

FINAL COPY
Torrance County Board of Commissioners
Regular Commission Meeting
February 11, 2026 9:00 AM

Commissioners Present:

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

Others Present:

JORDAN BARELA-COUNTY MANAGER
MICHELLE JONES-DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
MICHAEL GARCIA- COUNTY ATTORNEY
SYLVIA CHAVEZ-COUNTY CLERK
GENELL MORRIS- ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT III
DON GOEN – PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Schwebach called the meeting to order at 9:09 AM

2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation:** Pledge led by Chairman Schwebach, Commissioner Jaramillo said the Invocation.

3. **Changes to the Agenda:** None

4. **Proclamations:-** None

5. **Awards and Recognitions:**

A. **FIRE:** Recognition of Torrance County Firefighters Steven Meister, Thomas McLaughlin, Brandon Myers, and Mark Riddle for graduation from the EMS Basic Course.

Gary Smith, County Fire Chief:

- Reported that seven firefighters were originally sent to complete the EMS Basic (EMT) course.
- The course required approximately 167 hours of training per participant.

- Four individuals completed the program.
- Acknowledged the significant commitment and perseverance required to complete the course.
- Emphasized that:
 - These firefighters are “just getting started” in their EMS careers.
 - They will now be responding to residents’ homes and serving all constituents of Torrance County.
- Expressed pride in the graduates and appreciation for Commission support.
- Shared broader departmental training accomplishments:
 - 58 training certificates issued
 - 3,323 total training hours completed
 - Training hours accumulated since mid-last year
- Highlighted continued progress in strengthening emergency services capacity.

Commission Discussion & Comments

- Confirmed that the recognized firefighters are residents.
- Expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for their service and dedication.
- Noted that expanding EMS capability has been:
 - A long-term goal of the Commission
 - A critical effort to improve public safety services.
- Acknowledged the broader public safety challenges facing the county.
- Shared excitement that ongoing efforts to strengthen EMT and emergency response services are “coming to fruition.”
- Commissioner Jaramillo attended the training in Socorro and is very proud of their success in completing the course.

B. MANAGER: Recognition of the Torrance County Human Resources Department.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

Dispatch Staffing Shortage & Rapid Hiring Initiative

1. Background – Dispatch Staffing Concerns

- Ongoing discussions in prior meetings regarding critical staffing shortages in Dispatch.
- Dispatch staffing had dropped to six employees, which is:
 - Below minimum staffing levels.
 - A significant operational concern.
 - A risk to service coverage and employee workload.

2. Proposed Solution – Rapid Hiring Event

- A rapid hire event was proposed as a solution.

- This type of hiring initiative had not previously been conducted (to the best of current knowledge).
- The concept aimed to:
 - Accelerate recruitment.
 - Address urgent staffing needs.
 - Reduce time delays in traditional hiring processes.

3. Human Resources Leadership & Execution

- HR Team Recognized:
 - Chanda
 - Heidi
- HR:
 - Took the initial idea and developed it into a structured hiring event.
 - Advertised the opportunity.
 - Organized and executed the event within approximately four weeks.
 - Held the hiring event on a Saturday to maximize participation.
- The effort was described as:
 - A “huge undertaking.”
 - A successful example of turning an idea into actionable results.

4. Results of the Hiring Event

- Four (4) new Dispatchers hired
- One (1) Administrative Assistant hired
- Significant and immediate improvement to Dispatch staffing levels.

5. Commissioner/Leadership Comments & Recognition

Chairman Schwebach

- Appreciation expressed for:
 - Departments thinking “outside the box.”
 - Innovation and initiative.

- Bringing forward creative solutions to the Manager and Commission.
 - Recognition that:
 - Innovation and execution are what “make the County tick.”
 - Successful collaboration strengthens County operations.
 - Public acknowledgment and thanks extended to:
 - Human Resources, Chanda and Heidi
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6. Public Comment:

Amy May:

- Expressed appreciation on behalf of:
 - The Town of Estancia
 - Local businesses
- Thanked the Commission for:
 - Their work during the recent legislative session
 - Continued advocacy and support for the community
- Specifically recognized:
 - Michelle, Deputy County Manager
 - For answering difficult legislative questions
 - For clearly explaining the impact of proposed measures on local businesses
 - Jordan, County Manager
 - For actively advocating (“fighting”) on behalf of the ballot issue
 - For representing community interests at the legislative level
- Shared a gesture of appreciation:
 - Partnered with the owner of Opel’s (local business)
 - Purchased and delivered a bag of burritos as a thank-you gift
- Closed with:

- Encouragement to “keep up the hard work.”
- Formal expression of gratitude

Commission Response

- Expressed appreciation for the gesture
- Stated that the recognition “means a lot.”
- Thanked the business owner for the thoughtful gift

Linda Gallegos, Chief Deputy Assessor:

1. Rendition Deadline Reminder

- Reporting Deadline: February 28, 2026
- Applies To:
 - Livestock
 - Business Personal Property
- Time Remaining: Approximately two weeks left to file
- Penalty for Missing Deadline:
 - 5% tax penalty for failure to report
- Emphasized this is an important annual process currently underway in the Assessor’s Office.
- Purpose of appearance: Ensure the public is aware of the deadline and consequences.

2. Condolences

- Expressed heartfelt condolences to Commissioner Jaramillo on the passing of her mother.
- Shared that thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

3. Recognition of Legislative Efforts

- Commended county officials and representatives working in Santa Fe.
- Acknowledged advocacy efforts related to:
 - Capital outlay
 - Detention center needs

- Other countries' resource priorities
- Recognized the time and effort required for legislative lobbying.

4. Personal Legislative Experience

- Shared personal background:
 - Former County lobbyist
 - Former Assessor's Affiliate Chair (served 5 years)
 - Extensive experience working in Santa Fe
- Described the legislative process as:
 - "Hurry up and wait."
 - Involving ongoing communication with Representatives and Senators
- Highlighted the workload and challenges legislators face.

5. Public Engagement Encouragement

- Encouraged residents to:
 - Reach out to their Representatives and Senators
 - Communicate issues that cannot be resolved at the local level
- Stated that Legislators:
 - Do read emails
 - Do listen to constituents
- Emphasized the importance of educating lawmakers about local issues.

6. Appreciation to County Leadership

- Expressed appreciation to county officials for their advocacy efforts.
- Noted the hard work involved in representing Torrance County.
- Encouraged the public to recognize and value that effort.
- Thanked all who are working on behalf of the County in Santa Fe.

*Zoom.

Tiffany Wang – Innovation Law Lab:

Key Points Raised

1. Legislative Context & Future of CoreCivic Operations

- The speaker acknowledged the passage of HB 9 and the Immigrant Safety Act.
- Noted uncertainty about CoreCivic’s next steps:
 - CoreCivic may attempt to contract directly with ICE to continue operations.
 - Alternatively, they may choose to shut down, as occurred in 2017, reportedly to negotiate a more lucrative contract.
- Implicit concern: County economic stability should not hinge on decisions made by a private prison corporation.

2. Recommendation to the Commission

The speaker urged the Commission to:

- Work collaboratively with:
 - The State of New Mexico
 - Community partners
 - Programs such as the Local Solar Access Fund
- Pursue sustainable economic development strategies
- Develop an economic base not dependent on private detention contracts
- Reduce vulnerability to private corporate decision-making.

3. Ongoing Concern for Detained Individuals at TCDF

The speaker emphasized the importance of continuing to acknowledge and center the experiences of detained men at TCDF.

They read written accounts documenting alleged due process failures related to appeal submissions.

Documented Accounts from Detained Individuals

Person One – Appeal Not Mailed, Resulting in Accelerated Deportation

- Attempted throughout December to submit an appeal.
- Could not submit because postal services were unavailable.

- Filed a formal complaint with CoreCivic.
- CoreCivic stated they would:
 - Pick up appeal documents on December 18.
 - Send them via Priority Mail (3-day arrival).
- Documents were never sent.
- Result: The individual was subjected to accelerated deportation.

Person Two – Appeal Mishandled and Charged \$70

- Had to insist that staff send appeal documents repeatedly.
- On December 17, detention staff claimed documents were sent via Priority Mail.
- Documents never arrived.
- After continued follow-up:
 - On January 7, the detention center admitted that documents had not been sent due to an “error.”
 - Stated they would:
 - Send immediately.
 - Notify the judge to explain the error.
- On January 8:
 - \$70 was deducted from the individual’s commissary account.
 - The amount corresponded to expedited mailing service.
- Outcome:
 - Individual deported on January 10.
 - Package was never mailed.
 - No communication was made with the judge.

Core Issues Highlighted

- Alleged obstruction or mishandling of legal appeal submissions.
- Lack of reliable postal access within the detention facility.
- Financial charges for services not rendered.

- Potential due process violations.
 - Deportations occurring despite unresolved or unfiled appeals.
 - Broader ethical and accountability concerns regarding private detention management.
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Ian Philabaum – Innovation Law Lab:

1. January 28–29, 2026 Lockdown Incident

Speaker Group:

- Multiple detained men at TCDF (written statements, signed)
- 30 individuals formally attested to events

Timeline:

- January 28, 2026 – 11:45 a.m. / 12:00 noon: Lockdown initiated
- January 29, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.: Lockdown lifted
- Duration: Approximately 26 hours

2. Conditions During Lockdown

Lack of Drinking Water

- No drinking water provided during lockdown.
- Staff allegedly instructed men to drink from the cell tap water instead of refilling communal water jugs.
- Tap water quality at TCDF has reportedly been a long-standing concern.
- Many detainees reportedly avoid drinking tap water due to fears of illness.

Exposure to Cold

- Blankets, bedspreads, and coats were removed for washing.
- Items were not returned during the lockdown.
- Detainees report suffering from significant cold conditions.

No Access to Hygiene

- No ability to bathe during the 26-hour lockdown.

No Communication Access

- No access to communication.
- No access to lawyers.
- No explanation provided for the lockdown.

3. Denial of Legal Access (January 29, 2026)

Access to Lawyers

- Thursday pro bono legal visits were denied.
- Detainees were not allowed to meet with attorneys.

Law Library Access

- No access to the Law Library during lockdown.
- Broader complaint: “It is impossible to access the Law Library.”

4. January 30, 2026 – Formal Complaint to CoreCivic

Submitted By:

- 10 detained men (formal written complaint)

Key Issues Raised:

Copy Machine Inoperable

- The copy machine (described as the most critical resource for pro se defense) has not worked for the entire month of January.
- Ink cartridge reportedly ran out and was not replaced.
- This significantly impacted detainees representing themselves.

Legal Resource Barriers

- Inability to access legal materials.
- Lack of functional legal support infrastructure.

5. January 26, 2026 – Water Access Statement

- A CoreCivic official allegedly told detainees to drink tap water instead of instructing staff to refill water jugs.
- Tap water quality has been a long-standing concern among detainees.
- Some detainees reportedly resist drinking it due to reported illness.

Key Themes Identified

- Extended lockdown (26 hours) without adequate explanation.
- Lack of drinking water or reliance on disputed tap water.
- Removal of blankets and coats during cold conditions.
- Denial of access to lawyers.
- Law library access barriers.
- Nonfunctional legal copy machine for one month.
- Alleged pattern of inadequate response by facility administration.

Documented Impact on Detainees

- Physical discomfort due to cold.
- Dehydration concerns.
- Interference with legal defense preparation.
- Emotional distress from lack of communication and explanation.
- Impaired ability to exercise legal rights.

Kevin McCall, County Commissioner:

Torrance County Commission – Legislative Update & Recognition

Legislative Update – Commissioner (Santa Fe Delegation Lead)

Overview:

- Commissioner provided an update on recent legislative activity in Santa Fe.
- Described the current session as very active, with multiple trips to the Roundhouse.

Regional ER Facility Study Funding

- The Commissioner and Fire Chief traveled to Santa Fe on Monday.
- Senator Stefanics is sponsoring legislation to appropriate \$250,000 in state funds for a regional Emergency Room (ER) facility feasibility study.
- Bill received a “Do Pass” recommendation in Senate Finance (6–1 vote).
- Funding appears promising, though not yet finalized.
- Commissioner described this as a “huge win” for Torrance County.

Detention Facility Closure Impact

- Deputy County Manager presented to Senate Finance regarding the financial impacts of the detention facility closure.
- Initial data submission lacked full figures; updated numbers have now been submitted.
- Impact figures include both County and City numbers.
- Estimated annual economic impact:
 - Approximately \$17 million per year
 - Affecting Torrance County and Estancia
- Senate Finance is reviewing the updated data.
- Commissioner noted growing legislative awareness and sympathy toward:
 - Torrance County
 - Cibola County
 - Otero County
- Stated that legislators appear increasingly aware of the broader impact of facility closures (over 1,000 jobs statewide).

Administration Building Funding

- Senator Thornton contacted the Commissioner regarding potential additional capital funding.
- A request was submitted for:
 - \$3.2 million to cover the current funding gap for the Administration Building project.
- All four legislators have already provided some appropriations toward the building.
- Uncertainty remains regarding how this new request would interact with prior allocations.
- Potential use of funds (if approved):
 - Cover the remaining funding gap
 - Address low-voltage infrastructure needs (microphones, A/V systems), currently not included in the budget
- Commissioner described the funding opportunity as “promising.”

Overall Legislative Climate

- Commissioner reported a noticeable shift in how Torrance County is viewed at the Roundhouse:
 - Increased sympathy and receptiveness.
 - Greater acknowledgment of economic harm from detention facility closure.
- Indicated willingness to continue actively advocating for County support.

Chairman's Remarks – Recognition of Commissioner McCall

Context:

- Chairman noted this will be the final Legislative meeting where Mr. McCall serves as Commissioner.

Division of Responsibilities

- When both Commissioners began serving eight years ago:
 - Responsibilities were divided strategically.
 - Commissioner. McCall focused on Santa Fe Legislative efforts.
 - Chairman focused on local County operations and on-the-ground issues.
- Over time, Commissioner McCall developed extensive knowledge of State Legislative processes.
- Acknowledged transition in board responsibilities with Commissioner Jaramillo taking on additional boards and leadership roles.

Improvement in County Standing

- Chairman emphasized significant progress over the past eight years:
 - Torrance County's financial position has strengthened.
 - Improved fiscal stability and planning.
 - Clearer strategic direction.
 - Better long-term planning processes.
- Stated that these improvements have positively influenced how State Legislators view the County.
- Noted that strong administration and cabinet-level staff have played a critical role in these advancements.

Appreciation

- Chairman publicly thanked Commissioner McCall for:
 - Legislative advocacy in Santa Fe.
 - Strengthening the County's relationships with state officials.
 - Contributing to financial stability and improved reputation.
- Expressed hope that future leadership will continue building on this progress.

Key Financial Figures Mentioned

- \$250,000 – Proposed Regional ER feasibility study funding.
 - \$17 million/year – Estimated annual economic impact from detention facility closure.
 - \$3.2 million – Requested funding to close the Administration Building project gap.
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7. FAIRGROUNDS PROJECT:

- A. **MANAGER:** Request Approval of a Contract Amendment Between Torrance County and Franken Construction to Establish a Guaranteed Maximum Price for the Torrance County Fairgrounds Project.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

1. Project Budget Overview

Revenue

- Capital Outlay Grant Appropriations: ~\$4.9 million (fully funding the project)

Pre-Development Expenditures

- Survey: \$2,500
- Transformer Upgrade: \$5,000
- Design Services: \$428,000
- These costs were deducted from the total available grant funds.

Final Construction Estimate

- Franken Construction Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP): \$4,492,000
- Total expenditures vs. grant funding leaves:
 - \$8.12 surplus (project technically "in the black")

Project now structured to be fully funded by Capital Outlay grants with no additional County funds required.

2. Contingency & Cost Management

Current Construction Contingency

- \$124,500

Pending Cost Reductions (Potential Savings)

- Electrical work
- Duct work
- Ceiling work
- Potential total savings: ~\$42,000

If realized:

- Contingency increases to approximately \$166,000

3. Cost Increases to Date (Already Factored In)

Earthwork Issues

- Saturated ground discovered during over-excavation
- Required additional corrective work
- Caused ~3-week delay

Sanitary Sewer Line Replacement

- Roots found in line
- Full replacement required (not just jetting)
- Prevents long-term maintenance problems

Additional Soil Testing

- Multiple testing visits required due to ground saturation

All the above costs are included in the final GMP.

4. Contract Details

- Contract Form: AIA Document A133 (Guaranteed Maximum Price Amendment)
- Exhibit A: Building build-out costs
- Exhibit B: Earthwork, foundation, and site utilities
- Exhibit B was previously approved via an earlier amendment.
- Today's request: Approve final contract amendment (\$4.492M)
- This is the final amendment required to move fully into the construction phase.

5. Construction Timeline Update

Current Site Activity

- Final grading ("blue topping") underway
- Concrete work beginning
- Footings scheduled to begin

Metal Building Delivery

- Scheduled for February 24

Completion Estimate

- Original target: Late June
- Delay due to earthwork: ~3 weeks
- Revised target: Mid to late July

Brent Franken confirmed:

Contractor will work as needed to ensure readiness for the County Fair.

6. Wash Rack Canopy Discussion

- Wash rack remains included
- Canopy removed to meet \$4.9M budget target
- Canopy cost: \$80,000

Future Consideration:

- Possible reinstatement if contingency remains strong near project completion.

Commissioner noted:

- Exhibitors may be disappointed if a canopy is not included.
- Decision made to prioritize staying within budget.

7. Commissioner Discussion & Contractor Performance

- Commission clearly stated:
 - No appetite to exceed \$4.9M budget
 - Directive given to contractor to “sharpen the pencil.”
- Brent Franken:
 - Worked collaboratively
 - Reduced costs to align with funding limits
 - Removed canopy to hit budget target
 - Agreed to contingency strategy adjustment

Commission feedback:

- Franken Construction is described as “a pleasure to work with.”
- Appreciation expressed for contractor’s responsiveness and cost discipline.

8. Fair Board Concerns

- The Fair Board has expressed concern about the completion timeline.
- The Manager has received phone calls regarding readiness for the County Fair.
- Current assessment: Project remains on track for July completion.

9. Key Takeaways

- Project fully funded by capital outlay grant (~\$4.9M)
- Final GMP: \$4.492M
- \$124,500 contingency (potentially \$166,000)
- Construction progressing; building delivery scheduled
- 3-week delay due to unforeseen earthwork
- Wash rack canopy (\$80K) removed, but could be reconsidered
- Target completion: Mid–Late July (in time for County Fair)

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; **seconded by Commissioner McCall.**

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

8. DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM UPDATES AND COMMUNICATION

A. TORRANCE COUNTY EMWTBOARD MEMBERS: EMWT Updates

1. Presenter

Eddie O'Brien

- County Representative, EMWT Water Association

Purpose: Provide operational update on EMWT systems, policies, staffing, grants, and Melody Ranch status.

1. EMWT Organizational & Policy Updates

Policies & Procedures

- EMWT adopting:
 - EMW Gas personnel policies
 - City of Moriarty water policies (temporary framework)
- Policies will be customized and formally adopted as tailored to EMWT.
- Development underway for:
 - Standard operating procedures
 - Emergency protocols (led by David Massey)

Mapping & Infrastructure

- Transitioning all system maps to AutoCAD
- Old maps being digitized and updated

2. Staffing & Certification

Operator

David Massey

- Certified operator for both systems
- Verified with the State that his licenses cover the current customer count
- Will pursue higher-level certifications if growth requires

- Leading emergency protocol development
- Conducted full system survey

New Employee, Jake Ortiz

- Working toward Water Level 1 certification
- Currently on 24/7 on-call rotation
- Assists with after-hours response

Board Chairman, Bobby Ortiz

- Working toward Water Level 1 certification

Goal: Have certifications completed within the year.

3. Customer & Billing Updates

- Approximately 250 customers
- Currently using spreadsheets for billing
- Working toward:
 - Formal billing software implementation
 - Online billing within 1–2 months
- Ed Cardenas assisting with billing software access (county-funded wages)

4. System Survey & Maintenance

System Assessment Completed

Homestead Estates

- 6 priority items identified

Sunset Acres

- 2 priority items identified

Board Action

- Approved \$5,000+ in maintenance
 - Top 2 items for Homestead Estates
 - Top 1 item for Sunset Acres
- Work to begin ASAP

5. 24/7 Emergency Response

- EMWT now has a formal 24/7 response
- Dispatch has on-call contact numbers
- Jake Ortiz, primary responder; escalates to David Massey if needed
- Approximately 6 after-hours water leak calls handled successfully

6. Melody Ranch – Major Discussion Item

Current Conditions

- Residents receiving water via state-funded hauling
- \$250,000 allocated for hauling
- Water hauled Monday–Friday (double loads before weekends/holidays)
- Tank is filled into the system (not the side tank)
- Boil Water Notice in effect
- Some water is still pumped through the system

Concern:

Funding for hauling is temporary and expected to run out.

7. Melody Ranch – Funding & Grants

Grants Applied For

- \$400,000 – Tie-in to City of Moriarty
- \$200,000 – Drill new well
- \$320,000 – Growth Fund Grant
- \$600,000 – Governor’s Office Grant

Key Issue:

EMWT cannot assume ownership without secured funding.

Eddie O’Brien: Taking over today would leave the system in the same condition until funding is secured.

8. \$25,000 Study (Engineering/Design – Bohannon Houston)

Originally Discussed:

- County approved up to \$25,000
- Structured as 0% interest loan over 4 years
- Intended to fund technical memo/design study
- Study would support grant applications

Confusion Identified:

- EMWT believed the County denied payment
- County clarified:
 - Loan agreement drafted
 - EMWT exploring alternative funding

Commission Direction:

- Clarify whether EMWT wants:
 - Loan
 - Grant
 - Forgivable loan option (if system taken over)
- Bring back for next meeting (2 weeks)

Commission emphasized:

- Study likely critical catalyst for grant funding.
- Time is urgent due to the state emergency order.

9. Strategic Long-Term Vision

Ultimate Goal:

- Tie together:
 - Moriarty
 - McIntosh
 - Smaller systems (Melody Ranch, Sunset Acres, Homestead Estates)
- Create interconnected systems for redundancy
- Ensure uninterrupted water if one system fails

10. Concerns Raised by Commissioners

1. Urgency

- Emergency water funding running out
- Summer approaching
- Commission stressed moving Melody Ranch to the top priority

2. Use of Ed Cardenas (County-Funded Consultant)

- Commissioners were concerned he was handling lower-level administrative tasks
- Intent: Use his expertise for:
 - Grants
 - State coordination (OSE, NMED)
 - Regulatory navigation
- Direction: Use him strategically and fully

3. Communication Gaps

- Confusion over the loan agreement
- Committee formed to clarify:
 - Roles of Ed Cardenas vs. David Massey
 - Responsibilities moving forward

11. County Support

The Commission encouraged EMWT to:

- Lean on:
 - County administration
 - Grant staff
 - Commissioners
- Request assistance proactively
- Expedite processes where possible

12. Action Items

EMWT

- Clarify position on \$25,000 study funding
- Report back next meeting
- Continue grant pursuit
- Finalize billing software
- Implement AutoCAD mapping
- Develop emergency protocols

County

- Place \$25,000 funding discussion on next agenda
- Explore creative financing (possible loan forgiveness if takeover occurs)
- Assist with grant acceleration if needed

13. Public Health Status – Melody Ranch

Reported by: Samantha Odell, Emergency Manager

- Hauling continues until state funding is exhausted
- Boil Water Notice remains active
- System partially operational
- Situation is temporary and not sustainable long-term

Overall Tone & Assessment

Positive Developments

- Operational structure improving
- Certifications in progress
- Maintenance underway
- Emergency response operational
- Clear strategic growth vision

Ongoing Risks

- Melody Ranch funding gap

- Emergency hauling funds limited
 - Need for faster grant execution
 - Clarification of financial commitment structure
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9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. COMMISSION: Request Approval of the January 28, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve the minutes; seconded by Commissioner McCall.

Commissioner Jaramillo states she likes the new format of the minutes.

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

- a) **FINANCE:** Request Approval of Payables with a date range of January 22, 2026, through February 4, 2026.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; seconded by Commissioner McCall.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - Schwebach – Yes
 - McCall – Yes
 - Jaramillo – Yes
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11. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:

A. MANAGER/GRANTS: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-____, A Resolution Delegation Approval Authority to the County Manager to Submit Grant Applications for Recurring Grants and Grants without Matching Fund Requirements.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

- Current policy under Resolution 2019-47 requires:
 - All grant application requests are to be presented to and approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) before submission.
- **Identified Issue:**
 - Increasingly short grant submission timelines (sometimes as little as 12–14 days).
 - Staff faces difficulty committing time and resources to applications without prior Commission approval.
 - Risk of missing grant opportunities due to scheduling constraints.

Proposed Amendment (County Manager)

To allow the County Manager to submit grant applications without prior BCC approval when all of the following conditions are met:

- Supports an ongoing, recurring county program
- Is a recurring annual grant
- Requires no cash match (discussion later expanded to include in-kind match clarification)
- Is not practical to bring before the Commission before the deadline

Important Clarifications:

- This authority applies only to the application phase
- Grant acceptance must still return to the Commission for approval
- No financial commitment is made at the application stage

Three-Tier Framework Discussed

Recurring No-Match Grants (Eligible for Delegated Submission)

Examples:

- Fire District Funds (7 recurring funds annually)
- DWI program funding
- Juvenile Justice / CYFD programs

Characteristics:

- Received annually
- No county match required
- Already operational
- Staff capacity already exists

Grants Requiring Match (Cash or In-Kind)

- Must go before the Commission
- Considered a budgetary decision
- Commission retains full approval authority before application

New / Non-Recurring Grants

Examples:

- DOJ training simulator (previously discussed)
- New recruitment or law enforcement funding not previously administered
- Must come before the Commission before the application
- Administrative burden must be evaluated
- Not included in delegated authority

Commission Discussion & Key Concerns

Chairman – Key Points

- Expressed concern about historical grant pitfalls:
 - Referenced past Sheriff's grant for 10 officers
 - Grant phased out salary support
 - County unaware of long-term salary obligations
 - Resulted in layoffs and ~\$500,000 repayment obligation
- Emphasized:

- Commission must remain aware of every grant application
- Strong support for maintaining ratification authority
- Commission must retain the ability to:
 - Remove/redact an application
 - Stop manpower/resource allocation before implementation
- Requested:
 - Clearer definition of “no match.”
 - Include both cash and in-kind
 - Explicit language ensuring:
 - Any application submitted under delegated authority must appear as an action item at the next regular Commission meeting
 - Commission has the formal ability to reject or redact
- Stated:
 - Currently comfortable with proposal
 - Concerned about governance sustainability 10 years down the road
 - Wants safeguards to prevent future misuse

Commissioner McCall – Key Points

- Initially hesitant, later more supportive after clarification.
- Concerned about:
 - Defining “recurring” clearly
 - Risk of assuming recurring = low risk
 - Grants “rearing their head” later with hidden obligations
- Emphasized:
 - Recurring status alone does not eliminate financial or operational risk
 - Administrative oversight responsibility lies heavily on the County Manager
 - Future Commissions may not have the same working relationship

- Requested:
 - Strong language protections
 - Explicit Commission authority to remove at next meeting
 - Clear match definition (cash + in-kind)

Commissioner Inquiry

- Asked whether:
 - Commission approval is required before staff begin work on new grants
- Concern about:
 - Staff spending significant time without clear direction

County Manager Response:

- Yes — that is part of the problem this amendment addresses.
- Short deadlines make it difficult for staff to prepare without application approval.
- Proposal provides clear direction for recurring grants only.
- New grants would still require prior approval.

Ratification Timing Discussion

Two timing options discussed:

1. Ratification at the next regular meeting after application submission
2. Ratification after funding award notification

Chairman’s Position:

- Wants review at next regular meeting after application submission
- The Commission must be aware immediately
- Commission must retain authority to remove before award

Grant Committee Role Clarified

- Grant Committee remains active.
- Process under amendment:
 - The Grant Committee would review immediately upon notice.
 - Committee signs off early in application window.

- Manager authorizes submission.
- Application brought to the Commission at the next regular meeting.
- Manager noted:
 - Easier to coordinate the grant committee on short notice than a full Commission meeting.

Operational Transparency Requests

- Commissioner requested:
 - Full list of all current county grants (capital and operational).
- County Manager confirmed:
 - Spreadsheet compiled (with NM Grants Association assistance).
 - Will be provided.

Consensus & Direction

General Agreement:

- Support for addressing tight grant deadlines.
- Support for recurring/no-match delegation concept.
- Strong agreement that Commission oversight must remain intact.

Required Revisions Before Adoption:

- Clarify “no match” to include:
 - Cash match
 - In-kind match
- Add language ensuring:
 - Mandatory presentation at next regular Commission meeting
 - Formal Commission's ability to reject/redact the application
- Ensure future Commissions retain oversight authority

Action Taken

- Item deferred.

- Staff directed to:
 - Refine language incorporating Commission concerns.
 - Return with revised draft at next meeting.

Key Themes from Discussion

- Balance between efficiency and oversight
- Protection against long-term financial exposure
- Clear distinction between recurring vs. new grants
- Administrative burden considerations
- Governance continuity beyond current leadership
- Maintaining transparency and Commission authority

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to defer, Commissioner McCall seconded.

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

B. MANAGER/DWI: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-06, A Resolution Authorizing the County to Submit an Application to the Department of Finance and Administration, Local Government Division, to Participate in the Local DWI Grant and Distribution Program, to Include the Required Statement of Assurances and Memorandum of Understanding.

Key Points & Discussion:

- Opening Remarks:
 - Speaker expressed condolences to Commissioner Barnell for the loss of her mother, acknowledging the personal and professional significance.
- Presentation of Grant Resolution:
 - Item introduced as a resolution to approve the application for the DWI grant.
 - Speaker emphasized that this is part of a recurring annual grant process.

- Important details:
 - Grant requires a 10% match, which can be 100% in-kind contributions.
 - Application deadline: February 26.
 - Approval requested to move forward with the application.
- Discussion & Clarifications:
 - Commissioner Inquiry: Is this grant recurring?
 - Response: Yes, this is a recurring annual grant; each year requires an independent resolution as mandated by the state.
 - Commissioner Inquiry: Is this grant associated with moving operations into the Sheriff's Office?
 - Response: Yes, there are plans to hire a contractor as DWI coordinator under the Sheriff's Department umbrella.
 - The contractor will manage this grant separately.
 - Transition to the Sheriff's Department will not impact this grant.
 - Commissioner Inquiry: Are the grant funds the same as last year?
 - Response: Amounts may vary.
 - Previous fiscal year: Requested \$338,069, received \$203,464.
 - Current request will be compiled based on organizational needs and may result in a similar or adjusted amount.
- Next Steps:
 - Grant coordinator and staff will compile application materials and submit by the February 26 deadline.

Personal Notes for Deputy County Manager:

- This is your first item in your new role, and it sets the tone for grant management responsibilities.
- Coordination with the Sheriff's Office and contract management is key to this grant's success.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve Resolution 2026-06, Commissioner McCall seconded.

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

12. APPROVALS/ACTION ITEM

A. JUVENILE JUSTICE: Request Approval of a Budget Adjustment Resolution for the Juvenile Justice Program.

Rebecca Armstrong, Juvenile Justice Board Coordinator:

1. Overview of Grant

- Grant Duration: 3-year cycle; currently mid-cycle
- Annual Amount: \$261,000 (same as previous year)
- Purpose: Not a payback grant; funds must be expended according to deliverables to avoid reversion
- Current Expenditure: 57% after January invoices
- Fiscal Year End: June 30

Key Points:

- Grant deliverables must be followed closely; past instances where continuums lost funds due to unsubmitted services or insufficient service delivery
 - Emphasis on maintaining a "spirit of excellence" in service delivery
 - Schools report high satisfaction with contractors
-

2. Budget Adjustment Request

- Reason for Adjustment: A small portion (\$6,200) allocated to restorative justice cannot be used due to no contractor this year
- Proposed Action: Move \$6,200 from restorative justice to Gender-Specific Program (Girls Circle)

- Expected Outcome: 100% fund utilization; avoid any reversion
- Past Performance: Two years ago, Torrance ranked #1 in the state for lowest fund reversion

Approval Status:

- Already approved unanimously by the Family and Youth Council in January
 - Seeking Torrance County Commission approval today
 - Final approval will come from the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) / CYP
-

3. School Participation & Programming Update

New Schools / Programs:

- Moriarty High School: Voice Council program started in December; Girls Circle started in January
- Estancia Middle School: Active participation
- Mountainair Schools: Active participation

Paused Programs:

- EVCA School: Temporarily paused due to conflicts; expected to resume next year
- No schools lost; full intention to maintain prior participation

Participation Numbers:

- Current: 175 youth
 - Previous Year: ~200 youth, including fifth and sixth graders
 - EVCA participation is slightly lower due to program timing
 - Anticipated increase once all grade levels and paused schools resume next year
-

4. Key Discussion Points / Questions

- Question: Have additional schools been entered or participation increased?
 - Answer: Added Moriarty High, continued at Estancia and Mountainair. Participation is slightly lower now but is expected to match the prior year after completing the remaining grades.

- Question: Were any schools lost?
 - Answer: No schools lost; EBC school temporarily paused, will return next year
 - Question: Budget comparison to the previous year?
 - Answer: Same amount: \$261,000
 - Question: Participation comparison to the previous year?
 - Answer: Current youth served: 175; expected to exceed 200 by the end of the year
-

5. Next Steps

- Seek Torrance County Commission approval for budget adjustment
- Forward approved adjustment to State JJ Board / CYP
- Continue monitoring expenditures and service delivery to ensure full utilization
- Resume paused programs next year to maintain or increase participation

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

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

B. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Request Approval of an Agreement Between Torrance County and the New Mexico Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to Participate in the Statewide Digital Trunked Radio System (DTRS).

Samantha O'Dell, County Emergency Manager:

Summary & Key Points:

- **Purpose of Agreement:**
 - The discussed agreement is necessary for the county to access the state radio system and its channels.

- DoIT (Department of Information Technology, State Level) manages the system, including the GTRs (Group Talk Radios).
- Access to “top groups” is essential for county integration into the state system.
- **Subscriber Fees (Attachment D):**
 - Fee: \$20 per radio per month.
 - Historically, no entity has directly paid this fee due to state appropriations.
 - Current appropriations cover fees through June 2026.
 - SB 254 proposes increasing appropriations from \$2.8 million → \$6 million.
 - Appropriated funds are sent to DoIT and used to cover the subscriber fees for all participating agencies.
- **Potential County Costs if Appropriations Are Lost:**
 - Approx. \$2,720 per month for all county agencies’ radios.
 - Approx. \$24,000 annually.
 - Cost is determined by the number of radios active (“turned on”) each month, so it may vary.
 - Currently, these costs are not budgeted in this year’s county budget.
- **Discussion Points:**
 - Mr. Chair asked about the timeline if appropriations are withdrawn and the County must pay fees.
 - Response: Fees are assessed monthly, so the county could be liable immediately in the normal course of operations.
 - Recommendation: Commission should be regularly updated on the status of appropriations and any fee changes to anticipate potential budget impacts.
- **Scope of Radios Covered:**
 - Applies to mobile and portable units.
 - Confirmed that no other radio types are impacted.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- Monitor appropriations and SB 254 developments.
- Update the commission on any changes to subscriber fees or state funding.

- Confirm current and projected number of radios to accurately estimate potential county costs if appropriations are lost.

Notes / Observations:

- Transparency on costs and funding sources was emphasized.
- The discussion highlighted the need for proactive budget planning for radio access continuity.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; **seconded** by Commissioner McCall.

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

C. MANAGER: Request Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between Torrance County, Catron County, Sierra County, and Socorro County Regarding the Implementation of SB3 Funding for Region 7.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

Background:

- Senate Bill 3 (SB 3) passed in the last legislative session.
- SB 3 allocates state funding to the Administrative Office of the Courts to address behavioral health and substance abuse services statewide.
- Funding is distributed via judicial districts, aligning regions with current judicial district maps. Torrance County is part of the 7th Judicial District (Torrance, Catrona, Sierra, and Socorro counties).

Purpose of SB 3:

- Phase 1: Map behavioral health services within each judicial district.
- Identify gaps in services to plan future allocations.
- Ensure underserved areas, like Torrance County, gain access to resources.

MOU Requirements for SB 3 Participation

- Counties in each judicial district must enter an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).

- MOU requires:
 - Identification of a lead agency and fiscal agent for the region (Socorro County has agreed to serve this role).
 - Appointment of four County representatives to a local stakeholder committee.
 - Committee powers: planning, prioritization, and decision-making for funding at the county level.
 - Region-wide decisions are made collectively for fund allocation.
- Member counties must actively participate in planning and bear administrative costs; staff time is not reimbursable.
- Behavioral health expenditures that qualify under SB 3 are reimbursed through the fiscal agent (Socorro County).

Torrance County Participation

- **Representatives:** Angie Colburn (PMS) and Sarah Lucero (Misdemeanor Compliance Officer) have been attending planning meetings.
- **Upcoming Regional Breakout Sessions:** March 18–20 in Socorro County with UNM support for mapping local needs.
- **Goal:** Build a behavioral health infrastructure for offenders, community members, youth, and families, addressing the county’s limited existing resources.

Funding

- SB 3 creates new funding for behavioral health services.
- Estimated state allocation: ~\$150 million across New Mexico.
- Torrance County funding is proportional to regional participation and service needs.
- Previously, limited behavioral health funding existed, mainly through DWI programs, but no comprehensive funding for other populations.

Key Questions and Clarifications

- **Why are they tied to Judicial Districts?**
 - The judicial system provides oversight and structure to identify and serve offenders.
 - Ensures statewide consistency while addressing local gaps.
- **Lead Agency Selection:**

- Socorro County has capacity and expertise in behavioral health.
- Miss Munsey is leading for Region 7.
- **Local Control & Equity:**
 - County committees address local priorities and send representatives to regional decision-making tables.
 - Termination clause exists if the MOU is not serving the County's needs.
 - Commissioners emphasized checks and balances to ensure funding reaches Torrance constituents.

Concerns and Recommendations

- Commissioners stressed:
 - Need for oversight mechanisms to ensure funds are spent effectively.
 - Ensure equity and transparency in multi-County collaborations.
 - Monitor use of nonprofit partners to prevent misuse of funds.
 - Regular updates from representatives (Angie Colburn, Sarah Lucero) are critical.

Next Steps

- Approve the MOU with caveats for oversight and county voice.
- Attend regional breakout sessions (March 18–20) to map Torrance County behavioral health needs.
- Continue local committee formation to ensure County priorities are represented in Region 7 planning.
- Ongoing collaboration with Socorro County and UNM support for implementation.

Decision:

- Motion to approve MOU with awareness of the need for oversight and monitoring.
- Commissioners encouraged staff to maintain transparency, accountability, and local input.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Commissioner McCall**.

- Roll Call Vote:
 - Schwebach – Yes

- McCall – Yes
- Jaramillo – Yes

D. ROADS: Discussion and Potential Approval to Execute a Lease Agreement for 4 New Pick-Up Trucks Through the Enterprise E-Fleet Program for the Torrance County Roads Department.

Leonard Lujan, County Road Superintendent:

Purpose

- Proposal to lease four new pickup trucks through the Enterprise EP program for the Torrance County Road Department.
- Objective: Replace older trucks in the fleet and maintain operational efficiency without requesting additional budget funding.

Key Discussion Points

1. Current Fleet and Replacement Needs

- Department currently operates 18 vehicles, including pickups and support trucks.
- Four trucks being proposed will complete the replacement of older units, including a 1994 model with high mileage.
- Leasing trucks allows the department to phase out old vehicles and maintain a "new fleet."

2. Budget and Funding

- Funds earmarked from previous blade leases can be reallocated.
- \$115,000 is available in the current budget from savings on prior leases.
- Lease payments for four pickups: \$931.57/month per vehicle, totaling \$44,715/year, for a five-year lease.
- No new general fund request is needed; the department can fund the lease internally.

3. Operational Considerations

- Lease program allows the department to replace vehicles efficiently without impacting road maintenance schedules.

- Trucks are essential for daily operations: transporting operators, equipment, and materials to job sites.
- Department ensures all leased vehicles are compatible with existing equipment and road maintenance operations.

4. Efficiency and Fleet Management

- Department head emphasized that not all vehicles or staff are 100% efficient due to equipment and personnel constraints.
- Efficiency is measured by maximizing output with current staff and equipment, not by fulfilling all service requests.
- Properly leasing vehicles ensures consistent availability without overextending operators or machinery.

5. Comparison to Blade Leases

- Previous blades leased were funded from similar allocations, generating savings and operational flexibility.
- Current proposal mirrors prior leasing approach: reallocating existing budget to lease trucks.
- Discussion included potential alternatives for blade leases, but focus remains on trucks at this stage.

6. Long-Term Planning

- Proposal ensures fleet modernization while keeping costs predictable.
- Prevents the need for future budget requests for pickups, allowing focus on other equipment or road materials.
- Leasing avoids one-time large expenditures and spreads costs over five years.

Decisions and Agreements

- The department can proceed with leasing four pickup trucks using internal budget reallocations.
- Lease term: 5 years, cost approximately \$44,715/year.
- Future discussions on blade leases and heavy equipment will occur during the next budget cycle.

Action Items

- Department Head: Finalize lease agreement with Enterprise EP program.

- Budget Office: Track allocation from previous blade lease savings to cover truck lease payments.
- Board/Chair: Review efficiency and budget reallocation in future fiscal planning, particularly for heavy equipment.

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

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

E. ANIMAL SERVICES: Request Approval of a Grant Agreement Between Torrance County and Best Friends in the Amount of \$5,000.00.

Danette Langdon, Animal Shelter Director:

Grant Overview:

- Grant Amount: \$5,000
- Purpose: To complement the \$10,000 previously received from Best Friends. Funds are designated for:
 - Medical care of animals in our shelter
 - Transport costs to help animals get placed with fewer barriers
- Source: Torrance (grantor)
- Application Status: Not applied for; grant was awarded unexpectedly
- Matching Requirement: None
- Disbursement: Direct check to our organization
- Duration/Continuity: One-time grant; not expected to be ongoing

Key Points / Takeaways:

- This funding provides additional resources to support immediate animal care and adoption logistics.
- The grant aligns with our mission to reduce barriers for shelter animals without requiring additional effort or matching funds.

- Financial impact: Adds \$5,000 directly to operational support for medical and transport expenses.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- Prepare to receive and deposit the check.
- Plan allocation of funds to medical and transport needs.
- Acknowledge the grant with a thank-you note to Torrance.
- Track impact on animal placement outcomes for reporting purposes.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; **seconded by Commissioner McCall.**

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

F. FIRE: Request Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between Torrance County and the Professional Firefighters of Torrance County IAFF Local 5441 Allowing the Assignment of Lieutenants to Open Shifts Prior to the Issuance of Mandatory Overtime.

Gary Smith, County Fire Chief:

Key Discussion Points:

- **Problem:**
 - In our 24/7 operation, there are instances where staff cannot work mandatory overtime after a 40-hour shift.
 - Currently, if no one is available, employees are forced to stay, which affects family time and personal obligations.
- **Proposed Solution (MOU):**
 - Allows firefighters to leave their shift as scheduled without being forced to cover overtime.
 - A lieutenant can voluntarily fill the vacant firefighter spot for that shift.

- **Frequency & Context:**
 - This situation is rare—about 6–7 times historically—but we want a formal mechanism to handle it.
- **Impact:**
 - Employees can go home and attend to family or personal obligations.
 - Overtime budget remains unchanged; only the personnel filling it change.
 - Provides clarity and fairness for both administration and employees.

Layman’s Explanation / Speaker 2:

- **Example:**
 - A firefighter finishes a 48-hour shift at 9 AM and wants to go home to see family.
 - Previously, they might have been forced to stay for mandatory coverage.
 - Under this MOU, they can leave, and a lieutenant can take that overtime instead.
- **Key point:**
 - Ensures employees are not overworked or forced to miss important personal events.
 - Formalizes a practice that has already been done occasionally.
- **Context in Collective Bargaining:**
 - Normally, forced overtime must be “rank for rank” (firefighter for firefighter).
 - Lieutenants could not fill firefighter shifts before due to pay/title differences.
 - This MOU officially allows lieutenants to fill in, voluntarily or administratively, for these specific instances.
- **Benefit:**
 - Creates flexibility without breaking labor agreements.
 - Supports employee well-being while maintaining shift coverage.

Summary / Outcome:

- The MOU is a formal agreement allowing lieutenants to cover firefighter overtime shifts voluntarily.
- Firefighters will no longer be forced to stay beyond their scheduled shift if they have personal obligations.

- This process is rare but ensures fairness, protects family time, and maintains coverage without exceeding the overtime budget.

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motioned to approve; seconded by Commissioner McCall.

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

G. MANAGER: Request Ratification of a Small Purchase Professional Services Agreement Between Torrance County and Domenici Law Fire P.C., Not to Exceed \$59,999.00 to Provide Legal Services.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

Discussion Summary:

- The purpose of today’s meeting was to request ratification of a PSA previously executed with Domenici Law Firm.
- **Background:**
 - In the prior meeting, the Commission discussed the current protest regarding county water rights.
 - At that meeting, the Commission directed staff to move forward with securing outside legal services.
- **Process:**
 - Staff reached out to several law firms for representation.
 - Mr. Domenici agreed to represent the Commission.
 - The agreement was executed on January 26, ensuring availability for initial hearings with the Office of the State Engineer.
- **Current Action:**
 - The PSA is already in effect, and the Commission is being asked to ratify the agreement.

Key Points:

- PSA executed with Domenici Law Firm on January 26.
- Agreement ensures legal representation for water rights protest hearings.

Motion: Commissioner McCall motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Chairman Schwebach**

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

13. DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION:

A. Roads: Discussion of Current Blade Leases for the Torrance County Roads Department.

Heard with agenda item 12D.

B. Roads: Discussion on Additional Funding Request for the Rental of a Crusher for Gravel Material in FY26.

Leonard Lujan, County Road Superintendent:

Background

- At the beginning of the year, the budget allocated \$100,000 for:
 - Crushing material
 - Dozer rental for the pit
- Purchased blades for equipment that exceeded budget:
 - Needed an additional \$77,000 to cover the cost
 - Budget approval had not yet been granted, but managers allowed payment from existing resources

Current Request

- Request: Approval of \$77,000 from the general fund to cover dozer rental for pit operations
- Justification:

- Ensures roads are properly maintained
- Prevents small rocks from causing potholes
- Past operations have been successful in improving road quality
- Acting now ensures the availability of funds; future budgets may not guarantee sufficient funds

Operational Details

- Material handled last year: ~13,000 tons of aggregate
- Rental plan:
 - Rent a D8 dozer to stockpile material quickly
 - Rent a crusher for 28 days continuously
 - Use the Grizzly screener purchased recently for processing
- **Process:**
 1. Stockpile raw material using a dozer
 2. Crush material continuously with the rented crusher
 3. Screen with Grizzly
- **Outcome:**
 - Successfully improved ~6 miles of road
 - Achieved durable, high-quality gravel for roads

Budget/Financial Notes (Discussed by Finance/Chair)

- Current request requires a general fund adjustment
- Could be incorporated into the next Commission meeting budget adjustments
- Vehicles and related items have been discussed as action items, but this requires additional financial steps
- Emphasis on timely approval to avoid delays in road maintenance

Additional Notes

- Importance of pre-emptive stockpiling and crushing emphasized for efficiency
- This program is proven and effective, and a budget adjustment is strategically necessary

Action Items / Next Steps

- Consider \$77,000 allocation from the general fund
 - Schedule budget adjustment discussion at next Commission meeting
 - Continue with crusher/dozer operations as planned once funding is approved
-

C. MANAGER: Discussion of New Mexico House Bill 9 and the Economic Impact Analysis of a Potential Closure of TCDF.

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

- Noted that Deputy Manager Jones attended the Senate Finance Committee hearing.
- Highlighted that the Committee requested numbers from Torrance, Cibola, and Otero Counties on the potential closure of the facility.
- Mentioned the last-minute scheduling and rescheduling of the hearing and the Committee's need for comparable data.
- Deputy Manager Jones
 - Prepared and walked the Commission through the economic impact analysis provided to the state.
 - Outlined impacts on Torrance County and the Town of Estancia, including revenue loss, increased costs, and job impacts.
- Other Commissioners & Participants
 - Raised concerns about state laws, potential future risks, and federal/private contracts.
 - Emphasized local economic reliance on the facility and frustration with state decision-making.

Economic Impact Analysis – Torrance County

1. Direct Impacts to Torrance County

- Operational Costs to Accommodate a Potential Closure
 - Staffing: \$240,000 for three new transport positions.
 - Fuel: \$12,000 annually for transport vehicles.
 - Vehicle maintenance: \$7,500 annually.

- Detention costs:
 - Current: \$68.18/inmate/day.
 - Tentative Santa Fe County rate: \$228/inmate/day.
 - With 35 inmates: ~\$2.1 million annual increase in detention costs.
- One-time cost: \$190,000 for transport vehicles (recurring every few years).
- Revenue Considerations
 - Property taxes: minimal (~\$17,000 average over 5 years).
 - Gross receipts tax: ~\$312,000/year from CoreCivic.
- Five-Year Projection for County
 - Year 1: ~\$2.9 million economic impact.
 - Year 5: ~\$3 million annually due to inflation (~3.5%) and recurring costs.

2. Town of Estancia Impacts

- Revenue
 - Gross receipts: ~\$900,000/year (~2/3 of operating revenue).
 - Utility revenue lost: ~\$180,000/year (water/trash services).
- Employment Impact
 - Facility employs 230 positions, ~200 filled.
 - Annual payroll: ~\$13.5 million, which supports local spending (restaurants, gas, groceries).
- Total Estimated Impact: Over \$1 million in revenue/job-related impact.

3. Combined County & Town Economic Impact

- Total GRT loss: ~\$1.25 million/year.
- Lost utility revenue: ~\$180,000/year.
- Lost economic activity from personnel: ~\$13.5 million/year.
- Total five-year economic impact: ~\$17 million/year.

Additional Discussion Points

- Senate Finance Committee requested:

- Hard numbers on the 2017 prison closure; data unavailable.
- Information on where employees live (mostly local, still impacts the economy regardless).
- Federal Funding: ~\$23 million/year from lawful ICE contracts; loss would impact the local economy.
- Contracts & Facility Status
 - Current three-year CoreCivic contract ensures facility operation, closure not imminent.
 - Contract validity contingent on facility remaining open.
 - CoreCivic operates as a for-profit entity; financial incentives influence decisions.
- Legislative Concerns
 - State law increasingly hostile toward private prisons in New Mexico.
 - House Bill Two: \$6 million appropriated for economic development for Torrance, Otero, and Cibola counties. Potential use for local projects.
 - Concerns about long-term sustainability if CoreCivic or federal contracts change.
- Community & Local Economy
 - Closure or contract loss would lead to significant job loss, reduced local spending, and decreased municipal revenue.
 - Commissioners expressed frustration over state-level decisions impacting rural communities without understanding local conditions.
- Future Planning Considerations
 - Explore economic development funding for diversification.
 - Maintain working relationship with CoreCivic.
 - Monitor federal and state law changes affecting private prison operations.

Action Items / Next Steps

- Continue providing requested data to the Senate Finance Committee.
- Investigate 2017 prison closure impacts as feasible.
- Review stipulations and potential use of the \$6 million economic development grant.

- Maintain dialogue with CoreCivic to ensure continuity of operations and explore alternatives.

D. MANAGER: Discussion of the Torrance County Commission's Budget Priorities

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

Key Discussion Points

- Consolidated Budget Priorities (based on individual Commissioner input):
 1. Fire Department / Fire & Rescue
 - Focus on increasing operational response, particularly in mountain communities.
 - Identified as a top priority by multiple Commissioners.
 2. Roads Department
 - Maintain and enhance road infrastructure and operational efficiency.
 - Commissioner Hits described it as a "pinnacle" priority.
 3. Operational Efficiencies Across All Departments
 - Goal: identify efficiencies without cutting services.
 - Emphasis on maximizing budget impact, stretching dollars, and improving service delivery.
 4. Economic Development
 - Evaluate current positions and organizational structure.
 - Discussion of funding, staffing, and potential outside support (e.g., AREA organization as a resource similar to the dissolved Evita).
 - Commissioners expressed the need to understand the structure and capacity before prioritizing as a top funding item.
 5. County Administrative Building
 - Funding and execution were discussed but ranked below the top four priorities.

Commissioner Feedback / Perspectives

- Commissioner McCall & Commissioner Jaramillo

- Prioritizes Fire, Roads, and Operational Efficiency.
- Supports including Economic Development once departmental structure is clarified.
- Emphasized that operational efficiency is a county-wide initiative to optimize departmental performance without cutting services.
- Agreed with the top four priorities and emphasized economic development as high on the list.
- Suggested Economic Development could be supported with outside resources and strategic direction.
- Clarified that priorities are guiding tools, not exclusive: emergent needs in other departments will still be funded.
- Highlighted one-time funding opportunities (capital improvements) rather than recurring operational costs.
- Noted \$180,000 federal funding for the Sheriff's Department for two new units as a one-time augmentation.

Additional Notes / Clarifications

- Sheriff's Department is fully staffed; no cuts planned. Emphasis on maintaining services while considering efficiency.
- Economic Development
 - AREA is a supplemental resource; it supports but does not replace internal county economic development efforts.
 - Commissioners are exploring potential contracts or partnerships until a dedicated office/employee is established.
- Operational Efficiency initiatives apply county-wide; each department may propose how efficiency improvements are implemented and funded.
- Next Steps:
 - Review budget proposals and departmental reports with top priorities as guidance.
 - Schedule follow-up discussion at the beginning of the next meeting to finalize priorities and allocations.
 - Continue meetings with Treasurer's Office and Finance to evaluate organizational structure and funding opportunities.

E. CLERK'S REPORT:

Sylvia Chavez, County Clerk:

- Mail Ballots for Estancia School District:
 - Ballots will be mailed out next Tuesday to all eligible voters in the Estancia School District.
 - Voters have one month to return ballots.
 - Options for returning ballots:
 - Mail back to the office
 - Drop off in person
 - Use permanent drop boxes located in Mountainair or Moriarty
 - Speaker emphasized the goal of a high voter turnout for this special election, noting it is the first special election that is all mail.
- Tabulator Programming and Certification:
 - Scheduled for tomorrow at 10:00 AM in the Early Vote Room.
 - The process involves certifying two tabulator machines for the election.
 - The public is welcome to observe the certification process to understand how machines are prepared for elections.
- New Bureau of Elections Staff Member:
 - Rubena Miranda was welcomed to the office.
 - Brings 20+ years of experience as a precinct worker and presiding judge.
 - Notable background: her father was also a county clerk, providing a strong family history in elections.
 - She will participate in training for all aspects of the office.

F. MANAGERS' REPORT:

Jordan Barela, County Manager:

Economic Development Grant Application

- Speakers/Leads: County staff (unspecified), communications with external partners
- Details:
 - County is in communication with Merck, Hargan, and the EDA regarding the grant.
 - Grant application is still under review, no definitive outcome yet.
 - Economic development will be factored into this year's budget creatively, regardless of grant status.
 - If funded, allocation of grant funds could begin in April/May.
 - If not funded, an alternative plan will be proposed.

Senate Bill 183 – Regional Healthcare Study

- SB 183 provides \$250,000 for a feasibility study.
- Study is to be conducted by the New Mexico Healthcare Authority.
- Purpose: Explore the creation of a regional urgent care or emergency room facility in Torrance.
- Copy of bill included in commission packet.

Finance & CFO Support

- Discussions ongoing regarding finance department functions.
- KCD Advisory LLC contracted under a small purchase agreement to serve as interim Chief CFO.
- Execution of the agreement is currently underway.

Domestic Violence Program

- Meeting held with a nonprofit partner willing to assist.
- Key funding challenge: most sources require a nonprofit, but many nonprofits lack capacity for direct field services.
- Proposed solution: hybrid model
 - County retains contractors for direct services.
 - Nonprofit applies for and manages funding for wraparound services.
- Discussions are ongoing.

25 Acres on Allen Ayres – Potential Grazing Lease

- Two cattle ranchers expressed interest in leasing property for grazing.
- Lease would likely need to be month-to-month due to potential land swap with the Solid Waste Authority or future economic development use.
- Because multiple parties are interested, a formal procurement process is required.
- Commission's feedback requested on grazing lease concept.

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager:

Financial Update

- Quarterly Report Completion:

- The second-quarter financial report has been completed and submitted to LGBMS.
- Completion was supported by the Treasurer's Office and Misty Witt.
- Revenue Highlights:
 - Second-quarter revenues: \$39,002,673.80
 - This represents 51.8% of the budgeted revenues, which is slightly above the expected 50% midpoint of the fiscal year.
 - Overall assessment: Excellent performance at the halfway point of the fiscal year.
- Expenditure Highlights:
 - Second-quarter expenditures: \$29,001,849
 - This is 32.5% of the budgeted expenditures, well under the midpoint expectation.
 - Overall assessment: Positive financial management and good cost control

G. COMMISSIONERS REPORT

Kevin McCall, County Vice Chair:

Chief Gary Smith:

Key Points:

- Pilot Program Launch:
 - Implemented in District 2 (Indian Hills area).
 - Transitioned to full-time personnel on B shift instead of 24/7 coverage.
- Early Results:
 - Already responded to multiple calls successfully.
 - Demonstrates targeted deployment based on call patterns and gaps.
- Strategic Approach:
 - Compared to a baseball strategy: anticipate where issues (the "ball") are most likely to occur.
 - Focused on due diligence to identify high-demand areas and position responders effectively.
- Stakeholder Support:
 - Positive feedback from the State Fire Marshal, who is "super excited" about the initiative.
 - Anticipated benefits for the northern end of the district.

- Legislative Update:
 - Bill 183 moving to Senate Finance Committee.
 - Suggested consideration to contact Senator Minos regarding next steps.

Next Steps / Action Items:

- Monitor the effectiveness of B shift personnel in District 2.
- Track bill 183 progress and coordinate outreach to relevant Senate contacts.
- Evaluate potential expansion of the pilot program based on outcomes.

Ryan Schwebach, County Chairman:

- Main Focus: Sharing a personal note about an individual's family situation.
- Most of his updates have already been covered.
- Emphasized the importance of being aware of certain people in the community.
- Did not go into full details about the situation, but wanted to highlight:
 - The individual in question has siblings.
 - Contacts or those who have relevant knowledge should keep this family in their thoughts/prayers.
- The message was intended to encourage care, empathy, and support from the group without disclosing sensitive specifics.

Action/Follow-up:

- Attendees are encouraged to reach out or offer support if they can.
- Maintain sensitivity and discretion regarding the individual's situation.

Linda Jaramillo, County Commissioner:

- Discussion of new site for the Torrance Transfer Station.

Key Points Discussed:

- Reviewed details regarding the new transfer station site.
- Discussed progress and next steps for moving the project forward.
- Shared excitement and positive outlook on the project's development.
- Emphasized collaboration between board members and stakeholders.

Action Items / Next Steps:

- Continue monitoring progress on the site development.
- Maintain communication between board members and project leads (Jordan and Leonard).
- Schedule follow-up meetings as needed to finalize details.

Summary:

The meeting was productive, with all parties expressing enthusiasm about the new transfer station project. Initial details look promising, and collaboration is strong. The team is optimistic about moving the project forward.

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

Next meeting: February 25, 2026, 9:00 AM

15. Signing of official documents

16. Adjournment:

Motion: Chairman Schwebach motions to adjourn. **Commission McCall** seconded.

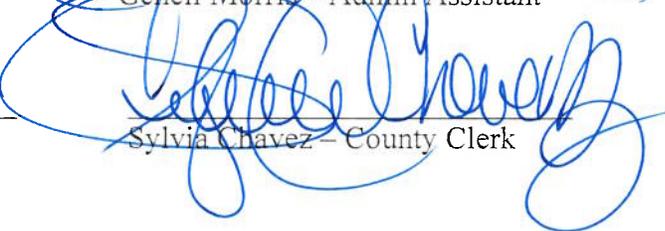
- Roll Call Vote:
 - Schwebach – Yes
 - McCall – Yes
 - Jaramillo – Yes

Meeting adjourned at 12:24 PM.

Absent
Ryan Schwebach – Chairman


Genell Morris – Admin Assistant

02/25/2026
Date


Sylvia Chavez – County Clerk

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