

Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting held on February 04, 2021 at 9:00 AM in the Conejos County Board Room, 6683 County Rd 13, Conejos, CO. 81129

**Call the meeting to order**

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

**Roll Call:**

Mitchell Jarvies- Chrmn.- Present  
Carlos Garcia-Vice Chair-Present  
Joseph Baroz- Vice Chair- Present  
Tressesa Martinez- County Admn.-Present

Also present were Nick Sarmiento-County Attorney, Connie Ricci-HR, 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 presented: Comm.Garcia/Second: Comm. Baroz. All in favor, motion carried.

3-0 Motion carried.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2021 Regular Meeting: Comm. Baroz/Second: Comm. Garcia, all in favor.

3-0 Motion carried.

**Public Comment:** None

**County Attorney**

Nick Sarmiento stated that he received a letter from Sub-district # 3 concerning the farm plan manager information. They are requiring that anyone that owns wells and is using wells has to augment and replace any injuries that they are causing to the stream system here in

Conejos; that means the Conejos River and the Rio Grande River. They are asking them to provide and update as to the wells that are being used and subject to the plan. We will be paying for the water and right now they have the Conejos County Courthouse listed. He will double check with Road and Bridge to make sure that there are no other wells that we are using; we will just certify that is the only well that we are using. The rules and regulations apply to only irrigation and also any depletions to the aquifer. He will talk to Donnie.

Nick stated that they can prove through their sewage system that they are putting water back into the system.

Comm. Garcia stated that they have a well at the jail and at the arena.

Nick stated that they will put it all together and go from there. Nick would like to go into executive session to talk about open meetings and open records.

The board recessed for a few minutes.

The board came back and continued with Tressesa, County Admn.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Tressesa stated that Comm. Garcia asked her to put the wolf situation on the agenda.

Comm. Garcia stated that it was sent from Daphne on Feb. 2nd.

Nick Sarmiento read the letter: Thank you both for taking time from your busy schedules to speak with many of our local government officials about the wolf introduction plan for Colorado on January 27<sup>TH</sup>. We would like to schedule a meeting with you and other stakeholders to discuss how we can be involved in the planning process to have opportunities to have meaningful involvement in the wolf introduction planning process but we do not contest the results of the passage of proposition 114. We do believe that utilizing local experts with diverse backgrounds will result in most efficient in wolf introduction plan possible. We would like to work with your office to make the impact and interest of our region represented through the entire process. We feel that our local ranchers, producers, and leaders can offer their expertise to help advice planning efforts. Many of our local governments have local land use plan which are created through local processes that offer guidance to state and

federal land management. It is our hope that we can develop an objective process for selecting individuals whose backgrounds and experience fulfill these needs and who can provide thoughtful construction input to actively help guide the process. These individuals will also be prime candidates to serve on the stakeholder advisory group when the time is appropriate. We understand that this process will be challenging and filled with diverse and often competing interest we are actively seeking strategies to maximize local expertise and input to ensure the final plan is thoughtful respectful local land property business owners and provides the best environment for the entire wolf to be introduced. We would be happy to schedule a zoom call at your earliest convenience availability to discuss ideas on how to achieve this balance. We are all in this together and we must work intimately to build a plan filled with compromise.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked if they are asking if we want to be on the board.

Comm. Garcia stated that it says that they are seeking membership's approval of the draft letter before sending it to the directors and engaging with partners. Please let us know if you have any thoughts, suggestions, or objections by Thursday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> for the final delivery on Friday Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Comm. Garcia stated that it sounds good to him. He would rather have some expertise on drafting the re-introduction for our local ranchers; he feels they should at least get back to them.

Nick stated that they can send a thumb's up that they are good with it.

#### **Lorie Lopez- Health Promotion Specialist- Pueblo Public Health-Zoom**

Lorie Lopez stated that she is a health specialist with the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment and is working with HRSA RCCORP Planning Grant. She is also joined by Teri Schriver and Natalie Chavez. They are representatives of the grant project with the Conejos Health Department as well as the Schriver Health Group. This grant is to address opioid use and prevention in Conejos County. She is happy to work with Natalie; they want to see if they are interested in buying into the project. The grant started in October of last year. They are working with the health department and the Schriver research group to recruit people for good experience interviews. They want to hear the voice of the community in this project. It has been a challenge with the pandemic. The draft was due on February 03<sup>rd</sup> and the

final is due by the beginning of March. They would like to get more buy in from locals and leadership to participate in the program. Lorie stated that what they are tasked with HRSA; they are putting together an opioid substance abuse coalition group that will meet once a month. They hope that they will be interested in joining or passing along the information to folks or colleagues that will be interested in participating. They need to do the needs assessment and gap analysis to address the substance and opioid abuse in the county; the strategic and action plan is created with the coalition numbers. They are hoping that they find some interest in this program. If they want to join and attend the meetings they are about an hour. They cannot do this without the voice of Conejos County. This is your project and they are here to support it; they want the best outcome to build a long term response to the crisis. They are hoping to bring in training from experts. HRSA has an implementation grant that they are hoping to apply for; they can hire more staff. That is their long term goal. She shared their contact information.

Comm. Garcia stated that he would support it; it is something that is needed.

Comm. Baroz stated that he agrees.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that he totally agrees. He stated that it looks like it is a long range plan; he has sat through 2 of these with groups of people in the community but the money ran out and it went away. They will have their buy-in as commissioners. He used the example of how many people attended the first, second and third meeting which was always less people; he wanted to know how that would be addressed. Are they looking at a long term program such as 5,10, or 15 year program.

Lorie stated that is basically what they are aiming. They want to have success in the planning stage so they can make a really strong case for an implementation grant so they may hire people to do the activities and do the prevention work listed in the action plan that they are going to create with this coalition and planning. The action plan can be a 3-5 year plan. They are aiming to make it someone's job to be in Conejos County and to do the work already. If you have someone there to literally do the work that would be really helpful. That is why they want as much buy-in now so they can be successful and make a really strong case for future funding to have sustainable programs.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked about the funding source. He wanted to know if this has to do with the opioid settlement that came out; is that where some of those monies are coming from.

Lori stated that this is a separate grant. They are working with the Attorney General's Office on this project. Teri can probably describe the opioid litigation.

Teri stated that she has been working with Natalie, Denise, and Lorie. The way she understands it the Attorney General's Office they are trying to negotiate the settlement; they are expecting payments to begin this calendar year. There are going to be some questions; what will the counties do with the money. A lot of the work that they are doing now is in preparation for that. They are looking at the community gap assessment right now. They are working with a methodology to help counties on what to do with the money.

Chrmn. Jarvies mentioned that they get the money from the tobacco grant every year which is on-going. It would be good to know if it is similar with the opioid money.

Teri stated that they can invite Heidi from the Attorney General's Office to come to one of your meetings; she can give them the updates.

Teri did not know how much will be allocated to Conejos County or the San Luis Valley.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that when the funding runs out then the program goes away.

Teri asked what kind of role with the commissioners like to play; would it be a joint decision.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that he would sit on every meeting he could attend.

Tressesa-County Admn. stated that the sheriff should play a big part.

Comm. Baroz stated that he would jump on board.

Comm. Garcia stated that he would depend a lot on their recommendations. They would all be willing to sit on and be actively involved in it. San Luis Valley Mental Health Comprehensive Center work close with our Department of Social Services. They have had a few presentations at the SLV Commissioners Meetings. This is being

targeted more towards Conejos County; maybe they have something they could lend us in the thinking process.

Lorie stated that their first meeting will be on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup>. She will get all the e-mails and send them the zoom link. They will have a meeting once a month which will be about an hour long. The first meeting will be an introduction to the HRSA Grant; after that they will get into the strategic plan. They will address the issues and talk about what they need to do; by that time Teri will have completed the needs assessment and analysis. She will present the findings and then they will go to the strategic and action planning portion.

Teri stated that the deadline for the strategic plan is July 2<sup>nd</sup>. They will probably pursue the longer term grant which could begin this fall.

Chrmn. Jarvies asked who the facilitators are.

Teri stated: we are the facilitators.

#### **Denise-Public Health/Board of Health**

Denise gave her report as follows:

##### **Administrative and Governance:**

1 vacancy for a prevention coordinator- They have temporarily hired Austin Chavez to help assist through the vaccination process.

**Communicable Disease Prevention-Denise** will discuss that on her Board of Health Report.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response-** Continue to work with Rodney King.

**Personal Care Provider (PCP) Program-** January 2021 they had 65 clients, total hours worked: 4,625.15- that has increased.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program-** 330 total household participation for January 2021. Curbside delivery continues 2 days a week due to COVID-19, closed Monday and Wednesday for preparation.

**Options for Long Term Care Program -** Officially closed as of June 30, 2020. Continuing to evaluate fair market value and settle on costs. Costilla County was not awarded the contract; a private company will

be taking over. They are hopeful that the company will retain some of the staff that originated here in Conejos County.

Connie-HR asked was is the name of the company and how is that going to affect our community.

Denise stated that it is Rocky Mountain Systems and they were told that they would keep our cliental and files.

**Denise opened up Board of Health**

SLV Regional information on COVID-19 as of 2/2/201-SLV currently has 118 known active cases.

Alamosa County- 63	Conejos County-10	Costilla County-4
Mineral County-4	Rio Grande County-35	Saguache County-2

Conejos County of 2/2/2021

11 active case	405 Positive confirmed to date
24 Hospitalized to date	4 deaths and 2 outbreaks

We remain in level orange at this time. The state will be changing the metrics on the dial and it will require a request to either become more restrictive or less restrictive. Once that process is finalized we can decide to move forward. They will have to go through more vaccinations first. They will open up that dialogue with the board when they reach that point. Some of the metrics for the next level don't change.

**Vaccinations-** They are doing vaccinations by appointment only on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays; this includes second dose vaccinations.

They have given out 392 first doses and 146 second doses. Yesterday they gave an additional 40.

**Rio Grande Inn LTCF-** 34 residents have received both doses, 1 received the first dose and 4 refused. 30 staff received both does, and 5 received the first does. Rio Grande Inn did not go through CCPH for the COVID vaccine. They contracted with a private vendor.

**Conejos County Schools/Educators:** They have collaborated with our 3 School Districts and have scheduled vaccines for interested staff. They will be doing South Conejos on Tuesday, on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> they

will be doing North Conejos and Sanford schools, this also includes Little Treasures and the Justice and Heritage Academy in Antonito.

Upcoming Events- As of February 08, 2021 people 65 years and older, educators, and school personnel and those with a co-morbidity issues are eligible for the vaccine.

On February 29, 2021 they will hold a mass vaccination at the South Conejos parking lot. The state will be sending a vaccination support team at no cost to us. They are ordering 400 vaccinations for that day. Rodney will be reaching out to others for traffic control; that traffic will affect road G.5.

Comm. Baroz stated that some people that got the first vaccine had a question on the second dose which will be on the 10<sup>th</sup>, is that going to be by appointment.

Denise stated that 202 people to push through their parking lot is too much. That will be broken down into the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. 75% have already scheduled out.

Connie-HR stated that yesterday she had got through to 78 people.

Denise stated that between Connie and Austin they had been able to reach out to those people. Austin is calling the remainder on the list. They have EMS on sight; the ambulance crew is available just in case of a reaction.

Denise mentioned that Valley Wide has opened up a mobile unit in front of the Catholic Church in La Jara. San Luis Valley Health has started vaccinations today at the La Jara Clinic on main street.

Comm. Garcia asked Denise concerning school districts; are they going to try to vaccinate other people that are not at the building every day such as coaches, bus drivers, custodians, food service, etc.

Denise stated that the school nurses coordinated that and have reached out to whoever is involved with the students.

Comm. Garcia stated that CHASA has put out quite a few recommendations for high school sports. He wants to know how involved she is and also Dr. Jackson with the school districts and high school sports or sports in general.



Denise stated that her and Dr. Jackson met 3 weeks ago he is taking the lead. Athletes are masked up, two spectators per student, if you have one student in junior high and one in high school then each student can get 2 spectators, household seated together, 6 feet from others. Dr. Jackson has communicated with all the schools.

Connie-HR stated that someone had asked her about clergy or parochial leaders; when would those people be vaccinated or their staff.

Denise stated that they would be with funeral directors. They are not really placed on their list but they go according to their age. They are Phase 1-B. They are not required to have proof of age or occupation.

#### **Linda Land Use Admn. and Chris**

Linda stated that she did send the monthly statistics. She did get a question on how they got so much on construction permits; that was because of the school and also Highland Cabinets.

Linda stated that they had a request from Mr. Taylor. The problem is that we don't have a burning regulation that the county has adopted. We follow the state regulation; if you are going to burn you need a state permit. State permits only allow for green waste to be burned; no shrubs, tree limbs, or branches. Those smolder and smolder. She will send a letter to Mr. Miller to let him know that he is in violation of the state regulation; hopefully he is not burning contractor material.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that we don't know if he is burning shingles.

Linda stated that we have a complaint process that they should sign showing how they are being harmed so they can go and see what is being done.

Linda also talked about campaign signs. She talked about the big Trump sign; she will send them a letter. Mr. DeHerrera stated that he will paint over his and Gale took her sign off. She mentioned that CDOT will not do anything with campaign signs.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they might have to send Road and Bridge guys to remove those.

Comm. Baroz asked if they can advise and get permission before taking them down.

The board will discuss some of those issues in executive session.

Linda stated that they had a discussion on construction permits and building codes. She mentioned that Chris-inspector really does support but can't sell it to the Planning Commission. The board makes the final decision on that. She wanted to know how much community input would the board like to see.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that he would like it advertised to talk about a universal code; most contractors are for it.

Comm. Baroz stated that he agrees, he had several contractors talk to him about it.

Nick Sarmiento stated that a building code is a good thing. The question is which one. The Planning Commission is against it but they have to bring them on board and have public notices to discuss it. The Planning Commission is valuable; maybe they might not have a full code. They could have a work session; sending the contractors a special invite to discuss the IBC.

Chris stated that the Planning Commission's argument is why should they have it for agriculture. He used the example of a hay shed; mentioned that those buildings can collapse and hurt someone.

Nick stated that they could hold a town hall discussion.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that maybe they could hold it at the Parish Hall.

Linda asked if she could solicit written comments; it would be easier.

Nick suggested inviting the contractors by letter; they will solicit comments for pros and cons.

Comm. Garcia stated that they have that newsletter coming up.

There was a short discussion if they should solicit comments from any unincorporated towns only.

Comm. Garcia stated that if Linda and Chris feel that we need a building code they can put all their ideas down. What are the pros such as safety and how badly do we need it.

Comm. Garcia asked Linda if they could break down their report, Linda said yes and they could post it on the Land Use website. Linda stated that the flood regulations go hand in hand with the building code.

**Naomi Keys- County Assessor- Abatelements-Zoom**

Naomi presented an abatement for approval.

Motion to approve Schedule # 598334311005 under the name of Montoya Family Revocable Trust in the amount of \$831.46 for the year 2020: Comm. Baroz/Second: Comm. Garcia, all in favor.

3-0 motion carried.

**Donnie -Road and Bridge Report**

Donnie presented his report as follows:

- They are trying to stay up with the wind and snow. Talked about the situation with the trees at County Road K. There are also some trees leaning over at Dennis Moeller's. He will get in contact with him to see if he will knock those down.
- He divided the guys into 3 different areas which is working out good; had some guys out at 2 the morning when they had the last snow storm.
- They are making sure the church parking lot is cleaned. The roads towards the cemeteries are rough.
- Talked about the culverts that they have replaced; have converted several bridges to culverts. They have eliminated 6 bridges; have several others to do and some they can't convert. He is working with Tressesa on budgets.
- They fixed the road that goes to the Gomez Cemetery.
- Switched things with the road grader crew. They have not received the new graders yet; he talked to the salesman and they are checking anything that is wrong with them.
- In the future they are looking at contracting to crushing material.
- Would like to get rid of the older pickups in the future.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that concerning those trees they can't go into his property; we can do it on our side if we need to.

Nick Sarmiento asked Donnie to send Mr. Moeller a letter because they are a hazard; they could fall on midnight. That way they have proof that they contacted him.

Donnie stated that they did call the sheriff's and they did put out a police report.

- The truck for the boots and gloves will be here on the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- They have a program to do daily's all the time. He ran a report which shows that they have saved 50-60,000 a year after the transition.
- The cost of fuel is half less than it was in 2017, 2018, and 2019 by being more efficient.
- Donnie talked about the hours that they used the water truck, in two years they only used it 75 hours; doesn't feel there is a need to buy another water truck.

Tressesa stated that they upgraded all of the districts with zoom capabilities.

Comm. Garcia asked that he has some concerns that will probably have to be discussed in executive session. He had a few suggestions for Donnie concerning the different areas that are being graded every 3<sup>rd</sup> week; wanted to know from what areas are they coming from, and could the graders be parked at the shop. When they start FSR 250 they could start on the north end at Horca and they do the loop, where do they park the graders; this is concerning vandalism.

Donnie stated that they would hit the La Jara side to Stunner which is a 4 day process they were able to do that in 2 days. They need to coordinate when they do the N end of 250 and work south.

Comm. Garcia asked if they could park the grader at the employees house.

Donnie said yes and they have also left equipment on Forest Service property.

Comm. Baroz asked if the data on paper is being shared with the crew.

Donnie said yes just the like the budget.

Comm. Garcia asked if that data is being shared with the mechanics. He stated that Donnie has implemented more positive changes to Road and Bridge; also since Jeff has been working in area 1 he should be compensated because eventually they will go with one supervisor for all 3 areas.

### Ernest Abeyta- Ambulance Report

Ernest stated that Brandon will start off with the yearly review.

Brandon stated that he has the 2020 summary report- total calls of service was 1,088 runs-99 secondary and 7 of those are third out which gives an average of 8.33 secondary and 3<sup>rd</sup> out calls per month.

Total revenue 313,828.18; total owed is 257,317.31.

Ernest stated that about \$100,000 is from insurance and the other is self-pay; about 95,000 is in collections that have not been sent out to anybody. He wanted to know if they should be sent to collections.

Comm. Garcia asked if it is a 2 or 3 year period.

Ernest stated it is his understanding that it is just one year; he stated that they have not moved forward but would like to get the board's feeling on that.

Comm. Garcia asked Ernest if he could break it down more to show how many people are not insured.

Ernest stated that they should be able to.

There was a short discussion as to whether people get a statement every month showing that they owe; which ones have a secondary insurance do some owe the 20% that the insurance does not cover; should those get a collection's letter.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that people can probably set up a payment plan.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that we have a responsibility to our citizens; it is a business.

Ernest stated that they will break it down to show what insurances have paid and which are self-pay; the total owed includes Medicaid, Medicare, Private and self-pay. Ernest explained what is being charged, contractual adjustment, etc.

During February 2021 they had 812 calls, 14 secondary- 0- 3<sup>rd</sup> were events. Total brought in was 50,196.88. In January they billed 101,785, adjustments were 47,735.00, charges 54,049; amount brought in was \$22,000.

Comm. Garcia stated that with budget cuts that they had talked about in December; if they are going to start cutting secondary calls totally off the board in the first quarter and dispatch gets the call are they going to say Conejos County is not available; will they have to call Costilla or Alamosa County.

Ernest stated that they are on a call. They will tell them they have another call for Conejos County and they will ask do you want us to do a secondary call; they will have to advise them to use Rio Grande, Alamosa, or Costilla.

Ernest stated that for 2021 the primaries did 40 hours a week versus 48 hours a week; this is creating an abundance with the shifts. Ernest had a question concerning the payroll; they had a total of 33,678 in January there is not much of a difference even if they cut hours. The crew is still pushing to do their job even though they have been threatened and harassed verbally, physically and sexually. They picked up everyone that they could.

Ernest asked about an under expenditure.

Tressesa stated that is the rest of the budget where they paid workman's comp, supplies, computer services, etc. for the year.

Ernest mentioned that they have been requested to work along with Public Health to monitor vaccinations.

Tressesa stated that she had talked to Denise about that. They could probably send those that are not on schedule and pay them with COVID dollars and have them do separate time sheets. She will send Ernest a time sheet with a break down.

Ernest stated that Cathy Steckle with North Fork EMS is willing to come down to help them assist with setting up the Special District process; the last week in February would work better for her. She asked if the county could pay for her room.

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they could save her from traveling if they set up a zoom meeting.

Ernest stated that they received an invoice for PPE for \$900.00 which is non-matching.

Tressesa will have Ernest tell Cheryl that it is COVID so she can put it on that line item.

Tressesa stated that they budgeted \$300,000 for salaries; don't know if he can cut from the rest of the budget.

Ernest will take a look at it once he gets a copy of the budget; he mentioned that he will start on the newsletter.

**Executive Session**

Motion to go into executive session as per 24-6-402 (b) to discuss legal signs, open meeting's law, and open records: Comm. Garcia/Second: Comm. Baroz, all in favor.

3-0 motion carried.

The board came out of executive session conference with the attorney at 12:14 PM and no decisions were made.

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

Chrmn. Jarvies stated that they had discussed as Comm. Garcia had brought it up in an email about keeping some regular office hours. They had a work session; they will take turns being here 8-10 AM starting Tuesday February 09th. That will give people the opportunity to come and see them. They will keep a log of who came in and what they discussed.

Tressesa County Admn. stated that she will post the phone numbers so they may contact them.

There being no further business to come before the board; Chrmn. Jarvies declared the meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM.

  
NATHAN RUYBAL

CLERK OF THE BOARD

  
MITCHELL JARVIES

CHRMN. BD OF COUNTY COMM.