

**Final**  
**Torrance County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Commission Meeting**  
**March 25, 2026**  
**9:00AM**

Commissioners Present:

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

Others Present:

**JORDAN BARELA-COUNTY MANAGER**  
**MICHELLE JONES-DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER**  
**MICHAEL GARCIA- COUNTY ATTORNEY ~Via Zoom**  
**SYLVIA CHAVEZ-COUNTY CLERK**  
**MACKENZIE CARLSON- ADMINASTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
**DON GOEN – PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Jaramillo Calls meeting to order at 9:01AM

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**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INNVOICATION**

- Pledge led by Vice-Chair Jaramillo
- Invocation led by Commissioner McCall
  - For the Commission as they make decisions for the County.
  - For firefighters fighting current fires and for much-needed moisture.
  - For law enforcement safety.
  - For conflicts around the world, asking for peace and de-escalation.

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**3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

**County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Announced one change to the agenda:

- Item 11D – Human Resources – unauthorized purchase to Robert Casewell Investigations:
    - Clarified the correct invoice in the packet is \$1,646.66.
    - Noted a previous invoice (approx. \$3,700) had already been approved at a prior meeting, so this agenda item is only for the final pending invoice of \$1,646.66.
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#### **4. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

- a. **MANAGER:** Recognition of Rebecca Armstrong, Torrance County’s Juvenile Justice Coordinator.

##### **County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Recognized Rebecca Armstrong, Torrance County Juvenile Justice Coordinator:
  - Reported on a recent statewide Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) meeting at Perpetual Tears Memorial in Torrance County.
  - Stated Rebecca coordinated and ran the meeting, representing the county “very well”.
  - Noted the state board holds her and the program in high regard.
  - Financial standing:
    - Torrance County’s juvenile justice program is among the best financial performers statewide.
    - Approximately 70% of state funding has been expended—stronger than many other programs.
- Emphasized belief in giving credit where due and praised her representation of the county locally and across the state.

##### **Vice-Chair Linda Jaramillo**

- Thanked Ms. Armstrong for her hard work.
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#### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT (Comment limited to TWO Minutes)**

## **Nancy Brockerman- Resident**

Raised concern about:

- High winds, excess vegetation growth, and massive tumbleweed accumulations.
- Tumbleweeds blinding fences and increasing fire risk.
- Suggested:
  - Cooperative approach between groups/agencies to collect tumbleweeds rather than “just throwing them over the fence.”
  - Potential to store tumbleweeds for future use as kindling/fuel (campfires, wood stoves).
- Acknowledged she herself has thrown tumbleweeds over fences and said that is not a real solution, especially for fire prevention.

## **Leonard Lujan- County Road Department Superintendent**

- Provided a road department update:
  - Fuel costs are rapidly climbing.
  - Extremely dry conditions: roads are turning into powder, and grading without moisture is not effective.
- Operational adjustments:
  - Will stop running blades non-stop.
  - New approach: “chasing complaints” only:
    - Graders will be dispatched only when complaints are received.
    - Focus work on trimming trees, cattle guards, culverts, and similar maintenance.
  - Concerned about budget:
    - With three months left in the fiscal year, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the fuel budget is already expended.
    - If they slow down as planned, they should make it through the year.

- If an event forces heavy grader use, fuel line could be over-expended by about 25%.

**Commissioner McCall**

- Asked if this reduction strategy had been used in the past.
  - Leonard confirmed this is a recurring strategy in very dry seasons.

**Vice-chair Jaramillo**

- Asked about budget status; Leonard reiterated:
  - With the slowdown, the department expects to finish the year within budget

**\*Zoom\***

**Tiffany Wang – Innovation Law Lab**

- Addressed the Commission and community via Zoom.
- Cited a January 9, 2026 letter from the New Mexico Department of Justice (NM DOJ) to Torrance County regarding the ICE contract for TCDF (Torrance County Detention Facility):
  - DOJ concern: the county’s retroactive approval/ratification of the intergovernmental services agreement (IGSA) extension with ICE is improper and invalid.
  - DOJ analysis (paraphrased from her reading):
    - It appears the original IGSA expired.
    - Extending the contract term via amendment after expiration and retroactively is akin to ratification.
    - Under NMSA 10-15-3(A), a public body cannot ratify a decision it never actually made.
    - Ratification cannot operate retroactively; it only takes effect on the date of ratification.
    - Therefore, any ratification vote on that expired contract is itself likely invalid.
    - DOJ asked the County to provide any evidence to the contrary if it exists.
- Key implications raised:

- If the contract is invalid and not corrected:
  - CoreCivic is detaining people in ICE custody without lawful authorization.
  - That could violate New Mexico false imprisonment law (intentional confinement without lawful authority).
- The currently (already) invalid contract is said to expire March 31, 2026, but DOJ's letter suggests it may already be invalid.
- Requested clarification from Commission/Manager:
  1. Purpose of the special meeting scheduled for Monday, March 30, 2026 (no agenda posted yet).
  2. What responses, if any the Commission has made to the NM DOJ inquiry.

## 6. DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM UPDATES AND COMMUNICATIONS

### a. PMS UPDATE

#### Angela Coburn Update – Current Year Status

- Reported on Senior Services operations since July 1 (program year start) through end of February:
  - 5,671 congregate meals served (meals in senior centers).
  - 22,963 home-delivered meals provided.
- Noted rising costs, especially fuel, are driving budget gaps.
- Shared that:
  - PMS has been lobbying AAA (Area Agency on Aging) and Aging & Long Term Services Department.
  - Believes the funding gap for this year may be closed via a contract amendment from AAA (not yet in hand).
- Asked the Commission to consider:
  - Long-term planning and partnerships to lobby at the Legislature for more senior services funding.
  - Stressed seniors as among the most vulnerable populations

## Greg Smith – Funding Strategy & Future Lobbying

- Drew on prior experience managing Senior Services in Santa Fe County:
  - Santa Fe County took over the contract from the City; there were struggles but persistent lobbying at the Legislature eventually made the budget “whole” (zero deficit).
  - Emphasized it took several years of intense legislative effort.
- Current Torrance County situation:
  - Fuel and vehicle maintenance for home-delivered meals are major cost drivers.
  - Estimated over 200 miles/day in home-delivery routes.
  - Average monthly senior services costs projected at \$50k–\$55k, but staff have managed to keep them at \$48k–\$49k with good budget management.
  - Estimated \$60,000 shortfall for the current year even after:
    - County’s \$40,000 contribution, which he called a “huge benefit”.
  - Believes the \$60k figure is conservative.
  - Hopes Aging & Long Term Services will come through with additional state funding.
- Outlook & Requests:
  - Urged the Commission to at least maintain current level of county funding for Senior Services in the next budget year, ideally increase it.
  - Explained that any legislative improvements (state-level funding changes) likely wouldn’t yield real financial benefit until FY 2028 (because next session is in 2027).
- Collaborative lobbying proposal:
  - Commissioner McCall asked if PMS would:
    - Return around November–December to help the (partially new) Commission craft a joint legislative agenda for senior services.
  - Greg Smith agreed PMS would:
    - Help develop a plan, including who will lobby, and coordinate with the county’s and PMS’s lobbyists.

- Stressed that a unified message from PMS and Torrance County in Santa Fe will be more impactful.
- Commission response & future plan:

Commissioner McCall:

- Suggested setting up a planning session in November/December to:
  - Define a game plan.
  - Identify the Commission legislative lead after the election.
  - Coordinate with PMS for joint lobbying.
- Offered to help facilitate and attend Santa Fe “one more year”.

Vice-Chair Jaramillo:

- Asked about quorum issues if he participates in lobbying trips once he is no longer in office; Commissioner McCall clarified he can still attend without creating a quorum.

## **b. ASSESSOR’S OFFICE UPDATE**

### **Linda Gallegos – Chief Deputy Assessor**

- Reported on upcoming Notice of Value (NOV) mailings and outreach:

Notices of Value – April 1 Mailing

- NOV’s will be mailed April 1.
- Taxpayers have 30 days (until May 1) from mailing to:
  - Apply for exemptions / taxpayer benefits.
  - Dispute property values (file valuation protests).
  - Apply for 65+ or disabled valuation freeze.

Address Issues

- Warned that many NOV’s are returned:
  - This is a significant operational and cost issue (postage and staff time).
  - Urged taxpayers to update mailing addresses with the Assessor’s Office.

Content of NOV’s

- NOVs will include:
  - Residential and non-residential property values.
  - Business personal property values.
  - Livestock values.

#### Livestock & Business Personal Property

- Reminded:
  - Blue livestock forms and business personal property forms should be submitted timely.
  - Late reporting carries a 5% penalty, but the office still wants current and correct accounts.
  - Livestock:
    - Must be rendered between Jan 1–Feb 28, but owners must also report livestock imported/exported after Feb 28.
    - Assessor receives regular reports from the Livestock Board but prefers direct communication with producers.

#### Outreach Sessions (Satellite Offices)

- Joint outreach with Treasurer and Clerk:
  - Purpose: assist with exemptions, forms, valuation questions, and protests.
- Locations and dates:
  - Encino:
    - Date: April 7
    - Time: 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM
  - Mountainair Multi-Purpose Building:
    - Date: April 15
    - Time: 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM
  - Tri-County Soil & Water District (west of Moriarty):
    - Date: April 29
    - Time: 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM

- Encouraged more citizens to attend; offices are committed to helping taxpayers.

#### Veterans & Other Exemptions

- Explained changes and key programs:
  - Veterans exemptions:
    - Legislation effective Feb 25, 2026 expanded the disabled veterans exemption to allow percentage-based exemptions based on disability rating.
    - Regular veterans exemption increased from \$4,000 to \$10,000 off taxable value.
    - Can apply to vacant land and commercial property as well as principal residence.
    - Requires a certificate of eligibility (the “green form”) from NM Department of Veteran Services.
  - Disabled veterans 100%:
    - Must be for principal place of residence, continuously occupied by the disabled veteran or surviving spouse.
  - Head-of-family exemption: \$2,000 off taxable value.
  - Valuation freeze:
    - 65+ or 100% disabled at any age.
    - Modified gross income  $\leq$  \$44,200 (amount adjusts annually with CPI).
    - Must qualify 3 consecutive years; no re-application needed afterward.
    - Freezes valuation, not taxes. Taxes still fluctuate with mill rates.
  - Late exemption/protest filings after May 1:
    - Not applied for current year, but will apply starting next year.

#### Mobile Veteran Services (Outreach Vehicle)

- NM Department of Veteran Services will send a mobile outreach vehicle:
  - Estancia:
    - Date: April 15
    - Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

- Location TBD (Linda asked if it might use the County Admin Building parking lot; Manager to confirm).
  - Mountainair – Saul Recreation Center:
    - Date: April 16
    - Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
  - Service:
    - Veterans can bring DD-214 and other documents.
    - Staff will issue certificates of eligibility on the spot.
  - Assessor’s Office strongly encourages veterans to use these events.
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## 7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **COMMISSION: Request Approval of March 11, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners.**

**Motion: Commissioner McCall** motioned to approve Commission Meeting minutes; Seconded by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo**.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
  - **McCall** – Yes
  - **Jaramillo** – Yes
  - Motion Carried
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## 8. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **FINANCE: Request Approval of Payables with a date range of March 5, 2026, through March 17, 2026**

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent

- **McCall** – Yes
  - **Jaramillo** – Yes
  - Motion Carried
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## **9. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE / AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE**

- a. **PLANNING AND ZONING: Request Approval to Publish Title and General Summary to Amend Torrance County Ordinance No. 2007-1, Also Known as the Torrance County Flood Plain Ordinance.**

### **Don Goen – Planning & Zoning Director**

- Background:
  - In Dec 2025, Planning & Zoning hosted a Community Assistance Visit with Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (DHSEM).
  - Purpose: review 2007 Floodplain Ordinance (No. 2007-1) and permitting processes for NFIP (National Flood Insurance Program) compliance.
  - Outcome: evaluation was very favorable.
- Proposed revisions:
  - Redlined changes in packet reflect:
    - DHSEM recommendations.
    - Additional edits identified by Don.
  - DHSEM and County Attorney Michael Garcia have approved the proposed text.
- Discussion:
  - Vice-Chair Jaramillo asked about wording “structure with or without gas or liquid storage tank” on page 12:
    - Don clarified:
      - Phrase is meant to cover both accessory and residential structures.
      - Ensures code applies regardless of presence/absence liquid storage tanks.
      - Related mainly to flood venting/breakaway panels so water can pass without structural collapse.

- Commission plan to hold the hearing at the second regular April commission meeting.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
  - **McCall** – Yes
  - **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

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## 10. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

- a. **FIRE: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-11, A Resolution Declaring a Fire Danger Emergency within the Unincorporated Portions of Torrance County and Imposing Burning Restrictions.**

**Gary Smith – County Fire Chief**

- Situation:
  - Over the prior weekend (Sat–Sun):
    - 7 fires occurred.
  - Over the last few weeks:
    - Total of 10 fires.
  - Some structures were threatened, but:
    - Only one outbuilding was lost.
    - Chief praised the fire department’s performance.
  - Noted an active fire on “other side of the mountain”: (Valencia County)
    - Estimated 500–700 acres, 0% containment.
    - Could reach around 1,000 acres.
- Conditions:
  - Extremely dry; National Weather Service models were not promising.

- Forecast called for only about 20% chance of precipitation for several upcoming days.
- Request:
  - Asked to implement a 60-day burn ban (fire danger emergency resolution).
- Discussion:
  - Commissioners noted even 100% chance of short-term moisture would not solve the prolonged drought.
  - Commissioner McCall expressed strong support, calling it a “smart, wise idea.”

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

**b. PLANNING AND ZONING: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-12, Finding Rubbish, Wreckage or Debris Upon Lot Ninety (90) Section Twenty-Four (24) T7N R8E, of the El Rancho Grande Subdivision to Be a Menace to Public Comfort, Health, Peace, or Safety and Requiring Removal.**

**Justice Weiss – Planning & Zoning (Code Enforcement)**

- Property:
  - Lot 90, Section 24, Township 7N, Range 8E, El Rancho Grande Subdivision.
  - Located next to 2078 Hwy 41.
- Condition:
  - Owner died in 2012.
  - Existing shed is falling apart.
  - Considered rubbish/wreckage/debris and a menace to public comfort, health, peace, or safety.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

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**c. PLANNING AND ZONING: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-13, Finding Rubbish, Wreckage or Debris Upon Lot Eighty-Nine (89) Section Twenty-Four (24) T7N R8E, of the El Rancho Grande Subdivision, Also Known as 2078 State Highway 41, to Be a Menace to Public Comfort, Health, Peace, or Safety and Requiring Removal.**

**Justice Weiss – Planning & Zoning (Code Enforcement)**

- Property:
  - Lot 89, Section 24, Township 7N, Range 8E, El Rancho Grande Subdivision, also known as 2078 State Hwy 41.
  - Same deceased owner as previous property.
- Condition:
  - Mobile home on the property:
    - Roof is peeling off; structure deteriorating.
  - Owner died 2012; issues with trust and no active heirs coming forward.
- Discussion:
  - Justice explained:
    - Property in the name of Dr. Paul H. Johnson’s trust; he passed Sept 2012.
    - No heirs have been responsive so far.
    - After Commission resolution and legal notices, county must wait ~30 days before physical cleanup.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

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**d. PLANNING AND ZONING: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-14, Finding Rubbish, Wreckage or Debris Upon Lot Eleven (11) of the Duke Country Estates Subdivision to Be a Menace to Public Comfort, Health, Peace, or Safety and Requiring Removal.**

**Justice Weiss – Planning & Zoning (Code Enforcement)**

- Property:
  - Lot 11, Duke County Estates subdivision.
  - Former address 2 Chisholm Trail (off Heritage).
- Condition:
  - Only ¼–½ of the mobile home remains.
  - A shed has already blown over; roof of mobile is lying behind (still attached but likely to blow).
  - Rapid deterioration over last two years; concern debris will blow toward the airport and nearby house.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

Discussion:

- **Vice-Chair Jaramillo** question:

- Asked about abandoned cannabis farms on Hwy 41 and Ewing area:
  - Large amounts of plastic blowing in the wind.
  - Asked how long it will take to get something similar done for those properties.
- **Don Goen Planning and Zoning Director and Justice Weiss Planning & Zoning (Code Enforcement)**
  - Don reported:
    - Same day, Senior Code Enforcement Officer Chuck Caviness had meetings scheduled with:
      - Tom Gordon (Finale location).
      - Mr. Singh (La Trench Arita / other site).
      - Representative from “Peace Farm 102” (flying in from California).
    - Prior complications:
      - Some properties are still under active lease, requiring court resolution before county action.
    - New approach:
      - Priority #1: Remove all plastic within 30 days.
      - Priority #2: Remove metal “rib” structures thereafter.
      - Property owners will be informed that:
        - They must clean up at their own cost.
        - If not, county will seek Commission resolutions for county cleanup and cost recovery.
    - Emphasized: “Clock is ticking, there’s no more fooling around.”
  - On cleanup operations:
    - Recent cleanup in Bella Vista had a skid steer hydraulic line failure, delayed but expected to finish the following weekend.
    - Road Department crews:
      - Perform cleanups on Fridays and Saturdays.

- Planning & Zoning supervises and coordinates; UVSW supports for waste services.
  - Justice confirmed he personally supervises cleanups on site.
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## **11. APPROVALS/ACTION ITEM**

### **a. CLERK: Request Approval of Canvassing of the Estancia Municipal School Bond Election.**

#### **County Clerk Sylvia Chavez**

- Election type:
  - All-mail Estancia Municipal School Bond Election.
- Key figures:
  - 2,749 ballots mailed.
  - 481 returned.
    - 448 accepted.
    - 33 rejected:
      - Most common reasons:
        - Missing signature and/or last 4 digits of SSN on affidavit envelope.
        - Clerk's office attempted to contact these voters, but none cured deficiencies in time.
      - 1 ballot required hand tally due to severe physical damage.
  - Results:
    - 310 votes FOR the bond.
    - 137 votes AGAINST.
    - Total = 447 machine-count + 1 hand tally = 448 accepted ballots.
  - Turnout breakdown by precincts 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16 provided in packet.
- Outcome:
  - Bond required a  $\frac{2}{3}$  (two-thirds) majority.
  - 310 vs. 137 meets and exceeds that threshold – bond PASSED.

- Operational notes:
  - First all-mail election in this context:
    - Sylvia described it as “nice” and similar to absentee processes.
    - Voters appreciated time at home to research the bond.
    - Some are now interested in becoming permanent absentee voters.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

**b. CLERK: Request Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between the Torrance County Clerk and the New Mexico Secretary of States Office for the 2026 Primary Election.**

**County Clerk Sylvia Chavez**

- Item:
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Torrance County Clerk and NM Secretary of State for 2026 Primary Election.
- Funding:
  - County to receive \$67,286.93 up-front to conduct the primary.
  - Clerk will:
    - Follow SOS reimbursement guidelines for allowable expenses.
    - Reconcile after the election:
      - If costs exceed 67k with justification, SOS may reimburse additional.
      - In a prior election, about \$10,000 was not reimbursed and had to be covered by the County elections budget.
- New factor – Open Primary:

- This will be the first year of “open primary” in New Mexico:
  - Decline-to-State (unaffiliated) voters will be able to request either a Democratic or Republican ballot.
  - Additional staffing and training will be needed to:
    - Explain options to voters.
    - Use system drop-down to assign appropriate party ballot.
  - Sylvia expects this is why SOS funding is higher than last time.
- Process & voter info:
  - Registered Dems/Republicans:
    - Will receive party ballot as usual.
    - May change party registration before May 5 (early voting start).
    - Cannot change party once early voting begins.
  - Decline-to-State / others:
    - Can choose Dem or Republican ballot at the polls (and via process SOS finalizes).
  - Same-day registration remains in place.
- Publication/Outreach:
  - Limited newspaper use due to cost and once-a-month publishing.
  - Clerk will:
    - Use County website & posted public notices throughout communities.
    - Use KOAT:
      - Previously used digital ads.
      - This cycle: will create a video commercial targeted to Torrance County with early voting info & open-primary explanation.
- Early Voting Schedule:
  - Main site (County Admin Building):
    - Starts May 5.
    - Hours: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (changed from 7:30–5:30).

- Alternate early voting site:
  - Starts May 16.
  - Days: Tuesday–Saturday.
  - Hours: 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

**c. HUMAN RESOURCES: Request Approval of Program Operator Agreement Between Torrance County and Education at Work, LLC. a Massachusetts Limited Liability Company for the Operation of the 2026 State of New Mexico Summer Internship Program.**

**County Manager Jordan Barela (on behalf of HR)**

- Background:
  - County historically hosted ~40 summer interns under the State of New Mexico Summer Internship Program.
  - Previously:
    - Interns were County employees:
      - HR handled hiring, onboarding, payroll, and offboarding for all 40 within a short timeframe.
      - Administrative burden was significant.
- New model:
  - State has contracted with Education at Work LLC (Massachusetts LLC):
    - They will be employer of record for all summer interns statewide.
    - They will manage hiring, firing, payroll, HR administration.
  - Torrance County’s role:

- Recruitment (especially through local schools).
- Placement with County departments and community partners.
- Oversight and supervision of daily work.
- Data collection and program reporting.
- County allocation:
  - Still 40 intern positions.
- Compensation to county:
  - State will pay \$750 per intern to the county for administrative oversight.
  - No net cost to the County; potential modest revenue for overhead.
- Statewide arrangement:
  - Education at Work LLC will handle all counties across the state.
  - Manager acknowledged possible scale challenges but:
    - Discussions have been ongoing for about 3 months.
    - Believes the company is prepared.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

**d. HUMAN RESOURCES: Request Approval of an Unauthorized Purchase to Robert Casewell Investigation in the Amount of \$3,763.05 for the Execution of an Internal Administrative Investigation.**

**County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Background:
  - County requested Robert Casewell Investigations to perform an internal administrative investigation.

- A quote was obtained, but a purchase order was not processed prior to services—constituting an unauthorized purchase.
- Two invoices:
  - First invoice (~\$3,700) previously approved and paid by Commission.
  - Second invoice (in packet) for \$1,646.66 remains to be approved.
- Investigation has been completed and delivered to Administration and HR.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

**e. MANAGER: Request Ratification of Amendment No. 3 to a Professional Services Agreement Between Torrance County and New Mexico Government Law for the Legal Services of Michael Garcia.**

**County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Contract:
  - Professional Services Agreement with New Mexico Government Law for County Attorney Michael Garcia.
  - Term expires at the end of February each year.
  - This is Amendment No. 3 to extend services.
- Timeline:
  - Jordan received the contract on Feb 27.
  - Last commission meeting was March 11, which left the County without legal services for ~2 weeks.
  - Manager executed the amendment under prior resolution authority and sought Commission ratification.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

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**f. LEGAL: Request Authorization to Participate in the Six Remnant Defendants Settlement Agreement Regarding Pending Opioid Litigation.**

**County Manager Jordan Barela**

- Background:
  - County previously joined national opioid litigation and has received some funds used for:
    - LDWI and misdemeanor compliance.
    - School-based substance abuse education (Estancia, Moriarty).
- New settlement:
  - Six “remnant” defendants:
    - Associated Pharmacies Incorporated
    - JM Smith Corporation
    - Louisiana Wholesale Drug Company
    - Morris & Dickson Company
    - North Carolina Mutual Wholesale Drug Company
    - United Natural Foods Incorporated
  - National settlement estimate: ~\$97 million total.
- County’s decision:
  - By participating, Torrance County is eligible to receive a portion of this settlement.
  - Funds must be used for substance abuse treatment and related services.
- Authority:

- Prior resolution already authorizes the County Manager to execute necessary documents once participation is approved.

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

Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
  - **McCall** – Yes
  - **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

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## **12.DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION**

### **a. CLERK’S REPORT**

**County Clerk Sylvia Chavez**

- Corona School District Special Election:
  - Canvass is scheduled for Monday (upcoming).
  - Results (all-mail, multi-county):
    - Torrance County (68 registered voters in Corona SD):
      - 24 ballots returned (relatively strong turnout).
      - Bond PASSED in Torrance County.
    - Lincoln and Socorro counties:
      - Bond did not pass; overall margin within three votes statewide.
  - A recount is expected due to close margin.
  - Commission will meet on Monday March 30, 2026 at 9:00 AM to canvass Corona SD results.
- Primary election:
  - Confirmed early voting dates already discussed (May 5 main; May 16 alternate).
  - Will continue public education leading up to June 2, 2026 Primary Election

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### **b. MANAGER’S REPORT**

## County Manager Jordan Barela

- Capital Outlay (2026 Legislative Session)
  - Handed Commissioners a breakdown of capital outlay appropriations signed by the Governor:
    1. Emergency Management Facility – \$50,000
      - For planning, design, construction, and furnishing.
      - Related project: converting the “Red Building” in Moriarty into an Emergency Management/Public Safety Training Facility.
      - County already has a \$50,000 design contract with Studio Southwest; this new \$50k supplements that.
      - Additional federal funding may arrive via Rep. Stansbury and Sen. Heinrich.
    2. 700 MHz Radio System – \$150,000
      - Requested ~\$200,000 total; \$150k may still be sufficient to complete.
      - Supports radio interoperability and coverage for public safety.
    3. New Admin Building (County Administration Building) – \$785,000
      - Original request was \$3.25 million.
      - Current funding gap ~ \$2.47 million.
      - Next steps:
        - Work with Wilson & Co. and design team (meeting scheduled tomorrow at 10:00 AM, via Teams) to:
          - Clarify design questions.
          - Possibly shrink or adjust square footage and scope.
        - Complete ~80% design, then finalize construction drawings.
        - Issue RFP for construction to obtain firm cost estimate.
        - Use final number to plan financing and address funding gap.
- TPF Funding

- Road Superintendent Leonard Lujan working on letter of intent and application for Transportation Project Fund (TPF).
- MWT Board Representation
  - EMWT Regional Water Authority:
    - Torrance County representative Ronnie Reynolds's term is up and he will not seek reappointment due to health.
    - Opens a county seat vacancy on the board.
- Audit
  - Office of the State Auditor has released the County's audit.
  - It is not public until presented formally.
  - Audit firm will present to Commission on April 8, 2026; Commission will then consider:
    - Resolution accepting findings and management responses.
- Operations Manager Hire
  - Announced hiring of Rubena as new Operations Manager (replacing Melissa Madrid, who moved to be HR Director in Edgewood).
  - Praised Rubena's operations background and fast start.

**c. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS:**

**1) Commissioner McCall, District 1**

**Commissioner McCall**

- Fairgrounds Project
  - Reported major progress:
    - Slab poured Monday for the new building (bathroom / 60x40 structure).
    - Building was erected; plumbing started this week.
    - Contractors and equipment are already secured.
    - On track for completion by early- to mid-July.
    - Main risk: spring winds potentially affecting skin installation on building.

- MWT / Melody Ranch Emergency Water
  - Asked Manager about:
    - Status of the Governor’s emergency water hauling funds for Melody Ranch:
      - Whether those funds are close to being exhausted.
    - Concerned about avoiding a sudden halt in hauled water.
  - Manager response:
    - No definitive budget balance known; state stopped buying bottled water to prioritize tank hauling.
    - No indication from DHSEM that funds are near exhaustion at this time.

**2) Commissioner Schwebach, District 2**

~Absent~

**3) Commissioner Jaramillo, District 3**

**Chair Linda Jaramillo**

- Manzano Land Grant Board
  - Attended meeting of Manzano Land Grant Board and heirs:
    - Reported good cooperation between the land grant board and heirs.
    - Minor disagreements occur but are resolved constructively.
  - Discussed:
    - Torrance County intern youth program:
      - Board is eager to host a student, but lack of an 8–5 office complicates scheduling.
      - They intend to work around this with flexible hours.
    - Ongoing idea for a helipad in the Manzano area; still under discussion.
- Behavioral Health – SIM Workshop (Sequential Intercept Model)
  - Attended a three-day regional workshop in Socorro:

- Counties involved: Torrance, Catron, Sierra, Socorro (Behavioral Health Region 7).
- Attendees from Torrance:
  - Judge Murphy, Judge Murdock.
  - Angie Coburn (PMS).
  - Sarah Lucero (Estancia School Board).
  - Debbie Ortiz (Health Council).
  - Teen Court representative King Court.
- Purpose:
  - Map behavioral health intercepts and priorities from law enforcement to courts to treatment.
- Outcomes:
  - Priorities voted on; UNM Behavioral Health Technical Assistance Center will provide a report.
  - Plan to hold community behavioral health meetings in Torrance County:
    - Invite all interested in behavioral health and teen court.
  - Vice-Chair praised Torrance County Teen Court and local behavioral health efforts.
- EMWT Meeting
  - Attended EMWT meeting (some expected guests didn't appear).
  - Received updates on:
    - McIntosh, Homestead Estates, Sunset Acres, Melody Ranch.
    - Proposal from Mr. Vigil for water rights near Willard – to be discussed further at next meeting.
  - Governor's Funding for Melody Ranch (asked Manager to brief public)

**County Manager Barela explained:**

- \$600,000 previously allocated via NMED to MWT; County acting as fiscal agent.

- A portion of that \$600k will be used for Melody Ranch preliminary design/tech map this fiscal year.
- Governor also appropriated about \$4 million specifically for Melody Ranch in the recent session:
  - Funds expected to be available next FY (after July/August).
  - Plan:
    - Use current \$600k to finish preliminary work before July.
    - Once \$4M becomes available, move directly into construction (pipeline extension from Tillery, well development, and/or infrastructure upgrades).
  - Governor is pushing to resolve Melody Ranch's water issues before leaving office in 2026.

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**13. Announcement of the next Board of County Commissioner's Meeting:**

**April 8, 2026**

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**14. SIGNING OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS**

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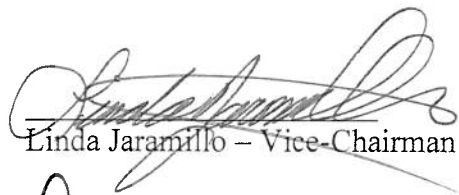
**15. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: Commissioner McCall** motioned to Adjourn; Seconded by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo**.

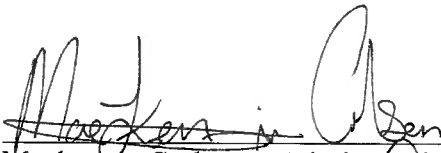
Roll Call Vote:

- **Schwebach** – Absent
- **McCall** – Yes
- **Jaramillo** – Yes
- Motion Carried

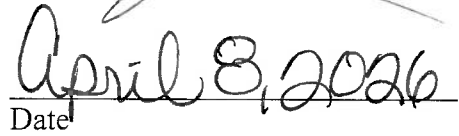
**Meeting adjourned at 10:30AM**

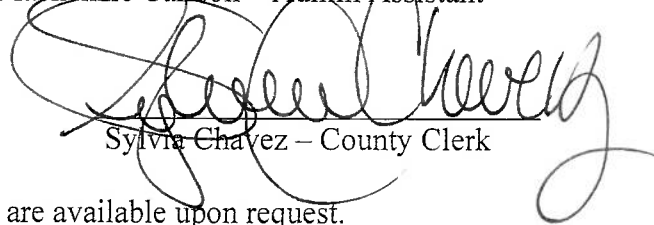


Linda Jaramillo – Vice-Chairman



Mackenzie Carlson – Admin Assistant

  
Date



Sylvia Chavez – County Clerk

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