

**FINAL COPY**  
**Torrance County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Commission Meeting**  
**March 13, 2024**  
**9:00 AM**

Commissioners Present:

**RYAN SCHWEBACH – COUNTY CHAIRMAN**  
**KEVIN MCCALL – COUNTY VICE CHAIRMAN**  
**SAMUEL SCHROPP – COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

Others Present:

**JANICE BARELA – MADAM COUNTY MANAGER**  
**TRACY SEDILLO – DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER**  
**MICHAEL GARCIA – COUNTY ATTORNEY**  
**LINDA JARAMILLO – COUNTY CLERK**  
**GENELL MORRIS – ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT I**  
**DONALD GOEN – COUNTY P & Z DIRECTOR**

1. **Call Meeting to order.**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Calls the March 13, 2023, Regular Commission Meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

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

**Invocation lead by:** Kevin McCall – County Commissioner

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

4. **PROCLAMATION: None**

5. **CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS:** None

6. **BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:** None

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT and COMMUNICATIONS**

**Debbie Mayberry -Cooperative Extension County Program Director:** We will start using the new kitchen at the fairgrounds for our diabetic creations class. April 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> from 9 to noon. A dietician leads the class cooking a full meal using two cookbooks that the participants will receive. If you're interested, please enroll online, or let me know. Last year we had over 17 participants in our office. I want to thank you for all your support. Project classes are going on now.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Clerk:** Candidate filing day was yesterday from nine o'clock to five o'clock. Only Republicans filed for the election races. We have Sylvia Chavez for County Clerk, unopposed. Kathryn Hernandez for Treasurer, unopposed. County Commissioner District 3, Linda Jaramillo, Nathan Dial, Mark Martinez, and Nick Sedillo. There is still a chance we will have write-ins on March 19th. I wish everybody that's running good luck. Thank you.

**Debbie Ortiz - Partnership for Healthy Torrance Community:** It was brought to my attention that there was an application notice in the Santa Fe New Mexican for more of our precious Estancia Valley Water Basin to be pumped out of the ground for dust control. I have delivered the notice to the Commissioners for the record.

It's disheartening to think that again, someone is trying to take water out of the Estancia Basin. The application was filed with the State Engineers Office. The water has historically been put to beneficial use in Santa Fe County and will temporarily be put to beneficial use in Torrance and San Miguel counties. The areas that they're talking about are considered out of the Estancia Valley Water Basin. It is not beneficial to the residents of Torrance county to see our water going to an area where they have very little water in that area and so of course they're

looking to us to pump this water out using an irrigation well. They're requesting a lot of water for three years. I'm asking the Commission to please help us to protect our water basin by sending letters of protest. The notice tells you how to do that. It's a complicated process. We are in the process of putting together a form letter. I've reached out to EBRA, to see if they can help us because, in the past, they've helped us with water issues. We need to protect our water. We have wind towers going up everywhere, they are draining Duran. Duran is having water issues, Vaughn is starting to see water issues, and Encino gets their water from Vaughn. If we don't take care of our water, we're going to be some very sad people with no water in our valley. I'm just asking all residents, and anybody that can, to send a letter of protest to the State Engineer's Office, the deadline is April 26th. We will help residents with a form letter, and then deliver them to the State Engineer's Office. I'm going to the Moriarty City Council this evening to ask the same from them. They are having water issues with their city wells.

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** What is your source of information on Duran? You made a statement that they are running out of water.

**Debbie Ortiz - Partnership for Healthy Torrance Community:** A resident.

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** I'm not attacking your position.

Estancia Valley Basin is subject to a lot of misinformation. So an anecdotal story about a resident in Duran, I'm not saying that they're well didn't fail, I'm saying that I hope people are not hanging their hats on anecdotal information. As far as dust control, they mix water with mag klure which is a dust suppressant. It's not like a construction site water truck. It's a one-time deal but it is a use of water which we need to be concerned with. Your concerns for the people here are very valid. But those concerns need to be addressed with accurate information. I hope that as you move forward, you can provide that type of information so that people can make their decisions based on good information.

**Marcie Wallin - Torrance County Fair Board:** The 2024 County Fair will be from August 6th through the 9th. The tag-in of steers and breeding heifers will be on April 17th at the Torrance County Fairgrounds from 4 to 7 am. June 8th will be our dairy and pygmy goats, lambs, market goats, and other animals, excluding chickens and rabbits. August 3rd is our cleanup date from seven to noon. It is posted on our Facebook page. It will also be in the minutes. I'll send it to the Ag teachers; the county extension agent already has it. Thank you.

**Patty Alexander - Resident:** Is there an update on Martinez Rd?

**Janice Barela-Madam County Manager:** I have confirmed with Road Superintendent Leonard Lujan, that there will be a three-inch overlay of asphalt in June or July for Martinez Road. This is when the contractor from Mountain States is available to complete the project.

**Patty Alexander - Resident:** Concerning our water issues, if you recall Schwebach Farms is one of our suppliers of a farmers market in Moriarty. Their well is drying up I believe it is because of all the pot farms being allowed to move into this area. These pot farms use three times more water than farms do and if we are going to supply water to our McIntosh residents, we need to fight hard to keep our water here in the Estancia Valley.

**James Collins – Resident:** I'm a well-driller here in the Estancia Valley. I get a lot of emails from the State Engineers Office on things that don't apply to me so, this email does apply to us. It concerns artesian well-finding areas; they have a new modeling. The majority of the Estancia Valley is now in an artesian well planning area. When people think artesian well, they think of just flowing water but that's not true. According to the State Engineer, the definition of an artesian well is, a welder penetrates a saturated hydrogeological unit and allows underground water to rise and move appreciably into another ideal geological unit or allows underground water to rise freely. For regulatory purposes, the determination of whether a well or borehole is artesian shall be made by the State Engineer taking into consideration the potential for loss of water at the ground surface or into another hydrogeological unit.

Whenever we drill a well, the hope is we go down and find a few different layers of water. That way, you know that the wells that are drying up, now, most of those were just drilled into the first layer of water. That doesn't mean there's not more water down there. Those wells back then made lots of water and stopped when they hit the first layer. Now you don't always find more water when you go down lower, but it's a good possibility that you can't here in the valley. If there is any confining layer in there such as clay, which usually there is, they can consider that an artesian well. If you find water lower, you get a lot of different answers. As a well driller, it's a lot different when they're looking at it on paper. When you hit this, water changes drastically. We don't know when we're drilling the wells because we don't pull out the drill pipe to measure the water level until we're done drilling. It's hard for us to determine whether it's artesian or not. If you go down into a different formation and find water in that different formation, then it's a little easier to tell, but you don't want to stop before your customer is good. The reason

all of this is important is because if they want us to construct these wells as artesian wells it will significantly increase the cost. I'm estimating four, five, or even six times as much as a regular well. I don't expect the Commission to do anything about this because you don't have any power to change this. I think the Commission and the public should be aware of what's going on. If you look at that map, it's all over the state. If you look at a population map, it's anywhere there's any population, it's almost all the aquifers in New Mexico fall into this artesian well.

I'm still trying to educate myself on it from all the different angles. I will do more research and bring it to the next Commission meeting. Thank you.

**Aurora Arreola - Policy Manager for New Mexico Immigrant Law Center:**

We provide free legal assistance to immigrants throughout the state of New Mexico, including those detained in facilities like the Torrance County Detention Facility. Today I'm here to shine a light on the appalling conditions within the Torrance County Detention Facility. Regrettably, individuals detained at Torrance County Detention Facility are not treated as members of society, but rather as subhuman, as articulated by former inmates. They indicate they treat us as animals. Inhumane treatment prevails, including insufficient medical care that forces inmates to rely on one another due to prolonged wait times. Those who aid their fellow inmates during these times have faced solitary confinement as punishment. I implore you to remember the name Kesley Valla and his story, which epitomizes the experiences within this facility. He sought protection from persecution and severe human rights violations in his home country, seeking asylum just like many others, only to endure dire conditions in Torrance. The federal government's oversight body and the Office of the Inspector General have twice called for the cancellation of the Torrance County Detention Facility contract. Immigrant's well-being is disregarded evident in dismal food quality extensive intervals between meals, sometimes exceeding 12 hours, and reports of contamination of food. Restricted access to water exacerbates this cruelty. Medical care is inadequate, with individuals often receiving over-the-counter pain relievers for serious illnesses or these conditions exacerbated by labor shortages. Who knows but regardless, the inhumanity persists, even for those awaiting deportation, exacerbated by inadequate due process, lack of adequate interpretation services, privacy, and more before facing credible fear interviews. Kesley Valla disillusioned by the huge inhumanity rising conditions, tragically took his own life in Torrance. This narrative of dehumanization extends far beyond isolated incidents during my visits to the Torrance County Detention Facility. Asylum

seekers have voiced a profound longing to communicate, feeling unheard not only by interpreters and guards but also by the immigration system itself. They are even deprived of regular conversations with their own families prohibited from maintaining essential communication. They yearn to be seen and heard they supplicate basic human rights every day like Kesley Valla and endure these conditions. It's imperative to recognize this reality. We are dehumanizing individuals who sought refuge driving them to the brink of despair. Is this the rhetoric we choose to perpetuate? Or shall we extend compassion to those in need and foster a welcoming community rather than one that cages migrants? We call on the Torrance County Commission not to renew the ICE contract at the Torrance County Detention Facility in light of ongoing human suffering and violations at the facility. Thank you.

**Tiffany Wong - Law Clerk at Innovation Law Lab:** I am a part of the Torrance County Listening Project, which is a group dedicated to understanding the needs and perspectives of Torrance County residents to develop shared visions for thriving communities and economies that meet their needs. I am here today to ask this Commission not to renew the ICE contract for the Torrance County Detention Facility when it expires next month. When people seek safety from persecution in the United States, they are met with a system designed around a principle of indifference that makes the consequences of seeking safety here worse than the reasons that would drive a family to leave home and everything they know to travel across the globe to a place to seek a better life. Torrance County has become one of the places used to discourage people from seeking safety in the United States. I have personally gone to meet and speak with some of the men detained at TCDF and I've heard of the truly horrible conditions there. There have been multiple sewage floods in the past few months and the individuals detained in the blocks where there was flooding, were forced to clean up the human excrement without any protective gear. One man slipped and fell because of a persistent leak. He and others had notified guards multiple times. Months later, he struggles to walk. Other men have explained it is better not to seek mental health services because when they reported their thoughts of self-harm or suicide to medical staff, they were stripped naked, isolated in a frigid room, and fed carrots for their meals until medical staff decided the thought had passed. No human deserves to be treated in these ways. I, along with other members of nonprofit legal service providers and community members, support Torrance County's efforts to provide good sustainable jobs for residents that do not involve detaining immigrants and people seeking safety and refuge in our country and generate the revenue necessary for the local community to thrive. Each year Core Civic, which is a private prison

company based in Nashville, Tennessee, receives 25 million federal tax dollars to operate TCDF, much of which ends up in the pockets of out-of-state shareholders and executives. Many of the staff who work at TCDF are from outside Torrance County or even outside New Mexico. Federal tax dollars would be better spent creating resilient jobs that employ residents of Torrance County and New Mexico to directly serve the needs of residents of Torrance County and New Mexico and invest in Torrance County's beautiful communities, landscapes, and cultural heirlooms. We are eager to support you in pursuing any funding Torrance County would require for such a transition. This Commission has the power to lead the way in New Mexico, stop the renewal of the detention contract at TCDF, and chart a path toward a powerful and dignified investment and job creation. We want to be with you in that effort. Thank you for your time.

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** This Commission addressed point by point every one of the contentions that had been made by the Immigration Law representatives here today. I personally, have pledged my honor, and continue to inspect the Torrance County Detention Facility at random times unannounced. The conditions which have been reported here today are from 2022. Since I have been in office since March 2023, I have found none. I have investigated in real-time Claims of abuse and mistreatment that were relayed to me by Ariel Prado and found them to be untrue or exaggerated. This Commission has made its position clear on this matter, we will decide whether or not to renew the contract based on credible objective information. Thank you.

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** I agree with Commissioner Schropp. We had a lot of information right here in public comment. I want to remind the public that is not necessarily what the Commission thinks. I encourage you to do your own research. There is a lot of misinformation concerning the prison.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. COMMISSION:** Request approval of minutes for the February 28, 2024, regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Action Taken:**

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Motion to approve the minutes for the February 28, 2024, regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

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

**B. COMMISSION:** Request approval of minutes for the March 4, 2024, special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve the minutes for the March 4, 2024, special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners.

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:**

Seconds the motion.

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

**9. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. FINANCE & PURCHASING:** Request approval of payables.

**Action Taken:**

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

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

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



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

**11. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION:**

**A. FINANCE:** Request approval of Resolution 2024-08, A Budget Adjustment Resolution.

**Misty Witt-County Finance Director:** We are looking at a budget increase for the SANE appropriation that was not part of the original budget, and also looking at a budget increase for the Clerk's election fund, that is reimbursable by the state. We have three grants that were not part of the original budget. That's the Hazard Mitigation Grant, the Community Wildlife Protection Plan Grant, and the DFA Training Grant. Finally, we have a cash transfer. These were for the Water Board, and ICE, they were deposited in the general fund versus a specific line item. We need to clean that up.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve resolution 2024-08.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**B. ROAD:** Request approval of Resolution 2024-09 Requesting Financial Assistance from the Local Government Road Fund Program to Purchase New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Surplus Equipment at the Annual Hardship Sale.

**Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent:** This resolution is to apply for the hardship sale, which we apply every year. Sometimes we get it sometimes we don't. We try and get some used equipment from the state, usually in July or August.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve resolution 2024-09.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **12. APPROVAL**

- A. CLERK:** Request approval of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Secretary of State and Torrance County for state appointed funds for the 2024 Primary Election in the amount of \$50,000.00.

**Linda Jaramillo-County Clerk:** This is a Memorandum of Understanding between Torrance County and the Secretary of State's office. These funds are appropriated by the New Mexico legislature to pay the cost of conducting and administering a statewide election for \$50,000. This money is used for election purposes, poll workers, registration officers, interpreters, messengers, electronic applications, polling place storage and building requirements, postage, tabulators, delivery, office supplies, and other items. We will get some more money for the General Election.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Secretary of State and Torrance County for state-appointed funds for the 2024 Primary Election in the amount of \$50,000.00.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

- B. SHERIFF:** Request ratification of agreement with the Department of Public Safety to accept FY2024 Law Enforcement Retention Fund for a total of \$6,381.48.

**Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant:** The LERF grant from the Department of Public Safety is based on a formula that was developed based on years of service to provide retention bonuses to deputies that meet their criteria. The total award is \$6,381.48 with no match. This is specific for this year to provide bonuses for two deputies, one of whom has met the requirement and met his anniversary with the workforce, he will be eligible for his portion of the bonus. Another one of the deputies that had been named resigned from the Sheriff's Office. That resignation was prior to his anniversary date. He will not be eligible for his portion of the award and will have to be returned to the state.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve the ratification of agreement with the Department of Public Safety to accept the FY2024 Law Enforcement Retention Fund for a total of \$6,381.48.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

- C. SHERIFF:** Request approval to pay Eye Associates of New Mexico invoice dated 11/9/2022, in the amount of \$279.00, for services provided for a county inmate. A purchase order was not secured prior to appointment.

**Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant:** We received this invoice for \$279.00 for an appointment back on November 9, 2022. I confirm that this particular person was an inmate with the county and would have been eligible for us to cover his medical costs. I'm requesting that we get permission to pay the \$279.00 to Eye Associates.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve the invoice to pay Eye Associates of New Mexico invoice dated 11/9/2022, in the amount of \$279.00.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**D. SHERIFF:** Request approval to pay Public Safety Psychology Group invoice number 27213 dated 2/20/2024, in the amount of \$295.97, for Return to Duty Psych Screening. A purchase order was not secured prior to appointment.

**Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant:** I recently received this invoice and upon receipt, I realized that a purchase order had not been secured prior to sending this deputy for the return to service exam. In researching I found out it was a miscommunication. The Sheriff's Office had thought that HR was going to submit the purchase order and HR thought the Sheriff's Office was going to be submitting it, so no one submitted the purchase order until I received the invoice. I can't submit a purchase order until you approve this.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve paying Public Safety Psychology Group invoice number 27213 dated 2/20/2024, in the amount of \$295.97.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

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

**E. SHERIFF:** Request approval of Agreement with Department of Public Safety for the Adam Walsh Implementation Grant Program in the amount of \$42,489.00. (Approved by Grant Committee)

**Cheryl Allen-County Sheriff Executive Assistant:** Both grant agreements were reviewed and approved by our attorney. I'm excited about this agreement. It's the first time we have received an award for the Adam Walsh Grant. This award in New Mexico has only gone to the big metropolises. This is the first time a smaller county has been awarded this grant to support our Sex Offender Registration Unit. The award is for \$42,489.00 as a reimbursement with no match. Providing overtime for operations, administrative duties, travel, and training costs to send three of our deputies to the sex offender boot camp to receive training for the program. We will also provide \$7,077.00 for equipment needed for the program.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve the agreement with the Department of Public Safety for the Adam Walsh Implementation Grant Program for \$42,489.00.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

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

**F. ROAD:** Request approval of Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund SP Project Letter of Intent, Job Scope Summary, Torrance County Road Map, and Estimate Summary of Costs and Quantities. Requires a 25% proportional matching share of the project fund.

**Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent:** This is our SP project for \$82,856.00. This will be to lay gravel 1 mile on Chula Vista Ave and 1 mile on Rio Vista Ave both from Otero Rd W to Estancia Del Norte in Rancho Grande subdivision.

**Action Taken:**

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** Motion to approve Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund SP Project

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**G. ROAD:** Request approval of Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund SB Project Letter of Intent, Job Scope Summary, Torrance County Road Map, and Estimate Summary of Costs and Quantities. Requires a 25% proportional matching share of the project fund.

**Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent:** This is our school bus project for \$120,060.00. This will be a chip seal on Juan Thomas and Ballenger Ranch Rd for a total of 2 miles.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve of Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund SB Project.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**H. ROAD:** Request approval of Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund CAP Project Letter of Intent, Job Scope Summary, Torrance County Road Map, and Estimate Summary of Costs and Quantities. Requires a 25% proportional matching share of the project fund.

**Leonard Lujan-County Road Superintendent:** This is our capital outlay project for \$246,689. This will be chip seal on LaPara Road for 1.7 miles, Fourth of July Road for 1 mile, and Camino Del Ray for 1.7 miles.

**Action Taken:**

**Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman:** Motion to approve Letter of Intent for 2024/25 Local Government Road Fund CAP Project.

**Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman:** Seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach – County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

**MOTION CARRIED**

**13. DISCUSSION**

**A. MANAGER’S REPORT**

**Janice Barela-Madam County Manager:** Yesterday Torrance County hosted the annual Fire Season Preparedness Meeting. This is the pre-fire season meeting designed to get all responding partners on the same page to provide a coordinated and efficient response to any fire in the county or region. I attended this meeting as the county's public information officer. I would like to thank Adrian Padilla Fire Management Officer Division 34, US Forest Service, Cibola National Forest, and National Grasslands Mountainair Ranger District for coordinating this meeting. The following stakeholders were in attendance:

US Forestry Service  
US Forestry Service air operations  
US Forestry Service Albuquerque dispatch  
National Weather Service  
State Forestry Service  
Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument  
Torrance County Fire Department  
Torrance County Emergency Management  
Torrance County Manager/PIO  
Moriarty Fire Department  
Bernalillo County Fire Department  
Bernalillo County Emergency Management  
Valencia County Fire Department  
Valencia County Emergency Management  
Isleta Pueblo Fire Department  
Chilili Land Grant  
Manzano Land Grant  
Edgewood Soil and Water Conservation District  
Claunch Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District  
Red Cross

I'd like to thank all of those in attendance. It was a strategic meeting that was extremely informative, and I found it to be comforting to know that these professionals are working together on fire prevention as well as coordinating well-planned responses if needed. Thank you to Torrance County Emergency Manager Samantha O'Dell for working with Mr. Padilla to coordinate the county hosting the meeting.

On Monday we met with the architect for the new fire station. A few recommended changes during the meeting will be implemented into the new design and then hopefully we can finalize it and move forward with a preliminary cost estimate. Congresswoman Stansbury's Office will be releasing their funding request application soon. The State Fire Marshal's office will be meeting with Chief Fire Winham, Deputy Fire Chief Sanchez, and me for a site visit at the property where the new road shop is located. That is the proposed site of the new Fire Station. That property is 20 acres, and the architect has determined that the new fire station will fit on this property. The State Fire Marshal is required to conduct a site visit and gather specific information before either approving or rejecting a new fire station at this site



## B. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

### 1) Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman, District 1

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Is there an update on the contract for the new admin building?

**Janice Barela-Madam County Manager:** I spoke with Mr. Beatty, he stated that they have a couple of questions or comments that he wanted to add to the contract. They're implementing those and reviewing them. He is expecting the contract to come to the county for review no later than Friday of this week. He also stated they are beyond excited to have this project and to work closely with Torrance County. As soon as we get the contract initiated, they're looking immediately to start meetings probably the second week in April.

**Kevin McCall-County Vice Chair:** Is there an update on the Governor, were there any vetoes?

**Janice Barela-Madam County Manager:** I haven't heard anything about any line-item vetoes on Torrance County's projects, but I haven't confirmed that either. I'll check into that and report back in the next meeting. And of course before that.

### 2) Ryan Schwebach - County Chairman, District 2

**Ryan Schwebach-County Chairman:** A couple of things I want to address. Firstly, I'm not going to get rid of Zoom. However, often Zoom comments fall on deaf ears. I appreciate all those of you who do take the time to bring stuff to our attention. It makes a big difference to be here in person.

A lot of what you heard about the prison is not entirely accurate. I encourage you to do your due diligence and understand where this is coming from. It's not the atrocities of a prison. It is a different movement in private prisons. There are other things behind this. Do your due diligence and call your representatives and encourage them to get educated both state and federal. It's important. There's a lot more at play here.

Second thing, water is always an issue. I'm a farmer and have dealt with the State Engineer. I work with well drillers and have a handle on it. What I'm discovering is a lot of people don't, although everybody relies on it. It would be valuable to reach out to the Manager's Office to have an educational process to understand how water is administered and how the State Engineers Office looks at it. How it ties together with Planning and Zoning, what the county's role is, etc. It is important to understand the whole dynamics. The residents need to understand it because it is through statute and legislation. Our state legislators have a major impact on everything that happens here.

### 3) Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner, District 3

**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** I have a working relationship with the Warden at the Torrance County Detention Facility. I can bring anyone into the prison with me at any time. The immigration lawyers are covered by DHS regulations, which is an exception. Any citizen of Torrance County who wants to go into the prison with me is welcome. At any time of day, anytime a day, any day. of the week. If you want to see what's going on, get a hold of me.

I've been able to get out on my motorcycle to check roads in my district. Since our last meeting, I have driven nearly 400 miles of roads in the third district. This past Monday I stopped by the new county road building. I asked Commissioner McCall to take a look at the concrete floor in the shop area. That floor was a hot pour and as a result, there are cracks that I believe should be ground out and repaired with the appropriate mix of cement and adhesive. Over the life of the building, the cracks that are present will cause problems in the future and should be repaired now. I drove the land grants and south of Mountainair roads. Our road crews have finished the emergency repairs to our bus routes and are now doing scheduled maintenance on the rest of the roads as we heard from Road Superintendent Lujan. We've got paving projects and improvement projects on the table being funded right now. BO16 the road that connects Deer Canyon Preserve was a miserable stretch of road. I received a lot of complaints about it. That road has been improved, but it requires more work. Road Superintendent Lujan tells me that they are preparing to get to work on that road in April.

The reason that roads in the third district are bad is because drivers are driving too fast. Excessive speed along with the wet weather, have degraded the roads faster than we can fix them. I've also driven the dirt roads for a Mountainair and Willard south along the Mesa from Cedarville to Pinos Wells, Negra, and Duran. Our crews are doing a good job of topdressing those works on those roads, but more work is needed. Speaking to my constituents and based on my observation the road south along the Mesa needs material in several places. Let's remember that the altitude on the mesa causes that area to receive moisture that the rest of us don't see. As we work towards our fiscal year 2024/25 budget, I want this Commission to be aware that it is time to spend some money on dirt roads in the third district. The roads in the first and second districts have been brought to a condition that should require routine maintenance for the next couple of years. Our road department can allocate resources to the third district before those roads need major work and money to make them safe.

I also want to make this Commission aware of the money that our GIS office will include in the budget for road signs, which are required by FEMA and our 911 system. It's time to make sure that our first responders and the people working on the wind farm projects can have an accurate understanding of where they are in emergencies. I'm riding alone and make a note of the ranches in case I crash, so I can tell people where I am.

I also got calls from constituents about the ongoing strife between participants in the county fair livestock shows and the Fair Board. We are investing a lot of money in the new multi-use building, and the show and fair need to modernize its policies and rules in a concise written form, to make the vision of this Commission for this fair and that building a reality. The best way to do that is to give the participants a voice in the process.

I also want to commend Central New Mexico Electric Co-Op for their management of our grid during the last bout of high winds. The fires in Texas were caused by the Excel Energy Power Line brought down by the winds. One power line and that fire ran for 1000s of square miles. CNMEC reconfigured automatic equipment so that when the power lines arc in the wind, the lines go dead. What was happening in Texas was that the rebound switches would automatically reset, and the line would recharge and keep arcing and throwing sparks. We had five poles breaking in the south end of the county and no fires. CNMEC is under the oversight of the Rural Electrification Administration and is a local energy provider as opposed to energy giant Excel. Well done to everyone at CNMEC and keeping us safe. Thank you.

14. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: None**

15. **Announcement of the next Board of County Commissioners Meeting:**  
March 27, 2024, at 9:00 AM

16. **Signing of Official Documents**

17. **Adjourn.**

**Action Taken:**


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

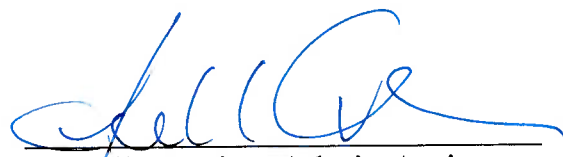
**Samuel Schropp-County Commissioner:** Seconds the motion.

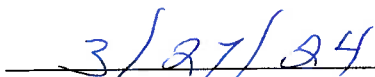
**Roll Call Vote:** Samuel Schropp – County Commissioner: - Yes: Ryan Schwebach  
– County Chairman: – Yes: Kevin McCall – County Vice Chairman: -Yes:

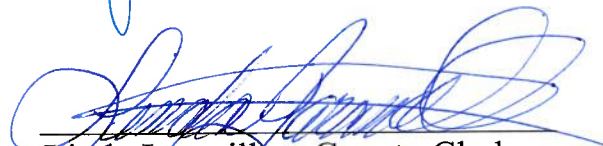
**MOTION CARRIED**

**Meeting adjourned at 10:22 AM**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ryan Schwebach - Chairman

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

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Jaramillo – County Clerk

The Video of this meeting can be viewed in its entirety on the  
Torrance County NM website. ([torrancecountynm.org](http://torrancecountynm.org))