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Torrance County Board of Commissioners
Regular Commission Meeting
June 24, 2026 9:00 AM

Commissioners Present:

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

Others Present:

STEPHANIE REYNOLDS- INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER
MICHELLE JONES-DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER
MICHAEL GARCIA- COUNTY ATTORNEY
SYLVIA CHAVEZ-COUNTY CLERK
GENELL MORRIS- ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK
DON GOEN – PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR

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1. Call to Order: Chairman Schwebach called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM

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2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation: Pledge led by Chairman Schwebach, Vice- Chair Jaramillo said the Invocation.

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

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4. PROCLAMATIONS: **– None**

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5. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS: **- None**

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6. BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: - Fill the County's vacant position on EMWT.

- A vacancy currently exists on the EMWT Board due to Board Member Reynolds stepping down.
- It was noted that Eddie O'Brien is the other current representative, indicating there are normally two representatives serving on the board.
- No letters of interest had been received.

- Discussion occurred regarding whether nominations could come from staff.
    - Clarification was provided that staff cannot formally make nominations, although they may suggest candidates.
- Commissioners expressed concern about the importance of maintaining representation on the board, particularly given ongoing matters involving funding and other pressing issues.
- Commissioner Schwebach indicated a willingness to serve on the EMWT Board despite previously avoiding the role, citing the importance of representation and current developments involving funding.

Motion: **Commissioner McCall** motioned to appoint Commissioner Schwerbach; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo.**

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

Motion Carried

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7. **Public Comment:**

Naomi Chavez:

- Requested that Torrance County retain its locally operated Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)/911 Dispatch Center.
- Urged County leadership to maintain local emergency communications services rather than pursuing consolidation that would remove dispatch operations from Torrance County.
- Emphasized that individuals calling 911 are often experiencing the worst moments of their lives.
- Stated that dispatchers serve as the first link in the emergency response chain.
- Argued that local knowledge is critical in a large rural county.
- Noted that local dispatchers possess familiarity with:
    - County roads and geography
    - Communities and neighborhoods

    - Local landmarks
    - Emergency responders
    - Unique challenges specific to Torrance County
- Asserted that this local knowledge can make a significant difference during emergencies when response time is critical.
- Reported that Torrance County and Santa Fe County have spent the past two years actively exploring regionalization opportunities.
- Stated that substantial:
    - Time
    - Effort
    - Resources
    - Planning
      have already been invested in the Torrance–Santa Fe collaboration process.

Concerns Regarding Bernalillo County Consolidation

- Noted that discussions regarding a potential merger with Bernalillo County have only recently begun.
- Expressed concern that, to the speaker's knowledge, limited progress has been made in evaluating:
    - Operational compatibility
    - Governance structure
    - Technology requirements
    - Financial costs
    - Long-term impacts on Torrance County residents

Federal Engineering Study Findings

- Referenced a federal engineering study that identified several challenges associated with dispatch center consolidation.
- Highlighted that one option presented in the study was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between counties.
- Explained that this option would allow:
    - Cooperation between counties
    - Technology alignment

- Retention of local accountability
- Continued local emergency communication services

Petition Presentation

- Presented a petition signed by:
  - County residents
  - First responders
  - Business owners
  - Community stakeholders
- Stated that the petition reflects community support for maintaining a locally_operated dispatch center.
- Asserted that signatories believe public safety decisions should be guided by:
  - Transparency
  - Local accountability
  - The best interests of Torrance County residents

Dispatch Employee Perspective

- Reported that many Torrance County dispatch employees believe that if regionalization is ultimately pursued:
  - Continuing collaboration with Santa Fe County would be the most practical option.
- Cited the extensive planning, assessments, and cooperative work already completed between Torrance and Santa Fe counties as justification for this position.

Jennifer Steen:

- Spoke in support of maintaining strong local dispatch services in Torrance County.
- Expressed concerns regarding the lack of information and transparency surrounding discussions of potential regionalization or consolidation of dispatch services.
- Requested greater communication with dispatch employees and the public regarding future plans, agreements, costs, and impacts.
- Shared a personal connection to emergency services:
  - Father served as a law enforcement officer in the area for approximately 30 years and is now retired.

- Daughter became an EMT at a young age and remains a certified EMT.

- Explained that dispatch personnel have historically played a critical role in supporting first responders and helping ensure their safety.
- Emphasized the importance of dispatchers providing reliable communication and support to emergency personnel responding in the field.

Community Confidence

- Stated that community members rely on local dispatch services and trust dispatch personnel to be available when emergencies occur.
- Highlighted the reassurance provided by knowing local dispatchers are supporting both first responders and residents.

Concerns Regarding Bernalillo County Discussions

- Noted that Bernalillo County has recently entered discussions regarding dispatch regionalization.
- Expressed concern that dispatch employees have not received clear information about:
  - Potential plans being considered.
  - Services or benefits being offered.
  - Whether Torrance County dispatch operations could be reduced or eliminated.
  - How employees and residents would be affected.

Questions About Future Operations

Employee and Training Impacts

- Whether dispatch employees would retain their jobs.
- Whether opportunities for additional training or professional development would be provided.
- Whether any perceived deficiencies in current operations or training have been identified.
- Improvements are needed to strengthen local dispatch services.
- Whether staffing and leadership changes are being considered to improve operations.

Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)

- Referenced a Joint Powers Agreement expected to be presented to the Commission.
- Requested details regarding:
  - The purpose of the agreement.

- How it would function.
- Its impact on dispatch employees.
- Its impact on County residents and emergency services.

Financial and Planning Concerns

- Acknowledged that Santa Fe County has already completed significant planning and financial analysis related to potential regionalization.
- Noted that financial figures have reportedly been discussed in relation to a Santa Fe County partnership.
- Expressed uncertainty regarding:
  - The financial implications of partnering with Bernalillo County.
  - Comparative costs between options.
  - Long-term impacts on the county and community.

Community Impact Concerns

- Stressed the importance of keeping the public informed to reduce uncertainty and fear.
- Asked how county leadership intends to maintain public confidence while discussing potential changes.
- Expressed concern about creating unnecessary turmoil within the community due to a lack of information.

<u>Luke Fields – Animal Services:</u>

- Romeo, a dog previously introduced at a Commission meeting, was transferred to:
  - Animal Humane New Mexico in Albuquerque.
- This marked a notable success because:
  - Adoption interest was reported immediately upon intake.
  - Romeo spent very little time in shelter care before transfer.
- Presenter described this as an exceptionally positive outcome.

Impact:

- Demonstrates effective transfer partnerships.
- Shows strong placement success for adoptable animals.

Kennel Repair Project Ahead of Schedule

- Renovation work is approximately three weeks ahead of schedule.
- Progress attributed largely to an outstanding contractor who:
  - Worked Saturdays.
  - Worked evenings.
  - Accelerated project completion whenever possible.

Original Conditions

The presenter reviewed the poor condition of the shelter before repairs:

Outdoor Kennels

- Dogs were becoming stuck in the kennel walls due to severe deterioration.
- Significant structural damage existed throughout the kennel areas.

Blue Kennel Room

- Flooring was heavily damaged.
- Staff constantly mopped to maintain sanitation.
- Concerns existed regarding:
  - Mold, mildew, and unsanitary conditions beneath the flooring.

Completed Improvements

Exterior Fencing Installation

- New fencing was installed in only a few days.
- Work progressed rapidly due to the contractor's dedication.

Temporary Outdoor Kennels

- Quickly constructed to accommodate animals during renovations.
- Necessary because interior areas had to be vacated for epoxy flooring work.
- Temporary setup enabled safe continuation of shelter operations.

Benefits Observed

- Dogs are responding positively to outdoor housing.
- Animals appear:
  - Less stressed, more comfortable, and happier being outside compared to interior kennels.

Blue Room Floor Restoration

- Damaged flooring was completely resurfaced.
- Presenter emphasized the dramatic improvement in appearance and sanitation.
- Viewed as a major quality-of-life improvement for both staff and animals.

Phase Three Underway

Focus: Gray Kennel Rehabilitation

Work has already begun on the next stage of renovations.

Existing Problems

- Kennels contain:
    - Holes, structural deterioration, and poor-quality previous repairs.

Findings

- Removal of old protective armoring revealed extensive hidden damage.
- Prior repair work was found to be inadequate.

Planned Improvements

- Damaged materials will be removed.
- Kennels will be rebuilt and strengthened.
- Long-term durability and safety will be significantly improved.

Transfer Operation

Source	Number of Puppies
Local shelter/community	**16**
Other communities (including Las Vegas, NM)	**17**
Total	**33 puppies**

Destination

- Puppies were transferred through Gallup, New Mexico.
- Final placement destination:
    - Best Friends Animal Sanctuary (Dogtown) in Utah.

Why This Was Significant

- None of the puppies spent time in the shelter.

- Animals remained in foster homes throughout the process.
- Staff conducted:
    - Field visits, vaccinations, and transfer preparation.

Transportation Challenges

- Vehicle was filled beyond normal capacity with kennels.
- A swamp cooler was used to keep puppies comfortable during transport.

Andy Chavez:

- Expressed the opinion that the proposed dispatch change is the wrong decision for Torrance County.
- Identified themselves as long-time resident of Torrance County, emphasizing local knowledge and community perspective.
- Voiced concern that county funds are frequently being directed outside of Torrance County rather than benefiting residents and services.
- Stated that this Dispatch decision is another example of money leaving the County.
- Urged the board to prioritize the needs of residents and the local community when making decisions.
- Noted observations from traveling throughout various parts of the County:
    - County money appears to be spent elsewhere.
    - Potential revenue or funds are not being adequately collected from outside parties.
- Requested that board members carefully reconsider the dispatch transition before moving forward.

***Zoom* - None**

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8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. COMMISSION: Request Approval of the June 10, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to approve the minutes; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo.**

- Roll Call Vote:

- Schwebach – Yes
- McCall – Yes
- Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried

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9. **Consent Agenda:**

a) **FINANCE:** Request Approval of Payables with a date range of June 4, 2026, through June 17, 2026.

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

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

Motion Carried

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10. **APPROVALS/ACTION ITEM:**

A. MANAGER: Request for Approval of Domestic Violence Advocate contract amendment.

Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager:

Fiscal Year Transition & Procurement Requirements

- The organization is entering a new fiscal year.
- Due to procurement requirements, actions must be completed in July for services to begin in August.
- The procurement timeline is currently running approximately one month behind schedule.
- A new procurement officer is in place, and staff indicated this delay is expected to be a one-time situation.

Extension of Ms. Medina's Contract

- Leadership determined it was appropriate to extend Ms. Medina's contract by an additional three months.
- The extension allows continuity of services while the organization:
  - Accepts Letters of Interest (LOIs) for the position.
  - Conducts the selection process during July.
- Ms. Medina will be encouraged to apply along with any other interested candidates.

Future Procurement Activities

- During July, the organization plans to:
    - Solicit Letters of Interest for the current position.
    - Request proposals for:
        - DWI Coordinator
        - Teen Court Coordinator
- These procurement activities are intended to align services for the upcoming fiscal year.

Linda Jaramillo, County Vice Chair:

- Requested clarification regarding the term "contract amendment" and what specifically was being amended.

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager:

- Explained that there have been two amendments to the contract:
    1. First Amendment
        - Remaining funds from Ms. Masters' contract were transferred and added to Ms. Medina's contract.
    2. Second Amendment (Current Request)
        - Extends Ms. Medina's contract for an additional three months while the organization completes the procurement and selection process.

Financial Details

- Contract value increased from approximately $22,499 to $32,000.
- The increase reflects:
    - Previously added funding from Ms. Masters' contract.
    - Additional funding for the three-month extension.
- Estimated cost of the extension is approximately $2,900–$3,000 per month for the additional three months.
- Explained procurement deadlines and fiscal year requirements.
- Justified the three-month extension as necessary to maintain services.
- Clarified the two contract amendments and associated funding changes.
- Confirmed procurement activities will occur during July.

Michael I. Garcia, County Attorney:

- Was asked whether he supported the amendment.
- Responded that he was in favor of the proposal.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo**

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

Motion Carried

B. MANAGER/FIRE: Request approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between Torrance County and the Fire Department Union for Chief's Pay.

Gary Smith, County Fire Chief:
MOU Review and Approval Status

- The MOU was reviewed by:
  - The Fire Chief
  - County administration
  - County legal counsel
- Staff indicated the document is appropriate to move forward.
- A correction was identified:
  - The signature page contains Jordan's name and will need to be updated before finalization.

Purpose of the Chief's Pay Program

- The program is designed to provide additional compensation to employees who take on:
  - Increased responsibilities
  - Specialized duties
  - Additional liability and risk
- The initiative aligns with a similar compensation approach already implemented by the Sheriff's Department.
- The goal is to recognize and reward employees whose contributions exceed normal job expectations.

Examples of Eligible Roles
Chief Smith highlighted several examples of positions that may qualify:
Wildland Coordinator

- Currently manages major wildfire incidents and response efforts.
- Example cited:
  - An approximately 800-acre fire where the coordinator worked continuously, including overnight operations.
- Despite the significant responsibility, the employee is not currently receiving additional compensation for those duties.

Field Training Officers (FTOs)

- Responsible for training and mentoring new personnel.
- Provide essential workforce development and operational readiness.

Future Specialized Positions

- Hazmat (Hazardous Materials) personnel were identified as another example.
- As specialized programs expand, employees are assuming:
  - Greater responsibility
  - Additional certifications
  - Increased liability

  may be eligible for supplemental compensation.

Financial Details

- The program has a maximum budget allocation of $20,000.

- Funding is already included within the department's approved budget.
- Commissioners emphasized that the initiative is intended as a pilot program to:
    - Test implementation methods.
    - Evaluate effectiveness.
    - Determine future growth opportunities.

Policy and Oversight Considerations
Need for Formal Policy
Commissioners expressed support for the concept but stressed the importance of establishing clear policy guidelines.

Key concerns included:
- Preventing unrestricted use of the compensation program.
- Ensuring future administrations cannot treat the program as an open-ended benefit.
- Creating defined eligibility criteria and approval processes.

Administrative Controls
- Staff confirmed a formal policy will accompany the program.
- The policy will:
    - Define who can receive Chief's Pay.
    - Establish approval procedures.
    - Regulate how compensation decisions are made.
- Authority for awarding compensation will be controlled through the Fire Chief and departmental leadership rather than being available for arbitrary distribution.

Payroll and Financial Management
- The Fire Chief will work closely with Finance to:
    - Ensure accurate payroll processing.
    - Track expenditures.
    - Develop best practices for managing discretionary compensation funds.

- Support was contingent upon:
    - Adoption of a formal policy.
    - Clear parameters governing the program.
    - Maintaining accountability and budget discipline.

Consensus support was expressed for moving forward with the MOU, provided that a formal policy is adopted to establish clear eligibility requirements, oversight, and spending controls. The program will operate as a $20,000 pilot initiative intended to compensate employees who assume additional responsibilities and specialized duties beyond their standard job requirements.

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

- Roll Call Vote:
    - Schwebach – Yes

  - McCall – Yes
  - Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried

C. MANAGER/FIRE: Request approval of the Contract bargaining Agreement (CBA) between Torrance County and the Fire Department Union.

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

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

Motion Carried

D. MANAGER/HUMAN RESOURCES: Request approval of updated job description for the Human Resources Assistant, including a pay increase of $1.50/hr.

<u>Heidi Vermaak, HR Director:</u>
- Reported that Chanda joined the department approximately 11 months ago.
- Stated that Chanda has consistently exceeded expectations since joining the organization.
- Explained that Chanda's role has evolved significantly, with her taking on additional responsibilities beyond her original job description.
- Highlighted the challenging nature of Human Resources work, noting that the department regularly encounters:
  - Difficult employee situations
  - Volatile workplace scenarios
  - Sensitive personnel matters
  - Complex administrative challenges
- Emphasized that Chanda has remained dependable and supportive throughout these challenges.
- Credited Chanda with delivering exceptional performance and measurable improvements, including:
  - Enhancing employee orientation processes
  - Improving HR file auditing procedures
  - Strengthening departmental operations
- Stated that together they have built a strong, reliable, and effective HR department.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo**

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

Motion Carried

E. MANAGER/FIRE: Request for approval for the Safety Officer implementation within the Torrance County Fire Department.

Gary Smith, County Fire Chief:
Discussion regarding the creation of a specialized Fire Department position that would serve as the foundation for a future County Fire Marshal function, consolidating safety responsibilities and expanding fire inspection and investigation capabilities.

Presented the concept and rationale for the position.
Main Points:

- The concept has been under development for approximately six months.
- Identified significant gaps in:
  - Building inspections throughout the County.
  - Fire extinguisher inspections and maintenance.
  - Safety compliance oversight.
  - Fire pre-planning for commercial structures.
- Proposed using an existing fire department employee with specialized credentials to:
  - Conduct building inspections.
  - Perform fire investigations.
  - Develop pre-fire plans.
  - Handle safety-related responsibilities currently dispersed across departments.
- Described the position as:
  - A starting point toward a future County Fire Marshal's office.
  - Not a full Fire Marshal office immediately, but a foundational step.
- Emphasized that the individual would possess professional credentials necessary to:
  - Enforce safety requirements.
  - Conduct inspections credibly.
  - Perform investigations internally rather than relying solely on the state.

Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager:

- Current safety responsibilities are fragmented among:
  - Human Resources
  - Fire Department Operations Manager
  - Facilities
  - Emergency Management
  - Other department staff
- No dedicated Safety Officer position currently exists.

- Safety duties were previously handled through:
    - HR initially.
    - A split Safety Officer/Emergency Management position.
    - Multiple departments after the split position was converted to full-time Emergency Management.
- Noted that:
    - Fragmentation has resulted in duties falling through the cracks.
    - A centralized position would improve accountability and compliance.

1. Need for a County Fire Marshal Function

- County relies heavily on state inspectors and investigators.
- State resources are limited.
- Local inspections would improve:
    - Code compliance.
    - Emergency preparedness.
    - Response planning.
    - Building safety oversight.
- County should be more involved in:
    - Plan reviews.
    - Fire code enforcement.
    - Inspection activities.

2. Expanded Responsibilities of Proposed Position

Fire Inspections
- County facilities.
- Commercial buildings in unincorporated areas.
- Fire extinguisher compliance.
- Building safety checks.

Fire Investigations
- Investigate local fires.
- Reduce dependence on state investigators.

Emergency Preparedness
- Create pre-fire plans.
- Document hazards before emergencies occur.
- Assist responders during major incidents.

Safety Compliance
- OSHA-related support.
- Inspection of county emergency equipment.
- Monitoring county safety procedures.
- Oversight of emergency bags and equipment readiness.

Budget & Staffing Discussion

Current Situation
- Safety duties currently exist but are spread among multiple employees.

- No dedicated budgeted Safety Officer position exists.
- Proposed employee already exists within the Fire Department budget.

Proposed Change

- Reclassify an existing firefighter/medic position.
- Move employee into a modified schedule (approximately 40-hour workweek).
- No immediate increase in salary.

Compensation

- Discussion indicated compensation would be approximately:
  - $20.50–$23.00 per hour.

Staffing Impact

Concern Raised:

- Removing a firefighter from field operations could reduce staffing.

Fire Chief's Response:

- Current staffing levels would still support deployment goals.
- County can continue:
  - Staffing Willard operations.
  - Maintaining six paid firefighters available countywide.
- Future staffing needs may need evaluation as the program grows.

Concerns Raised by Commissioners

Credential Dependency

- What happens if the employee leaves?
- Replacement would require equivalent certifications and credentials.

Position Growth

- Is this creating a future need for another position?
- Concern that duties removed from the employee may eventually require backfilling.

Hiring Process

- Concern about selecting a specific individual without competition.
- Recommendation:
  - Open the position for posting.
  - Allow qualified candidates to apply.
  - Ensure a fair hiring process.

Budget Transparency

- Any other department was relinquishing funds to support the position.
- Administration clarified:
  - No dedicated safety position funding currently exists elsewhere.
  - Position would remain funded through the Fire Department budget.

Supporting Comments

Facilities/Project Perspective

- Existing collaboration on facility projects has shown the value of having:
  - Building information available to responders.
  - Better emergency planning.
- Current efforts are limited and not countywide.

Safety Compliance Perspective

- Recent inspections revealed previously unidentified compliance issues.

- Centralized oversight could:
    - Improve procedures.
    - Maintain compliance.
    - Reduce liability.
    - Provide a knowledgeable point of contact for safety matters.

Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager:

- Asked for clarification on what had just been approved.
- Wanted to confirm whether:
    - An existing employee within the Fire Department was being reclassified, or
    - The department was advertising a Safety Officer position with a pay rate of $20.50 per hour.

Ryan Schwebach, County Chairman:

- Explained that Commissioner McCall wanted the position advertised.
- Confirmed that the position would be posted.
- Noted that the position itself is being changed/modified.
- Confirmed that despite the change, the position still needs to be publicly posted.

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

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

Motion Carried

F. MANAGER/FINANCE: Request approval for the reclassification of the supervisory position in Finance, to Finance Director from Assistant Finance Director.

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager:

Budget Status

- The approved interim budget includes sufficient funding for:
    - A Finance Director position
    - An Assistant Finance Director position
- Current Organizational Context

- A prior restructuring occurred when Misty (formerly Deputy Manager) was appointed as Finance Director
- Currently, there is an Assistant Finance Director role in place
- This has created confusion regarding authority, titles, and reporting structure

Identified Issue

- The current arrangement is causing:
  - Confusion in authority lines
  - Operational inefficiencies
  - Overlapping or unclear management responsibilities within the finance office

Proposed Solution

- The group is advocating for a title and structure adjustment:
  - Reclassify the Assistant Finance Director position as Finance Director
  - This change is already supported within the approved budget

Proposed Reporting Structure

- The Finance Director (formerly Assistant Finance Director) would:
  - Report directly to:
    - Manager & Deputy Manager
  - Maintain operational authority over the finance office
  - Operate with clear decision-making authority without requiring excessive additional approvals

Rationale

- The change is intended to:
  - Reduce administrative strain and confusion
  - Improve efficiency and clarity in decision-making
  - Better reflect the competence and capability of the current finance office staff
  - Align titles with actual responsibilities already being performed

1. Contractual Relationship & Meaning of "Work Closely"
   - Finance Director:
     - Clarified that "working closely with the Treasurer" means operational approval and financial verification alignment, not shared authority.
     - The relationship is built into the system as a mandatory control step before payments are issued.

2. Payment Approval Process
   - **Joanna Romero** explained the current workflow:
     - All outgoing payments must be approved by the Treasurer's Office before issuance.
     - The system is configured so:
       - No check can be printed without Treasurer approval
       - Treasurer verifies funds availability and payment validity
     - Treasurer confirms:

        - Funds exist
        - Payments are appropriate and authorized
- This applies to every transaction, ensuring strict oversight.

3. Meetings & Communication
    - Finance and Treasurer's offices:
        - Currently meet weekly (recently implemented practice).
        - Purpose of meetings:
            - Review ongoing audit issues
            - Track financial status updates
            - Improve coordination between departments
        - This is described as a newly established routine to strengthen communication and oversight.

4. Separation of Duties / Internal Controls
    - Finance staff emphasized strong segregation of duties:
        - Finance cannot perform Treasurer functions
        - Treasurer cannot perform Finance functions
    - Purpose:
        - Fraud prevention
        - Ensuring no single office controls both money flow and approval
        - Maintaining accountability in county financial operations

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo.**

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

Motion Carried

G. HUMAN RESOURCES/FINANCE: Request approval to pay the 5/31/2026 invoice to eScreen for $500.00 for a drug screen service performed as requested by the Torrance County Human Resources Department; no purchase order was in place prior to the service being provided.

Heidi Vermaak, HR Director: Apologized for the confusion regarding an invoice submitted during the transition of bringing drug screening in-house. Explained it was part of setting up a new process, including training and implementation. Clarified that the invoice was mistakenly entered for a purchase order while the team is actively building out the in-house drug screening program. It is not for a single drug screening but is instead tied to the broader drug screening contract.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to approve; **seconded** by **Vice-Chair Jaramillo.**

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

Motion Carried

H. MANAGER/FIRE: Review of the Joint Powers Agreement Phase I Steering Agreement. Bernalillo County provides services for Torrance County. Approval of Agreement with the delegation of the Commission to the Manager to Sign.

Gary Smith, County Fire Chief:

1. Opening Context & Purpose of JPA
   - The discussion is at a "fork in the road" regarding the Dispatch Center's future direction.
   - The JPA being considered is described as a "steering JPA":
     - Intended to guide discussions with Bernalillo County.
     - Focused on determining whether a future partnership is viable.
   - Emphasized:
     - This agreement does NOT bind the County to a final decision.
     - It only enables structured exploration before committing resources.

2. Clarification on Legal/Operational Impact
   - The JPA:
     - Does not legally tie the County to consolidation or merger.
     - Establishes a framework for discussion and evaluation.
   - Identifies participants from both counties who will:
     - Evaluate feasibility.
     - Coordinate exploratory planning.
   - Commitment language is conditional:
     - Resources will be used to study possibilities, not to finalize action.

3. Inclusion of Dispatch Leadership
   - Whether the 911 Dispatch Director was included in discussions.

- Response:
  - The director is referenced in the JPA.
  - She is listed as a representative participant.
  - However:
    - Unclear how deeply she was involved in early-stage discussions.
    - Acknowledgment that multiple conversations have occurred across Counties.

4. Operational Motivation & Service Improvement Goals
    - Primary motivation is improving emergency response services.
    - Identified concerns:
        - Existing gaps in dispatch operations.
        - Some gaps are external (beyond dispatch control).
        - Some internal issues could be corrected.
    - Goal:
        - Improve service quality for first responders and constituents.
        - Align expectations for performance and accountability.

5. Dispatch Director Position & Other County Discussions
    - The director was not part of the initial discussions.
    - She is aware of the JPA and proposed contract.
    - Reported position:
        - Not in agreement with the contract.
    - Additional context:
        - Director has had conversations with Santa Fe County.
        - Those discussions appear to be further along than the Bernalillo discussions.
        - County leadership notes uncertainty and lack of direct briefing on details.

6. Liability, Compliance, and Risk Concerns
    - Public concerns prompted a review of dispatch operations.
    - Issues identified:
        - Training procedures and infrastructure gaps.
        - Potential regulatory compliance deficiencies.
    - Risks:
        - Legal liability to the county.
        - Financial exposure for inadequate systems.
    - Conclusion:
        - Status quo is not sufficient.
        - Need to evaluate external regional solutions.

7. Rationale for Bernalillo County Partnership
    - Commission perspective:
        - Bernalillo County is seen as a regional dispatch model:
            - Designed to serve multiple jurisdictions.
            - Structurally capable of expansion to surrounding counties.
        - Belief:
            - Bernalillo could potentially absorb larger regional dispatch responsibilities.
        - Purpose of exploring a partnership:
            - Ensure dispatch operations meet regulatory and service standards.
            - Explore whether regionalization improves efficiency and compliance.

8. Intent of the JPA Process
    - The JPA ensures:
        - Neither county "spins its wheels" in informal discussions.
        - A structured, formal exploration process.
    - Key clarifications:
        - No immediate merger decision is being made.
        - Dispatch staff and leadership will be included going forward.
        - This is the official beginning of due diligence.

9. Governance & Transparency Concerns
    - Concern raised about perceived lack of communication:
        - Some stakeholders felt "kept in the dark."
    - Leadership response:
        - Acknowledges awareness gaps in earlier discussions.
        - Emphasizes:
            - Now is the official stage where details will be fully examined.
            - Transparency and structured evaluation will follow.

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

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

Motion Carried

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11. PUBLIC HEARINGS :

A. GRANTS: Discussion and public comment on projects for the 2026-2030 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP).

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move into the public hearing. **Commissioner McCall.**
Roll Call Vote:
- Schwebach – Yes
- McCall – Yes
- Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried 10:06 AM

2026–2030 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP)

- Purpose:
  - Receive public comment on ICIP priorities
  - Review and adjust project priorities
  - Prepare for final approval by resolution later in the meeting

Key Participants & Roles

- Ryan Schwebach, County Chairman: Facilitated meeting, motioned into public hearing
- Jody Cornwall, Grants Administrator: Presented and organized the ICIP priority list - Swarn in.
- County Attorney: Oversaw public hearing process and legal structure
- Planning & Zoning Director: Provided technical input on dam project readiness

Jody Cornwall, Grants Administrator:

ICIP Priority List Overview

- Confirmed priorities were aligned with prior discussions
- Focus on:
  - Completing previously funded projects
  - Emphasis on finishing the administration building
- Identified funding gap:
  - Estimated remaining need: \$2.5M–\$3.5M (later refined)

Administration Building Funding Discussion

  - Request full remaining funding (~\$3.5M including contingencies), OR
  - Limit request strictly to known gap (~\$2.5M–\$2.9M)

Consensus direction:

- Lean toward requesting ~\$3.5M
- Rationale:
  - Inflation and construction cost increases
  - Anticipated overruns
  - Need buffer for contingencies

Loan Strategy Discussion (~\$9.5M–\$9.9M existing loan)
Questions raised:

- Should the County:
  - Pay off the loan early?
  - Reduce the loan partially?
  - Maintain it until funding certainty improves?

Key financial explanation:

- Loan currently has:
  - Minimal or net-neutral interest burden due to reinvestment structure
  - Used strategically to demonstrate funding capacity to the legislature
- Concern:
  - Paying it off too early could reduce financial flexibility
  - Could create challenges re-establishing funding access later

General direction:

- No immediate full payoff decision
- Maintain flexibility until post-legislative clarity

Clerk's Office Project

- Clarified it was unintentionally "redlined" earlier
- Consensus:
  - It should remain in the ICIP priority list

Willard Fire Station Renovations

- Questioned whether the project is still active
- Clarified:
  - Likely phased or partially completed
  - Still relevant depending on scope

Mescalero Dam Project

- Previously removed from the ICIP list
- County intends to pursue internal funding/resources instead
- Engineering already completed and approved by the State Engineer's office
- Project is shovel-ready, pending execution planning

Admin Building Clarification (Final Consensus)

- The County is only requesting the remaining gap funding
- Approximate range: $3.5M total ask for remaining need and contingency
- Loan already covering major portion (~$10M structure referenced)

Public Comment Status

- Hearing remained open for:
  - Public input supporting or opposing ICIP items
  - No additional public comments were summarized in the transcript provided

Michelle Jones – Deputy County Manager: Clarified that the current stage does not involve approval of the final budget. Any language suggesting that the final budget is being approved at this time was corrected.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move out of the public hearing. Seconded by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

- Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried 10:16 AM

B. FINANCE: Discussion, public comment, and possible approval of FY27 Final Budget.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move into the public hearing. **Commissioner McCall.**
Roll Call Vote:

- Schwebach – Yes
- McCall – Yes
- Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried 10:17 AM

Luke Fields and Leonord Lujan were sworn in by the County Attorney.

1. Public Comment

Luke Fields (Torrance County Animal Services)

- Confirmed under oath to tell the truth before addressing commissioners.
- Full identification provided as Animal Services representative.

2. Safety Campus – Infrastructure Projects (Primary Discussion)

A. Fence Project (Safety Campus Security Fence)

- Initial estimate: $80,000 (rough estimate with Leonard)
- Updated CES-approved "Blue Book" quote (Gordian-managed):
  - $89,000+ actual cost
- Proposal includes:
  - High-security fencing with anti-intrusion barbed wire
  - Three standing vehicle gates (north, south, east)
    - Designed for future expansion flexibility
    - Can be reused if additional property is acquired
- Additional gate breakdown discussed:
  - ~$10,000 fire department gate

- ~$5,000 animal services gate
- Final budget request evolved during discussion:
  - Initial request: $90,000
  - Later clarified/adjusted discussion: $95,000 total package consideration

Key Operational Notes

- Work could begin as early as July 1
- No formal bidding required due to CES/Gordian pricing structure
- Option to:
  - Phase project
  - Proceed with fencing only
  - Delay road improvements to future ICIP
- Contractors already in place

3. Driveway / Road Improvements (Safety Campus Access Road)

Speaker: Fields + Road Department input (Leonard referenced)

- Estimated cost: $40,000
- Scope includes:
  - Base course installation
  - Culverts
  - Millings for surface layer
- Conditions:
  - Cost may decrease if donated millings are available
  - Final price depends on width and transport costs
- Concerns raised:
  - Road is currently soft/muddy during the monsoon season
  - Drainage issues exist
- Security argument raised:
  - Safety concern due to vandalism incidents (vehicles tampered with)

Commission Decision

  - Defer/phase road improvements
  - Prioritize fencing first
  - Revisit $40,000 allocation later if budget allows

4. Animal Services Kennel Building Project

Luke Fields:

- Funding source:
  - $136,000 Animal Welfare Grant
- Project plan:
  - 16x40 kennel building
  - CES blue book estimate: $129,000+ to construct shell (walls up, insulated, up to code)
- Remaining gaps:
  - Kennels inside building not funded
  - Utilities not included
- Strategy:
  - Apply for additional Animal Welfare Fund support
  - Possibly supplement funding later if needed

Commission Guidance

- Strong direction from Chair:
  - Do not assume additional County funding
  - Stay within grant limits where possible
  - Allowed to pursue external Animal Welfare funding

5. Budget Clarifications / Final Direction

- Confirmed budget intent:
  - Add $95,000 to County infrastructure for safety campus fencing
  - Confirmed classification under capital infrastructure
- Road project:
  - Initially discussed but held/removed from immediate approval

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move out of the public hearing. Seconded by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried 10:37 AM

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager: I have one more item to discuss.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move into the public hearing. **Commissioner McCall.**

Roll Call Vote:

- Schwebach – Yes
- McCall – Yes
- Jaramillo – Yes

Motion Carried 10:35 AM

Michelle Jones, Sylvia Chavez, Senaida Anaya, and Linda Gallegos were sworn in by the County Attorney.

Elections Budget Line for Reversion Funds

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager:

- Explained the issue from a meeting with the County Clerk's Office regarding state election funding.
- Current problem:
    - The state provides election funds to the county.
    - Unused funds must be returned to the state.
    - There is currently no dedicated expenditure line item for this reversion process.
- Request:
    - Add an expenditure line item of approximately $40,000.
    - Purpose: cover possible "reversions" of unspent election funds.
- Clarification attempts during discussion:

- Funds are received in FY26 but may be returned in FY27.
- Money flows into the general fund, then may need to be returned later.

Commissioner Questions / Concerns

- Confusion over why a $40,000 budget line is needed if funds are simply returned.
- Concern raised:
  - Whether this represents "tying up" funds unnecessarily.
  - Preference to avoid allocating large placeholder amounts.

Suggestion from Chairman Schwebach:

- Use a smaller, more accurate estimate (around $9,000–$14,000) based on expected reversions.
- Avoid over-budgeting without a clear necessity.

- Structural concern:
  - Preference for cash-in/cash-out clarity rather than large contingency line items.

Michelle Jones, Deputy County Manager:

- Explained uncertainty in final reversion amounts:
  - Federal/state review may disallow certain expenditures.
  - Reversion amount could increase beyond initial estimates.
- Noted experience:
  - Approximately $9,000 expected reversion for the current cycle.
  - Could increase depending on audit findings.

Sylvia Chavez, County Clerk & Senaida Anaya, Chief Deputy Clerk:

- Confirmed funding details:
  - Received approximately $67,000+ for primary election operations.
  - Current estimated reversion: ~$9,000.
- Explained accounting issue:
  - State funds are received into the general fund, not a dedicated election fund.
  - This creates complications when returning unused funds.
- Supported creation of:
  - A dedicated expenditure line item for reversions.
- Acknowledged uncertainty:

- Final reimbursement/reversion amounts may change after state review.
- Could increase beyond $9,000 depending on allowable costs determination.

Ryan Schwebach, County Chairman:

- Consensus direction emerging:
  - Do not lock in overly large placeholders (e.g., $40,000).
  - Prefer:
    - A smaller dedicated line item (~$9,000–$14,000 range).
    - Adjust later if needed via budget amendment.
- Rationale:
  - Avoid tying up unnecessary funds.
  - Maintain clearer accountability in future audits and transitions.

Linda Jaramillo, County Vice Chair:

- Asked why state election funds are routed into the general fund rather than a dedicated fund.
- Provided accounting explanation:
  - Described concept as similar to:
    - Contra asset accounting
    - "Allowance for doubtful accounts"
  - Purpose:
    - Helps smooth budget forecasting.
    - Ensures end-of-year adjustments are handled properly.
- Clarified:
  - General fund acts as a central account ("401 fund" referenced).
  - Departments draw from it through budget allocations rather than separate cash accounts.
- Recommended approach:
  - Use more precise estimates rather than large placeholders.
  - Adjust mid-year if needed based on actual expenditures.

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move out of the public hearing. Seconded by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried 10:50 AM

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12. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE / AMENDMENT TO COUNTY CODE: - None

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13. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:

A. GRANTS: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-20 Adoption of the Resolution Authorizing Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP).

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

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

Motion Carried

B. FINANCE: Request Approval of Resolution No. 2026-21- A Resolution Approving the Torrance County Capital Asset Listing.

Kirk Knight – Presenter: Assisting the County with the finance and asset inventory process

- Presentation of Asset Inventory
    - The active capital asset listing and a separate disposal list.
    - The County has conducted a full inventory of assets as required by the state.
    - This effort is part of addressing issues identified in the last two audit years.
    - Asset data was:
        - Distributed to all departments
        - Based on prior audited figures
        - Collected via standardized templates
        - Verified through follow-up questions and validation

- Status of Asset Listing
    - Active asset list includes approximately:
        - 550 line items
        - Total value of approximately $38 million (consistent with prior year)
    - Disposal list includes approximately:
        - 60 assets
        - Original cost of just over $1 million
        - Mostly old vehicles and outdated equipment

Key Questions & Clarifications

- Why are many assets listed at $0 net value?
    - Response:
        - Assets are fully depreciated over time
        - Depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method
        - Values reflect accounting depreciation, not market value
- How is asset value determined?
    - Based on:
        - Estimated economic life
        - Straight-line depreciation schedule
- Concerns about disposal list
    - A commissioner noted the lack of explanations for disposal reasons
    - Example raised:
        - A 2021 Chevy Tahoe (Sheriff's Department) initially questioned
        - Clarified: vehicle hit a deer and was totaled

Concerns / Recommendations Raised

- Commissioner MCall requested future improvement:
    - Add reason for disposal for each item (e.g., wrecked, totaled, unlocatable, obsolete)
    - Improve transparency and clarity in disposal documentation
- Operational suggestion:
    - County should evaluate formal disposition processes for unused assets:
        - Recycling
        - Sale
        - Proper disposal of untracked or unused items

Additional Notes

- Some assets listed are:
    - Damaged beyond repair
    - Not physically locatable
    - Stored or unused for extended periods
- Roads included as capital assets
    - Brief clarification raised that infrastructure, such as roads, is included in asset accounting

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

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

Motion Carried

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14. <u>DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION:</u>

A. GRANT:

<u>Jody Cornwall, Grants Administrator:</u>
1. DFA Electronic Grant System Transition

- Since September 2025, the Department of Finance Administration (DFA) has transitioned all grant processing to a fully electronic system.
- The system now requires:
    - Electronic signing of grant agreements
    - Submission of all supporting documents digitally
    - Processing of pay requests and reimbursements through the system
- Currently, only:
    - The grant staff and the Manager's office (authorized users) have access to the system.
- Limitation identified:
    - Restricted access is creating workflow bottlenecks for approvals and documentation processing.

2. Signature Authorization Concern & Proposed Solution

- DFA requires commission-level approval documents to be signed within the electronic system.
- Concern raised:
    - Need for clarity on how the Chairman's physical signature translates into electronic approval.
    - Requirement that commission authorization be properly documented in the system.

Proposed solution discussed:

- Once a hard (physical) signature is obtained from the Chairman:

A resolution may be created authorizing staff (Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager) to enter approval into the DFA system.

  - Stephanie would act as an official certifying agent, confirming the Commission has reviewed and approved documents.

Clarification provided:

- Stephanie's role would be:
  - Not acting as the electronic signer on behalf of the Commissioners
  - Instead, serving in a capacity similar to a certification/notary function
  - Attesting that proper physical approval was received

3. Commission Response

- Initial confusion was expressed regarding:
  - Why is additional authorization needed if the Chairman already signs documents?
  - Whether system access overlaps with managerial authority.
- After clarification:
  - Commission agreed with the proposed resolution approach
  - Approval granted for Stephanie to certify physical approvals in the system
- Agreement that this process is acceptable and aligns with administrative needs.

4. Reporting & System Usage Updates

- All quarterly reports, payment requests, and reimbursements are now processed through the DFA system.
- Benefits noted:
  - Improved tracking of financial status
  - Better visibility of:
    - Funds requested
    - Reimbursements pending/approved
- Challenges:
  - System is continuously evolving (monthly updates and added features)
  - Managing updates has become time-intensive and close to a full-time workload

5. Coordination Request for Departments

- Request made to departments and project managers:
  - Keep the grant administrator consistently informed of capital outlay and project updates
  - Examples include projects like the fairgrounds
- Purpose:
  - Ensure accurate quarterly reporting
  - Prevent missing or outdated financial/project data

B. CLERK'S REPORT:

<u>Sylvia Chavez, County Clerk:</u>

1. Election Certification / Canvas Status

- Ms. Chavez reported that the state approved the Election canvas.
- Commission District 2 (Republican side):
  - No recount is required.
  - Margin of victory was sufficient.
  - The declared winner remains unchanged.

2. Post System Recheck (Audit) – Precinct 20

- Ms. Chavez confirmed a post system recheck scheduled for today at 3:00 PM (moved up from next week due to district court judge availability).
- Scope of audit:
  - Focused on the Secretary of State race (Democratic ballot).
  - Approximately 40 ballots will be reviewed.
  - Ballots pulled from six different tabulators.
- Process:
  - The public is invited to observe.
  - Officials will hand-tally ballots.
  - Results will be compared against machine tabulator results.

- Any discrepancies will be investigated and explained.
- Expected outcome: results should align closely between manual and machine counts.

3. Statewide Audit Process Context

- Ms. Chavez explained that this is part of a state-mandated audit system recheck.
- Conducted via random selection by a state-hired auditing firm under the Secretary of State's office.
- Audit structure:
  - The top five Counties selected typically audit the gubernatorial race.
  - Additional Counties audit other races, such as:
    - Secretary of State
    - State Representative races
    - U.S. Senate races
- In this case:
  - The County was assigned the Secretary of State race audit.

4. Audit System Notes & Updates

- System rechecks are now required for all 33 counties in the state.
- Previously:
  - Only randomly selected counties participated.
  - Larger counties were more frequently chosen.
- Change implemented approximately 3–4 years ago to ensure statewide inclusion.
- Example context:
  - Larger counties may have 300–400 precincts.
  - Smaller counties (e.g., Torrance County) have around 22 precincts.

5. Handling of Anomalies

- If discrepancies are found:
  - Ballots will be reviewed individually.
  - Issues may involve:
    - Marking ambiguity (oval fill clarity)

        - Questionable or unclear votes
    - Findings must be documented and explained.

6. Funding and Resources
    - Election Official confirmed funding:
        - Approximately $67,000 in election funds is available.
        - Funds cover:
            - Post system rechecks/audits
            - Potential recount costs
            - Temporary election workers required for the process

7. Upcoming Election Administration Item
    - Independent candidate filing day is scheduled for tomorrow (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM).
    - Individuals may:
        - File as independent or other party candidates for the general election.
        - If not filed, candidates may still appear as write-in candidates.

8. Public Participation
    - The public is invited to observe today's 3:00 PM audit process.

C. MANAGERS' REPORT:

Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager:

- Expressed concern over the recent devastating fires in the community over the last few days
- Extended strong praise for:
    - Fire Chief Smith
    - Emergency Manager
    - All first responders
- Emphasized pride in Torrance County emergency response teams
- Highlighted that responders have acted in a way that "reflects really well on the County"

Fire Update – Gary Smith, Torrance County Fire Chief

- Echoed appreciation for crews and agencies involved
- Noted strong team coordination and growing system-wide collaboration
- Praised firefighters for "busting their butts" and their strong commitment

Active Fires Update

- Deer Canyon Fire
  - Size: ~115 acres
  - Status:
    - Fire lines established
    - US Forest Service assisting
    - Fire is largely "contained in behavior," though formally not fully classified as contained
  - Conditions:
    - Fire behaved in a way that partially self-limited on the terrain (mesa slope)
    - Still being actively monitored
  - Resources:
    - Some crews remain on site, but the majority shifted to other incidents

- Canyon/Varnado Fire (I-40 / 222 area)
  - Size: ~852 acres
  - Containment: 0% officially, though ground conditions suggest strong progress
  - Operations:
    - Fire lines constructed
    - Area has been fully dozed and secured in sections
    - Ongoing suppression operations continue
  - Support:
    - Wildland coordinator Steven Meister actively assigned
    - The US Forest Service was also involved earlier and shifted resources between incidents
  - Outlook:
    - Continued work expected for 1 to 1.5 weeks
    - Crews will remain on scene depending on wind conditions and fire behavior

Resource & Funding Discussion

- Fire Chief confirmed:
  - Reimbursement processes are underway
  - County is actively submitting claims for wildfire response funding
  - Multiple reimbursement checks already initiated/signed
  - Wildland coordination efforts help strengthen funding recovery
  - Emphasis: The County will continue pursuing all eligible funding opportunities

Additional Questions

- Deer Canyon Fire concern:
  - Officials confirmed:
    - Fire is stable but still under monitoring
    - Low likelihood of immediate flare-up due to containment lines
    - Resources mostly redirected to the larger I-40 fire complex

Stephanie Reynolds, Interim County Manager:

Administration & Finance Update

Financial Status

- Finance department:
  - Working toward closing fiscal year operations
  - Overall financial position described as "very good"
  - Finance and Treasurer's Office:
    - Meeting weekly with County Manager participation
    - Coordinating closely on reporting and audit improvements

Audit & Compliance

- Focus areas:
  - Addressing FY25 audit findings
  - Proactive steps to reduce or eliminate issues for the FY26 audit
- Progress:
  - Improvement trajectory described as "gaining momentum"
  - Collaboration between departments has been productive

Budget & Upcoming Actions

- Upcoming second July meeting:
  - Presentation and finalization of:
    - Fourth-quarter FY27 budget resolution
- Contracting plans:
  - RFPs scheduled for July posting for:
    - DWI Coordinator
    - Team Court Coordinator
  - Services expected to begin in August

Hiring & Vacancies

- Active recruitment for:
  - Financial Analyst I
  - IT Specialist
  - Certified Patrol Deputy
  - County Manager (accepting letters of interest)
  - Animal Control Officer
  - IT Specialist role nearing closure for applications

D. COMMISSIONERS REPORT:

Kevin McCall, County Vice Chair:

1. Fairgrounds Project Update

- Construction at the fairgrounds is progressing well overall.
- Commissioner plans to visit the site later today following the meeting.

- A formal punch list walkthrough is scheduled for June 30, indicating the project is entering completion stages.
- Punch list items are currently being developed and refined.
- Project is expected to be completed in time for the County Fair, despite earlier concerns.
- Commissioner noted the project has been stressful primarily due to tight timing constraints, but acknowledged the contractor is performing well under pressure.

2. Proposed Road Policy Change (Private Roads to County Maintenance)
- Commissioner introduced a potential policy change regarding County road maintenance acceptance standards.
- Discussion was previously held with:

  Michael I. Garcia, County Attorney, Ruben Gastelum, Rural Addressing, GIS Analyst, and Donald Goen, County P & Z Director
- Current issue: It is very rare for private roads to be accepted into county maintenance.

Proposed New Metric-Based Standard:
- A road may qualify for county maintenance if it meets a defined density threshold:
  - At least 4 residents per every 1/10 of a mile of road
- Purpose of the metric:
  - Creates a quantifiable standard for decision-making
  - Ensures county resources are used efficiently ("bang for buck")
  - Avoids maintaining long rural stretches serving very few residents

3. Next Steps
- Commissioner to continue refining the proposed policy.
- Further evaluation needed on:
  - Existing qualifying roads
  - Exact measurement standards and implementation details
- Policy to be brought forward for formal consideration in the near future.

Main Topic
- Issue of private roads not meeting current county road specifications
- Discussion on whether/how the county should modify its approach for upgrading and maintaining these roads

Current Issue with Private Roads
- Private roads often cannot meet current County road specifications
- Major challenge: residents lack the financial resources to upgrade roads themselves
- Existing policy expectation:
  - Private roads must be upgraded to county specs before adoption
  - Once adopted, the county assumes maintenance responsibility

<u>Leonard Lujan, County Road Superintendent:</u>
- Suggested practical approach:
  - County can bring roads up to standard at County cost where feasible
  - Initial work may focus on basic usability (grading/blading) rather than full upgrades

    - Roads do not need to be fully rebuilt immediately to be functional
- Emphasis:
    - Make roads passable for emergency services (medical, sheriff)
    - Gradual improvement over time rather than immediate full compliance

Adoption and Maintenance Model
- Standard process reaffirmed:
    - Residents or private road owners must bring the road to county specs
    - The county then formally adopts and maintains the road
- Key concern raised:
    - Many residents cannot afford the required upgrades, creating inequity

Eligibility and Mapping Process
- Determining eligible roads will use:
    - GIS mapping system
    - Measurement of road segments (approx. "per 10th of a mile" discussion)
    - Count of residents served along each road
- Concern:
    - Process may be time-consuming but manageable with GIS tools

Service Criteria Clarification
    - eligibility to be based on:
        - Residents living along the road, OR
        - People who regularly drive/use the road
- No final decision made—needs clarification

<u>Jody Cornwall, Grants Administrator:</u>
- Referenced House Bill 247
    - Potential funding opportunities if roads are upgraded and then transferred to the County
    - Capital outlay funding could support road improvements
- Concern raised:
    - Funding roads may reduce money available for county-wide priorities (e.g., administrative buildings)
- Emphasis:
    - Goal is to balance targeted rural road needs vs. broader county needs

<u>Leonard Lujan, County Road Superintendent:</u>
- Immediate improvement strategy:
    - Roads can be bladed/graded first to improve drivability
    - Full material upgrades can happen gradually
- Benefit:
    - Improves livability and safety without immediate major expense

8. General Consensus / Sentiment
- Broad agreement that:

- Problem is widespread and long-standing
- Current system places undue burden on low-income rural residents
- Even minimal maintenance (blading) would significantly improve conditions

- Strong recognition that:
  - Policy review is necessary
  - Mapping/eligibility list is the first step

Ryan Schwebach, County Chairman:

- Acknowledged public awareness of ongoing water-related issues affecting Estancia.
- Stated that the County is actively involved in discussions with the city to develop resolutions and quicker fixes.
- Mentioned ongoing coordination with multiple stakeholders to avoid waiting solely on the previously planned solution.
- Referenced a scheduled well-related project or repair expected toward the end of August, but emphasized efforts to find earlier remedies.

Linda Jaramillo, County Commissioner:

1) Pre-Celebration Dinner (June 15) — Albuquerque

- Location: El Pinto
- Group: Visitors from Sun Zia (delegation group) + host participants
- Purpose: Informal dinner before the following day's dedication event

2) Energy Facility Dedication (June 16) — Wind Energy Transfer Site

- Type of site: High-voltage electrical transfer/convertor station tied to wind energy infrastructure
- Purpose: Converts and transmits power from wind generation to long-distance transmission
- Key technical details discussed:
  - Wind turbines generate AC power
  - Facility converts AC → DC for efficient long-distance transmission
  - DC transmission reduces power loss over long distances due to lower line losses at high voltage
  - A corresponding receiving station converts power back for distribution
  - Includes large-scale phase conversion technology

Observations & significance:

- Described as one-of-a-kind in the United States
- Extremely large infrastructure ("like seven stories high," remote location)
- Significant regional impact within the district
- High-profile attendance:
  - State legislators
  - Out-of-state officials

- Industry and technical stakeholders
- Community members

3) Gallup Conference — Commissioners Meeting
- Location: Gallup, New Mexico
- Topics discussed:
  - Proposed legislative changes affecting:
    - Commissioner governance structures
    - Elected official salaries
  - General skepticism expressed about the likelihood of legislative progress

4) Manzano Land Grant Meeting (Sunday)
  - Land grant governance and community issues
  - Attendance as part of ongoing local civic participation

5) LEPC Meeting (Following Day)
  - Local advisory/commission-related matters (LAPC)
  - Participation in structured local governance discussions

6) Community & Cultural Engagements
- Attendance at:
  - Local fiestas (including Torrance-area fiestas)
  - Graduation parties and community celebrations

7) Evening Dinner with Clergy and Guests
- Participants:
  - Father Jordan (young local priest)

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15. <u>EXECUTIVE SESSION:</u>

A. COMMISSION: Discussion regarding the purchase and discussion for possible action of Land Purchase Agreement with Torrance County, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(8).

B. COMMISSION: Discussion of the water rights purchase and discussion for possible action between Mr. Larson and Torrance County, pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(8).

C. COMMISSION: Limited Personnel Matters Regarding the Position of the Deputy County Manager, pursuant to Executive Session 10-15-1.H (2).

D. COMMISSION: Limited Personnel Matters Regarding the Position of the County Manager, pursuant to Executive Session 10-15-1.H (2).

E. COMMISSION: Discussion of pending litigation, State of New Mexico EX REL. Raul Torrez, Attorney General v Torrance County, DA. COMMISSION:

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move into Executive Session; **seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

11:26 AM

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move into Regular Session; **seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

2:09 PM

16. <u>CONSIDERATION OF ACTION(S):</u>

A. COMMISSION: Discussion and possible action regarding the Land Purchase Agreement with Torrance County that was discussed in Executive Session. (Roll Call Vote)

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move forward with the land purchase; **seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

B. COMMISSION: Discussion and possible action regarding the water rights purchase between Mr. Larson and Torrance County that was discussed in Executive Session. (Roll Call Vote)

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to move forward with the purchase with Mr. Larson; **seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

C. COMMISSION: Discussion and possible action regarding personnel matters regarding the Deputy County Manager that was discussed in Executive Session. (Roll Call Vote)

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to direct our attorney to amend the current contract concerning the Deputy Manager to reflect what was discussed in executive session. **Seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

D. COMMISSION: Discussion and possible action regarding personnel matters regarding the County Manager that were discussed in Executive Session. (Roll Call Vote)

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motioned to draft and execute a contract with Stephanie Reynolds to become the Manager, as discussed within the executive session, and to stop advertising for the position of Manager. **Seconded** by **Commissioner McCall.**

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

Motion Carried

E. COMMISSION: Discussion and possible action of pending litigation, State of New Mexico EX REL. Raul Torrez, Attorney General vs. Torrance County, which was discussed in Executive Session. (Roll Call Vote)

Chairman Schwebach: Our County Attorney will move forward as directed concerning this issue.

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

Next meeting: July 08, 2026, 9:00 AM

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18. **Signing of official documents:**

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19. **Adjournment:**

Motion: **Chairman Schwebach** motions to adjourn. **Vice-Chair Jaramillo** seconded.

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

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM.

Ryan Schwebach - Chairman

7/8/2026
Date

Genell Morris – Admin Assistant

Sylvia Chavez – County Clerk

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