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Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting held on November 18, 2020 at 9:00 AM in the Conejos County Board Room, 6683 County Rd 13, Conejos, CO. 81129

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**Call the meeting to order**

Chrmn. Jarvies called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**Roll Call:** Mitchell Jarvies- Chrmn.- Present  
Steve McCarroll-Vice Chair-Via Telephone  
Carlos Garcia-Vice Chair-Present  
Tressesa Martinez- County Admn.-Present

Also present were: Nick Sarmiento-via ZOOM, Connie Ricci-HR, via ZOOM, and AnnaBelle Gomez, Deputy Clerk and Recorder.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Chrmn. Jarvies led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Prayer:** Chrmn. Jarvies gave the opening prayer.

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion to approve the agenda as amended: Comm. Garcia/Second: Comm. McCarroll; all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried

**Approval of minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2020 meeting as presented: Comm. McCarroll/Second: Comm. Garcia, all in favor.

3-0 motion carried

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 05, 2020 meeting as presented: Comm. McCarroll/Second: Comm. Garcia, all in favor.

3-0 motion carried

**Public Comment:** None

**Administrators Correspondence**

Tressesa, County Admn. stated that she would like to note that she has moved the County Attorney to the end of the meeting.

#### **Legal Holidays for 2021**

Tressesa stated that she sent them a copy of the legal holidays for 2021. She got a response from everyone that they were okay.

Motion to approve the holidays for 2021 as presented: Comm. Garcia/Second: Comm. McCarroll, all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried.

#### **Care Acts**

Tressesa stated that she would like an approval for 2 checks. They have been working on the Care Acts Fund; they have a committee and have gone over everything. She has submitted 134,000 to the state that will be reimbursed back to us. The Town of Antonito is getting 90,270.60 and the Town of La Jara is getting \$691.82; she has all the documentation. She would like the approval of those checks being issued today.

Comm. Garcia asked Tressesa if she can get them a report on that. He wanted to know if in the Town of Antonito was that money going to go businesses.

Tressesa stated that she can send them a copy of what she has requested from the state so they can see the breakdown; yes that money is going to businesses.

Comm. Garcia asked if we got reimbursed for the Emergency Manager's salaries.

Tressesa stated that it was rejected so Rodney and her contacted the state. They approved all of his time not just his overtime so they are getting \$16,000 for him.

Motion to approve the Cares Funds release in the amount of \$90,270.60 for the Town of Antonito and \$691.82 to the Town of La Jara: Comm. Garcia with the question of the total being 134,000/Second: Comm. McCarroll, all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried.

Tressesa, County Admn. stated that 134,000 was the whole total which included Dept. of Social Services.

Tressesa mentioned that she has been working on budgets and would like to meet with elected officials and department heads next week.

**County Newsletter/Comm. Garcia**

Comm. Garcia stated that when he came on board as County Commissioner he wanted to start a newsletter. Thought a 2-sided on a letter size paper to be put out quarterly; putting it on the web page and maybe at businesses throughout the county. The purpose would be to promote our services and programs from each department. The Sheriff's Department might want to put all their calls, a Commissioner's corner and recognize some employees. These newsletters are very effective in getting out what the organizations do. He would be willing to coordinate it.

Tressesa, County Admn. stated that they used to do newsletters before, they didn't have the staff and it became very costly. Tressesa mentioned that they can follow up with the department heads. She will let them know that they will start in 2021. They will have until March and probably post in April.

**Nick Barela-DSS Report Via- Zoom**

Nick requested approval for EBT expenditures in the amount of 395,978.20 and Accounts Payables in the amount of 20,910.84.

Motion to approve EBT expenditures and accounts payables as presented: Comm. Garcia/Second: Comm. McCarroll, all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried.

Case load report is as follows: Child Support: 401 Child Welfare:13 Adult Financial: 131 Colo. Works: 47 Food Assistance: 756 and Medicaid 1,731 Cases.

Contract Prowers County: That is for continued hot line for Child Welfare in the amount of \$2,169.00.

Core Service: They did receive the Core Service Program letter that he submitted in June. They did receive some additional Cares Funding, for the Adult Protection they received an additional 1,037.00 and for

Administration they received an additional 12,497.00. They have some staff that is doing that for public assistance.

Kinship Review: Nick stated that he provided a letter for that review. Conejos County was successful in passing their non-certified Kinship Care review; the next one will be scheduled for May of 2023

Chrmn. Jarvies asked Nick to explain that.

Nick stated that pertains to families that are placed with kin which are a result of their Child Welfare Case Load. They come in and review those particular cases. They check different variables in the case. It is an audit similar to what they do for public assistance.

#### **Rodney King- EMS**

COVID- Testing Plan -Rodney stated that he has been talking to Denise so he going to come up with a testing logistics plan. He has been talking to Donnie about Road and Bridge and the sheriff; they need to get a date on that. The state will bring in their testing stuff for that.

COVID-Inoculation Plan He is also working on a plan for inoculation when the vaccine becomes available.

COVID-Communications Plan- VHF radios/Digital- Rodney stated that he has been working on the communication section for the plans. Right now if they have a radio that goes down it will depend whether Digicom or some other company has the parts. He has updated 5 VHF radios to use and will be ordering a combination Digital and VHF radio to communicate with all the frequencies with all entities in an emergency. He does have that in his budget-account; that should be qualified for COVID reimbursement.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked Rodney that request is for how many radios.

Rodney stated that is for only one radio; it is a special radio that has digital and VHF capability.

Comm. Garcia asked if he has to spend that money by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Rodney stated that the bid was for 30 days but he could probably get an extension if he had to. It will take a couple of weeks to get it and have it delivered to him.

COVID- Upgrade to Conejos County Policy/Coordination Room-Rodney mentioned that he needs to upgrade the Conejos County Policy room next to the Emergency Coordination Center. He is asking for upgrades to include about \$6500 in equipment and improvements to allow Zoom and other meeting formats. They would be allowed to put in a 75" TV and upgrade computers to be able to do any of the trainings or meetings in conjunction with the COVID. It would work as a center for their policy group or for their emergency operation. That would run around 6,000; there are some special grants coming up after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. He is hoping COVID funds will be re-done then. The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will okay some of this stuff as special projects but won't start until the 16<sup>th</sup> of January. He would like to purse that so they can use it.

Rodney stated that they had a table top scheduled yesterday which was cancelled because the sheriff has been extremely busy. They will re-schedule as soon as things slow down.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked Rodney to work with Tressesa-County Admn. on the upgrading of the communication center; also make sure that they are re-imbursable.

Rodney stated that he would like to do it before the end of the year.

Rodney stated that he gave Linda the information so they could use that account for the Zoom meetings.

#### **Denise Jiron- Board of Health Report/COVID update**

Chrmn. Jarvies proceeded to call Dr. Vaughn Jackson-Medical Director

Denise gave her report as follows:

SLV Regional information on COVID-19 as of 11/17/2020

**CASES-** Active Cases in the SLV-237

New Cases in the past 2 weeks- 237 (Severe level for a 2 week incidence rate)

Cumulative total cases-1041

#### **TESTING**

Tests: 9282 tests have been completed for 6002 residents

Testing rate is 2.7/1000 people, above the state's minimum requirement of 0.75/1000.

Positivity Rate is 10.66%, indicating that even more testing is needed.

## HOSPITALIZATION AND DEATHS

83 Local hospitalizations to date, plus 14 transferred out of area  
Deaths: 19

Active Cases: 11/17/2020

Alamosa County: 21

Mineral County: 0

Conejos County: 30

Rio Grande County: 48

Costilla County: 15

Saguache County: 23

Regional: 237

Conejos County as 11/17/2020

30 Active Cases

146 Positives confirmed to date

4 Hospitalized to date

1 Death

Two Week Average Positivity Rate for Conejos County: 13.10%

Goal is to stay below 5%

Conejos has had 539.15 cases per 100,000 people or 44 total new cases  
between 11/2/2020-11/15/2020

CDHPE has moved us to level orange along with Alamosa County and  
County bases off the threshold in our positivity rate.

Conejos is seeing a high level of transmission within house holds and  
extended family members and it is also crossing county lines with  
contacts mainly in Alamosa and Rio Grande County. Messaging is focused  
on limiting social contacts to prevent further illness and loss of  
lives. They are encouraging personal responsibility and community  
support is needed to be encouraged as we try to move through the  
upcoming months without increase in positive cases.

Dr. Vaughn Jackson stated that this week hasn't been as bad as the  
last 4 weeks.

Denise stated that they are seeing a bulk of it on young people.

Denise stated that the state has revised the state dial and will be  
releasing the revised version on Friday; she will e-mail that to Dr.  
Jackson. Denise stated that they have added the level purple which is  
extreme risk.

Denise stated that she told the state that they would not volunteer to  
dial back. She stated that what needs to be clarified is if we do not

volunteer what does that mean. She will wait for notification from them and inform the board accordingly.

Dr. Vaughn Jackson stated that he had a concern with Sanford. He thinks he has that pretty well solved; he has not had any new cases in almost a week. Dr. Jackson told them that parties had to be stopped. The nurse from the school came in and they have added some things; he has seen some decline. He felt that businesses should be kept open, and tell the businesses that if they don't have a mask then they can't come in; we might have to limit the amount of people in our stores. Dr. Jackson talked about the hunters coming in from Texas and New Mexico. New Mexico is not allowing anyone from Colorado to go into their state; we should do the same to them.

Denise stated that back in March we sent out the home owners notification to wait; we can try that.

Dr. Jackson said it's not homeowners it is tourists.

Nick Sarmiento stated that there is a precedence set by Gunnison County in 1918 for the Spanish Flu and they tried to do that again. It did cause some issues with the State of Texas. They did put significance restrictions on tourists.

Denise stated that they did have a shelter in place; but the Attorney General did react and this was concerning homeowners that owned land in Gunnison but resided out of state.

Dr. Jackson stated that those residents were not supposed to leave the State of New Mexico.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they might need to have a meeting and come up with the perimeters.

Comm. Garcia stated that it would be hard to do something like what the governor of New Mexico did. Thanksgiving is coming up and there will probably be a lot of people traveling which might be just within our own state.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked who has jurisdiction over the schools and what is our role in that; is that Colorado Department of Education that runs that.

Dr. Jackson stated that all schools put a complete comprehensive plan.

He reviewed it and they changed some things. Now they are sending classes home and the teachers are now getting it. We should shut until after Thanksgiving but boys are in playoffs too.

Denise said they call her after talking to Dr. Jackson seeking a different answer and she refers them to CDE and the guidance because schools are not governed by Public Health or CDPHE, they are encouraged to consult with us. They determine who to quarantine and who to let off quarantine.

Dr. Jackson stated that they have been very good about calling him.

Dr. Jackson stated that if anyone has tested positive they do need to be treated they just can't be sent home.

Denise will copy that to the schools.

Comm. Garcia stated that CHASA who governs the sports in Colorado are trying to get through the football playoffs which will last about 2 more weeks, they might start limiting basketball and other sports. They are letting the elementary stay in session but some have shut down until Thanksgiving.

Dr. Jackson stated that he feels the schools are being on top of it. They are checking temperatures before they get in the buses. He has not heard much from Antonito.

Denise stated that she has reached out to Antonito to reach out so us; also mentioned that she has been in contact with both school nurses; they have been really good in communicating.

#### **Denise- Public Health Report**

Administration and Governance- Personnel positions have not changed. They hired a nurse at 30 hours a week.

**Communicable Disease Prevention-** See Board of Health Report on Coronavirus.

**Immunizations-** Mentioned that they have a drive through clinic for the flu planned for December 14, 2020; that depends on the status of their cases at that time. That will be in their office in La Jara.

**Prevention and Population Health-** They are continuing with the Tobacco Grant. Child Fatality- no new cases. Baby and Me tobacco free, CDOT,



and RCORP- Natalie and Joleen and Natalie have taken on the RCORP Grant deliverables which is opioid grant.

PCP- October they had 63 clients; hours worked 1641.3

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program-** 338 total household participated in October, curbside delivery continues 2 (Tues. and Thursdays weekly due to COVID 19 (cuts down transmission); closed Mondays and Wednesday for preparation of the food boxes.

**Options for Long Term Care Program-** Officially closed as of June 30, 2020; continue to correspond with the state regarding close out report and monies. Gary is largely leading that.

Denise mentioned that as Rodney had stated they were planning a vaccination test site at the stake center in Manassa. Due to staffing shortage and lack of volunteers they could not do it this week. They are hoping to stage a testing site with the next 2 or 3 weeks; that would be free; would be set outside.

Denise mentioned that she had sent the board a copy of the dial. We are in orange. We did not volunteer for red. They will probably be contacted for that. If any county lands up in purple that would essentially be a shut down to where we were in March and April. Our businesses, government offices, retails and restaurants are to be only at 25% capacity of staff. Those that can work remotely should be doing so and everyone should be wearing a mask. Retail stores should only have 25% and restaurants 25% capacity with increased take out. That message has been sent out to all and she will follow up with a phone call. Most concerning are offices. She is asking the board to talk to the offices to go back to 25% capacity and working remotely.

Connie-HR Director asked Denise if she suggests that they cohort.

Denise stated that she thinks it is wise because they have seen 7 outbreaks in Alamosa County and those are all at businesses; the ones that were closed were due to staff.

**Linda- Land Use**

**Robins Construction- County Road H Bridge Replacement-Status Update**

Linda stated that they have the agreement from Robins Construction; Mr. Sarmiento has that; she asked Mr. Sarmiento to share that.

Nick Sarmiento-County Attorney stated that the reason for the Memorandum of Understanding is just to make sure that we have timelines in there. For the public's benefit we approved the Large Rock Mining Special Use Permit awhile back. Part of the agreement is that Mr. Robins/Robins Construction would start working on the Lazaro Bridge and replacing it. We have a glitch in there that kind of amortizes the cost of replacing the bridge. They have tied in into \$10.00 per load and once that balances out then at some point Robins Construction will start owing that every time that they are mining. The reason for the \$10.00 per load is that is the best approximation that we have as to the use impact caused by Mr. Robins mining to our roads and road infrastructure. This is not an action item for today; he just wanted to bring it today, it was already signed. He told them that if there are any questions about this to bring it back because he wants the board to review it open session before we commit. They hope to start February 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. There are some conditions. Scott Johnson is the engineer and Don Martinez the one approving the bridge. We would start publishing notice for the surrounding landowners that the bridge will be out of circulation and that would be starting January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. Nick stated that it shows how much it will take to do it which is 30 days. Steel prices are shooting up they will be flexible with them. They have a one year warranty. A lot of these things were discussed; this agreement is just to set up the deadlines and timelines. They can either have another Special Meeting to discuss approval of this MOU or we can approve it in December. The timelines don't start until January.

Nick Sarmiento stated that he has sent the IGA agreement for law enforcement to their council.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they can go through it and make changes if they have to. They can present it at their December meeting.

Linda did mention that her office doesn't meet the 25% due to COVID but will work with her staff on that.

#### **Aaron Abeyta, Nick Barela, and Larry Zaragoza-Cares Act Discussion**

Aaron Abeyta-Antonito Town Mayor stated that they have 730,000 appropriated to Conejos County through the Federal Cares Act. The Cares Act will be expiring by the 29<sup>th</sup> of December otherwise it has to be returned to the state. He is in the committee to be creative to find a way that we can keep that money in the county where it was intended to be used and much needed. He took it upon himself to approach the Latino Community Foundation of Colorado. Mr. Carlos

Martinez is the CEO of Latino Community Foundation of Colorado who was appointed by Governor Polis to the State Board Cares Act for the entire state through the Cares Act Grant. He reached out to the foundation to see if there was a way that any unused money could be run through the Latino Comm. Foundation of Colorado and in turn have the Latino Foundation issue grants to the various entities within our county that need it because of COVID; if it is not spent by December 29, it will go away. If there is more coming on it may diminished because we didn't spend it this time. There is ample need. He wants to use Latino Foundation as a mediary and see if they can distribute the money and then get reimbursed because that is the way the grant works. The other option being how could the commissioners, mayors and the community at large team up independently under the Latino Community Foundation to make sure that money doesn't get backed. He felt the county or the towns could get reimbursed. He has talked to Christi from the Department of Local Affairs and asked her if we could get vouchers for internet, utilities, and food. All those are applicable and expenses and can we prove that we spent it on COVID. Just by wearing a mask is proof that everything is COVID. He felt that those are examples that it benefits the community and the county. He does not want to see that money go to Washington or Denver where it is not needed.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that was a very good presentation from Mr. Abeyta. He feels that they need to get together and meet for a discussion. He is for using the dollars where they can as long as they are reimbursed. Those dollars will have to be funneled through the county. We can keep the county within the deciding factor because we are responsible. He appreciates that Mr. Abeyta has been super active and is looking after the community and Mr. Zaragoza as well. There are things that we need to look at and make sure that they are expenditures that would reimbursable.

Mr. Abeyta stated that they are meeting about once a month; they will try and meet more frequently because right now time is of the essence. He stated that he was talking to Clerk Trujillo and her idea was that everybody is suffering from COVID19, everybody has expenses that were unforeseen, new expenses having to educate their kids from home. Her idea was to distribute the money to every resident, every water user a relief from paying their water bill for X amount of months. Can we prove it is COVID, I think we could ear mark it as COVID relief; they can show that the delinquent accounts went up almost double since March. Don Martinez said they have the similar circumstances in Romeo and Mr. Zaragoza in La Jara. We have faith that the money will be used by our citizens as it was intended.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that he thought Mr. Zaragoza was looking for money to pay their bills if they were delinquent and they said that was not acceptable.

Mr. Zaragoza stated that was right. Going back to what Mr. Abeyta eluded earlier on the delinquency of water and sewer payments; in March they had about 17% delinquent but now they were up to 30%. As the town manager he does not want to turn off water and sewer to individuals in the community. There are some that have 900.00 bills so anything would be most helpful for the residents and for the town to continue. He would like to add that what Mr. Abeyta suggested about partnering with the Latino Foundation; he has been involved with several of their meetings. They are a very reputable foundation. He would support Mr. Abeyta's suggestion. He also mentioned that they had talked about providing assistance to some of the agriculture.

Nick Barela stated that he wants to be supportive to all the recommendations but want to be very careful as to what is an actual documented cost because of COVID because of auditing purposes. The group has to be very careful. I know that we have about \$350,000 of requests that have come in and that haven't been decided how we are going to move forward on those. He would hate to send money back.

Tressesa, County Admn. stated that she received an email from Kristi letting them know that that they got \$134,000. She wants to know if they are going to spend that down because if not they will defund those dollars. She did respond and copy Nick Barela; she told her that they had between 350,000- 400,000 worth of applications but don't have all the supporting documentation that we need and are strapped for time. She mentioned that Rodney King was on that call and they were told if they didn't run that by the state first, make sure it is reimbursable and then send the request. They will run it by the state then we can ask for reimbursement.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked Mr. Abeyta, Mr. Zargoza, and Nick Barela to set a date to meet around the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December. They should have a paper trail due to audits.

The board recessed for a few minutes.

The board came back from recess and turned the time to Nick Sarmiento-County Attorney.

**Executive Session**

Motion to go into executive session as per 24-6-402 (b): Comm. Garcia/Second: Comm. McCarroll, all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried.

The board came out of executive session conference with the attorney at 11:15 AM and no decisions were made.

Nick: It is the opinion of the county attorney that the discussion had an executive session constituted an attorney/client privilege therefore no record was kept.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that Connie-HR brought it up and Denise mentioned in her report about cutting to 25% within offices. Right now we are doing by appointment only.

Tressesa stated that not necessarily, she understands that Scott will let them in if there is no one else waiting.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that he is okay with that. He feels that they should leave it up to each department head because they know what they need to have for staff. They can tell them these are the guidelines but do what you can.

Connie stated that the guidelines are 25%.

Comm. McCarroll felt it should be left to the elected official or department heads; let them decide what they want to do and how they want to do it and go from there.

Comm. Garcia stated that what Connie is saying from the chart that Denise presented it says level orange high risk offices 25% and remote is strongly encouraged. In the Clerk's Office there are 4 full time employees that would mean only having 1 person at all times. We should be consistent because Nick Barela-DSS has 12 employees he could have 3 and they would be cohorted. He feels they should be consistent across the county.

Connie-HR stated that right now there are about 14 employees quarantined. They are seeing employees being exposed outside of work so when they come in we run the risk like Alamosa Social Services. They could have 3 people work today and 3 people the next day, etc. It is difficult in each office; some cannot work remotely.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they sent an email out to each department stating that we are in level orange and that we operate at 25%; let them know that the board encourages them to do that in whatever manner works for each department. That shows that they are concerned and are working towards that.

Comm. Garcia stated that he agrees with Comm. Jarvies concerning the email from Tressesa-County Admn. He feels that no office should be working at 100% daily.

Comm. McCarroll felt the same way. He feels we need to stay open but need to be cautious.


County Admn. Tressesa will send the elected officials and department heads an email concerning what the Board decided.

Connie-HR stated that with Tressesa's direction she ordered sanitizing back packs, masks, and gloves.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chrmn. Jarvies declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

  
NATHAN RUYBAL  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

  
MITCHELL JARVIES  
CHRMN. BD OF COUNTY COMM.