

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING

April 11, 2024

Santa Fe, New Mexico

1. A. This meeting of the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) was called to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. by Carl Dickens, Vice Chair, on the above-cited date in the Palace Conference Room, 100 Catron Street Santa Fe, New Mexico. The meeting was conducted as a hybrid with people attending in person and on line.

B. A quorum was achieved with the following members present:

Members Present:

Carl Dickens, Vice Chair
J.J. Gonzales [virtually]
Emily Wolf [virtually]
Tom Egelhoff

Member(s) Excused:

Shann Stringer, Chair

Others Present:

Greg Shaffer, County Manager
Cristella Valdez, Assistant Attorney
Penny Ellis-Green, Land Use Administration [virtually]
Paul Olafson, Community Development Director
Gary "Brett" Clavio, Planning Manager
Jacqueline Beam, Sustainability Manager [virtually]
Michael Carr, Sustainability [virtually]
Sara Smith, Manager's Office, Operations Manager
Daniel Fresquez, Manger's Office, Communications Coordinator

C. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes and Ms. Wolf moved to approve the agenda as published. Mr. Egelhoff seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved. [Mr. Gonzales arrived following this action and indicated that his vote was in the affirmative.]

D. Request Approval of Minutes: November 9, 2023

Ms. Wolf moved to approve the November 9, 2023 minutes. Mr. Dickens seconded and the motion passed without opposition. [Mr. Gonzales arrived following this action and indicated his vote was in the affirmative.]

E. Request Approval of Minutes: March 14, 2024

Ms. Wolf moved to approve the March 14, 2024 minutes. Mr. Egelhoff seconded and the motion passed without opposition. [Mr. Gonzales arrived following this action and indicated his vote was in the affirmative.]

2. Discussion Items

A. Presentation Concerning Santa Fe County Resolution No. 2024-038

Manager Shafter said he was pleased to be meeting with WPAC and was present to review the new WPAC resolution and discuss the composition of the committee to ensure that the current members' representation is reflected in the resolution. Also, terms of appointment will be reviewed.

He said the resolution changes include:

- Establish a stronger connection between the County Commission and WPAC
- Heighten awareness of climate change and interdependency risk between water and wastewater in terms of supply and quality
- Increase the focus on inter-disciplinary/departamental collaboration
- Increase administrative support to WPAC to schedule, notice and distribute meeting materials

Manager Shafter addressed the differences in the 2024 resolution versus the previous 2019 resolution:

- The 2024 resolution calls for up to 19 members versus 2019's 12 members. The number has been increased to ensure sovereign partners/pueblo governments have the opportunity for representation along with representation from the City's Water Conservation Committee
- A larger membership allows for more working or sub-groups to divvy up the work
- A County Commissioner will serve as a non-voting "sounding board" member
- The 2024 resolution expands WPAC's liaisons to include the County Manager's Office for administrative assistance, and Community Development Department/Sustainability Division, Public Works Department/Utilities Division and Growth Management Department/Planning Division for interdisciplinary and substantive assistance

Brett Clavio, Planning Manager, said his work with water and wastewater issues have increased over the years. He previously served as the Transportation Manager which brought him in contact with the county pueblos. Currently, he is assisting with the development of a water and wastewater master plan RFP for the La Cienega area. He recently reviewed a wetland restoration report by Ecotone.

Jacqueline Beam, Sustainability Manager, said she met with WPAC in the past to discuss the MS4 permit regarding stormwater and EPA reporting. Sustainability has worked with wells and data tracking and is looking at rain gardens and other ways to incentivize backyard conservation.

Michael Carr, Sustainability Specialist, said he manages the nature-based climate solutions program as well as recycling and composting projects.

Returning to the resolution, Manager Shaffer noted that in terms of guiding principles, the 2024 resolution specifically calls out:

- Results-based accountability framework
- SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound – objectives
- Geographic and culturally appropriate best practices
- Includes the voices of County youth, diversity, equity and inclusion principles

In terms of specific areas of focus, the 2019 resolution referred to aquifer storage and recharge activities, exploration of a regional water authority and consideration of drought management practices. The 2024 resolution expands upon:

- Drought management and aquifer recharge
- Incentivizing large- and small-scale water collection and pollutant reduction activities, such as rain gardens and water catchment systems
- Provision of water and other resources for abnormal events
- Develop a work plan to assure adequate water quality and quantity for seven generation/100 years for the County
- Analyze and make recommendations concerning wastewater, including but not limited to, County wastewater service options for rural and non-densely populated areas of the county, such as distributed wastewater treatment facilities

Manager Shaffer said a work plan should be presented annually to the BCC at the second January meeting; however, the work plan for 2024 is expected for presentation July 26, 2024. As far as periodic reports, the resolution calls for those reports on a quarterly basis or as identified in the current work plan.

The County Manager's Office issued a press release requesting interested residents to submit letters of interest and résumés by April 19th. The Pueblo governors with land within Santa Fe County were also contacted to make recommendations. The BCC may make appointments by April 30th. Onboarding members could occur within the May/June timeframe, the work plan being developed in June and July.

Manager Shaffer thanked the members for their service to the County and the community.

Mr. Dickens expressed his appreciation of the resolution's directness and focus. He emphasized the importance of moving forward.

Manager Shaffer said new members will be selected to fill the representation called for within the resolution; however, expertise and experience is always desired. In addition to the

geographic and organizational positions, an engineer with a hydrology and geology background, etc. would be beneficial.

Mr. Dickens introduced himself stating he grew up in the Village of Los Ranchos along the Rio Grande River, and is a 40-year resident of La Cienega with a passion for water. He lauded J.J. Gonzales for his mentoring and understanding of the complexity of local water issues. Mr. Dickens has served on the La Cienega Valley Association, Santa Fe River Community Collaborative, and the Pipeline Coalition. He offered the following points and ideas:

- Onboarding new members needs to include the history of the area
- WPAC needs to be countywide in issues and not La Cienega-centric
- An educational packet was developed by him and Ms. Wolf and because of insufficient resources the material was never promoted
- A subcommittee of the Pipeline Coalition developed an RFP-document to hire a contractor which ultimately did not work out but the process was exceptional with City and County review and was successful as a collaborative process
- He suggested including non-WPAC members, such as members of the Pipeline Coalition and Santa Fe River Traditional Communities Collaborative to serve on subcommittees
- Working with the City is important, especially in terms of stormwater management
- Water conservation with the County's 10,000 wells needs to be initiated. Well owners need to understand water conservation and City Water Conservation Manager Christine Chavez would be an excellent resource
- Aspire to make Santa Fe County the conservation capital of New Mexico starting with La Cienega
- The County needs to participate with the City on water conservation, spring restoration, and the 66 year-old wastewater treatment plant. He'll be meeting with the Southwest Environmental Finance Center and John Dupuis to discuss funding for the needed \$320 million new plant
- The growth pattern in La Cienega has brought in an estimated 450 homes within the last 20+ years, all on individual wells
- Four wells in Eldorado located within the Ancha Tesuque Formation have a direct impact on the La Cienega springs. There was an agreement that those wells would be taken off-line once Eldorado had access to County water. That agreement should be adhered to
- Currently, he is organizing tours of La Cienega Valley to educate City employees on its rich history so they'll better understand who is impacted by their water decisions

Ms. Wolf complimented the breadth of the resolution and its forward thinking on the expansion of expertise within the committee. She mentioned the City's Scorecard that would be useful for WPAC to coordinate with in terms of shared goals.

B. Review of Current WPAC Membership

Sara Smith, Manager's Office Operations Manager, discussed positions and terms with the members present and noted WPAC does not have term limits. The following was ascertained:

Carl Dickens: Vice Chair, term date may be expired; represents 7.1. Central Planning Area/District 3

J.J. Gonzales: Term began during or shortly after the pandemic; 7.a.and c. Member of a water system/ acequia association, also a farmer, former-plumber and conducted extensive research at the OSE regarding water rights

Emily Wolf: Term began in 2020, resides in District 4 and is very interested in continuing her service

Tom Egelhoff: Appointed by BDD Board and began March 2024; 7.h. Serves as the Director of Agronomy at the Club at Las Campanas. In 2016, the Club was granted a non-voting seat on the BDD Board. A resident of Eldorado, and via the Club operates a pump station and diverts San Juan-Chama water. The Club is working to be a leader in the nation for golf course water conservation

Speaking for the staff, Manager Shaffer said they look forward to working with the re-energized and expanded WPAC.

3. **Matters from the Public** - None were presented.

4. **Matters from the Committee** - None were presented.

5. **Concluding Business**

Mr. Dickens commented that, “there are moments in time when things come together and I’ve got this feeling that it is coming together right now.” He thanked staff and asked that WPAC’s gratitude forwarded to the Commissioners who put the new resolution together.

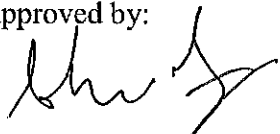
Mr. Egelhoff observed that having former County Utilities Director John Dupuis at the City has helped to develop cooperation between the two entities.

Mr. Dickens mentioned the submission of a \$1 million grant application through the BOR Water Smart Program for an aquatic eco-system restoration study and design plan. This is for the entire river and he credited Mr. Dupuis with extending the grant application to the entire river.

A. **Adjournment**

Vice Chair Dickens declared this meeting adjourned at approximately 5:10 p.m.

Approved by:



Carl Dickens, Vice Chair
Shawn Stinger

Respectfully submitted by:

Karen Farrell, Wordwork

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

DRAFT