-

2) Commissioner Schwebach, District 2

- Wished everyone a Happy New Year, hoping to be able to say in December that “it was a great year.”
- Appreciated:
 - Input during budget priority discussion; said it shifted his thinking in useful ways.
- Reiterate appreciation for Misty Witt:
 - Called her impact “world of difference” for Torrance County finances.

Wished her best to her and her family; invited her to stay in touch.

3) Commissioner Jaramillo, District 3

- Thanks to Misty:
 - Expressed gratitude for Misty’s service and professionalism.
- Fire Department:
 - Been in regular contact with Fire Chief Gary Smith.
 - Praised department’s excellent progress and leadership.
 - Noted:
 - Willard station is now being used and slept in for the first time, marking a key milestone.
- Veterans Memorial Wall Event:
 - Announced ceremony on Feb 21 at 1:00 p.m. at the Memorial Wall:
 - To ceremonially bring in the engraver, escorted in.
 - To honor all donors and veterans whose names will be inscribed.

- Invited:
 - All commissioners, donors, and community.
- Clarified:
 - Wall is not only for fallen soldiers, but any veterans who served and lived in Torrance County.
- How to add names:
 - Contact Chad Hamilton or Estancia City Hall for applications.
- Shared personal plan:
 - Will add names of her five uncles who served in WWII:
 - Mateo Luna
 - Malecor Luna
 - Antonio Luna
 - Gabriel Luna
 - Andalecio Luna (killed in action overseas).

16. Executive Session

- a) Executive Session pursuant to 10-15-1.H(2), limited personnel matters: Hiring of the Deputy County Manager
- b) Executive Session pursuant to 10-15-1.H(7), attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatening or pending litigation: OSE Hearing No. 25-023

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to Enter into Executive Session; Seconded by **Vice-Chair McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

Entered Executive Session- 12:44PM

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to Exit Executive Session; Seconded by **Vice-Chair McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes

Returned From Executive Session- 2:15PM

Actions / Directions Announced from Executive Session

1. Deputy County Manager Hiring
 - Commission directed County Manager Barela to:
 - Proceed with contract offer to the selected candidate.
 - Aim to execute the contract at the Jan 20 special meeting.
2. Water Rights Litigation – OSC Hearing No. 25-023
 - Case involves:
 - County water rights and protests connected to the EMWT project.
 - Commission directed Manager Barela to:
 - Obtain special counsel to represent Torrance County in this matter.
 - Move forward with necessary legal steps.

17. Announcement of the next Board of County Commissioners Meeting:

Next meeting: January 28, 2026 at 9:00AM

18. signing of official documents

19. Adjournment

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to Adjourn; Seconded by **Commissioner Jaramillo**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - **Schwebach** – Yes
 - **McCall** – Yes
 - **Jaramillo** – Yes



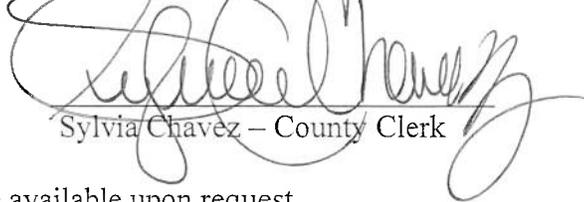
Ryan Schwebach – Chairman



Mackenzie Carlson – Admin Assistant



Date January 28, 2026



Sylvia Chavez – County Clerk

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