

San Juan County Commission
Regular Meeting
May 20, 2025

Chairman Fortner called the San Juan County Commission meeting to order on May 20, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers located in the County Administration Building, 100 S. Oliver Drive, Aztec, New Mexico. Chairman Pro-Tem Gonzales gave the invocation and Commissioner McDaniel led the Pledge of Allegiance. Those present were:

CHAIRMAN	Terri D. Fortner
CHAIRMAN PRO-TEM	Sam Gonzales
MEMBER	Sandra L. Lanier
MEMBER	GloJean Todacheene - Absent
MEMBER	Gary McDaniel
CLERK	Alyssa Kuhn
TREASURER	Carol Taulbee
SHERIFF	Shane Ferrari
UNDERSHERIFF	Cory Tanner
COUNTY MANAGER	Mike Stark
DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER	Steven Saavedra
ATTORNEY	Joe Sawyer
DEPUTY ATTORNEY	Ellen Wayne
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	Kim Martin
PARKS & FACILITIES ADMINISTRATOR	Steven Dansie
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATOR	Nick Porell
CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER	Roberta Padilla
DEPUTY HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER	Melissa Wood
ADULT DETENTION ADMINISTRATOR	Daniel Webb
FIRE CHIEF	David Vega
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF	Donovan Mack
SAFETY & COMPLIANCE MANAGER	Adam Ortega
PUBLIC RELATIONS & FILM MANAGER	Devin Neeley
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTOR	Megan Cullip
PROJECT MANAGER	Porter Smith
PRESS: Tri-City Record	David Albright
VISITORS:	13

Recognition

1. Graduate Recognition

Shane Ferrari, Sheriff, recognized Lieutenant Tim Smith, who graduated from the Northwestern School of Police Staff and Command in Phoenix, Arizona on April 25th. The 10-week program

focuses on command-level content including critical incident management, planning and policies, organizational behavior, budgeting, resource allocation, risk mitigation, and several other contemporary policing issues; these courses are rigorous and high volume. Lieutenant Smith was surrounded by law enforcement commanders from around the region, exposing him to a wide variety of leadership styles and practical insight; the County will benefit from the gained knowledge and networking source. Sheriff Ferrari presented a diploma to recognize Lieutenant Smith for his successful completion of the program.

Regular Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Mike Stark, County Manager, stated that there were no changes to the agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Gonzales to approve the agenda as presented. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for April 15, 2025
2. Approval of Regular Meeting/Budget Workshop Minutes for May 6, 2025
3. Approval of FY25 Budget Adjustment #14 – Resolution No. 24-25-76
4. Approval of Treasurer's Check Register for April 2025
5. Approval of Finance Check Registers for April 2025
6. Approval of Award of Bid No. 24-25-20, County Road 7900 Full Depth Reclamation
7. Approval of Renewal of Bid No. 21-22-20, Cooperative Price Agreement for Fuel; Cardlock Facilities and Bulk Fuel Purchases to Flyers Energy of Auburn, CA and Senergy Petroleum of Phoenix, AZ
8. Approval of Award of Proposal No. 24-25-19, Request for Qualification Based Proposals Alien Run/Angel Peak Trail Design Services to ERO Resources Corporation of Durango, CO
9. Approval of Extension of Lease Agreement with Process Equipment and Service Company, Inc. (PESCO) of Farmington, NM
10. Approval of Resolution No. 24-25-77, a Water Conservation Plan

A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Commissioner McDaniel to approve the Consent Agenda. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Proclamation Declaring May 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month

Megan Cullip, Community Health & Social Services Director, requested staff to prepare a proclamation declaring May 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month. Ms. Cullip read the proclamation aloud:

PROCLAMATION

PROCLAIMING MAY 2025 AS "MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH"

WHEREAS mental health is part of overall health; and

WHEREAS, mental health helps to sustain an individual's thought processes, relationships, productivity, and ability to adapt to change or face adversity; and

WHEREAS, mental illness adversely affects those abilities and often is life-threatening in nature; and

WHEREAS, one in five adults in the United States experiences a mental illness in a given year, with one in twenty being defined as a serious mental illness

WHEREAS, early identification and treatment can make a profound difference in the successful management of mental illness and recovery; and

WHEREAS, every citizen in San Juan County can make a difference in helping end the silence and stigma that for too long has surrounded mental illness and discouraged individuals from getting help; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners desires to increase awareness and public understanding of the importance of mental health.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of San Juan County, New Mexico, does hereby proclaim the month of May 2025 as "Mental Health Awareness Month" in San Juan County to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance of mental health and to encourage San Juan County citizens to seek identification and treatment of mental illnesses.

A motion was made by Chairman Pro-Tem Gonzales, seconded by Commissioner Lanier to approve Proclamation Declaring May 2025 Mental Health Awareness Month. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

2. New Mexico C-PACE Program and Proposed Project with Exceptional Healthcare

Eric Christensen, Project Manager, Adelente Consulting, Incorporated presented the New Mexico Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program enacted into law by the State legislature, HB 228, in March 2023. The program is designed as an alternative source of financing improvements to commercial properties, covering direct/indirect costs related to reducing energy or water consumption, generating renewable energy, or building resiliency. Mr. Christensen highlighted the following.

- Eligible properties include any privately-owned commercial, agricultural, industrial or multi-family property of five or more dwelling units, including property owned by a not-for-profit organization.

- The law requires counties to opt into the program by adopting an ordinance establishing a special assessment program for all eligible properties in the County. If a project lies within the boundaries of municipality, they will need to adopt a resolution or ordinance.
- Applications for the program would be referred to the program administrator (Adelante Consulting), reviewed, and jointly approved in concurrence by the County.
- The County would not be liable for any debt of the property owner and would not pledge or lend its credit to the property owner or capital provider.
- Billing, collection, and enforcement of delinquent improvement special assessment lien or special assessment financing install payments, including foreclosure, are the responsibility of the capital provider.

Mr. Christensen stated Exceptional Healthcare has an eligible project and requested the Commission to consider \$6,623,747 in PACE related funding towards their total 20,000 square foot 24-hour emergency room hospital located on Pinon Hills Blvd in Farmington; the total construction cost is \$16,980,461. Mr. Christensen introduced Don Nicolini, Vice President of Development, Exceptional Healthcare. Mr. Nicolini indicated that the hospital provides specialty services, a digital imaging suite, laboratory, and outpatient/inpatient hospital services for acute admissions and overnight observations. Commissioner McDaniel asked if the program accepts Medicaid/Medicare health plans. Mr. Nicolini indicated yes both health plans will be welcomed. Chairman Pro-Tem Gonzales questioned if there have been any discussions with San Juan Regional Medical Center administration, regarding the transportation of certain medical emergencies with two hospital facilities providing helicopter services. Mr. Nicolini stated that would be handled by Bruce McVay, Chief Operating Officer and a formal agreement would be created to ensure the understanding of the duties/responsibilities of both hospitals and that a special use permit would be required from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

3. Apply for the HIRE Vets Gold Medallion Program

Daniel Newman, Senior Human Resource Generalist, presented the U.S. Department of Labor's HIRE Vets Medallion Program which honors employers that meet federal standards in veteran hiring, retention, and internal support. Mr. Newman stated employers must meet the qualifications listed:

- Employers must demonstrate that at least 7% of all new hires in the previous calendar year were veterans with a minimum of 75% retention for 12 months.
- A veteran resource group is maintained and leadership development opportunities for veterans are provided.
- The employer must have no labor law violations.

In 2024, 11% of new hires were self-identified veterans; as of year-to-date 2025, 24% of new hires have identified as veterans. The County meets the hiring requirements and a need to formally establish a Veteran Employee Council (VEC) program and support veterans in the workforce is necessary. Mr. Newman stated that participation in the VEC program would be a voluntary meeting every other month to strengthen connections between the County and the community to serve/coordinate future community-based service events. Participation in the HIRE Vets Medallion Program supports the County's mission/values and aligns with the County motto, "Building a Stronger Community," promoting trust, teamwork, and increased engagement across the organization and community. In New Mexico, no government employers have been awarded the HIRE Vets Medallion, and in the United States no county governments are

recognized under the program-positioning. A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Commissioner McDaniel to approve to Apply for the HIRE Vets Gold Medallion Program. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

4. Application for Variance from San Juan County Cannabis Ordinance No. 120 for Burnin' Barrels – 870A NM Hwy 516, Flora Vista, NM

Ellen Wayne, Deputy County Attorney, indicated that Burnin' Barrels Cannabis submitted a Variance Application to the Community Development Department on March 27, 2025, seeking a variance from the minimum separation requirement in Section 3(A) of Ordinance No. 120 for the life of the business. Joe Sawyer, County Attorney, announced that the Commission will only be relying on evidence gathered at the original variance hearing so as not to violate the due process rights of parties involved. A public hearing was held before hearing officer T. Ryan Lane on April 30, 2025. The hearing focused on Burnin' Barrels proposal to utilize an existing structure at 870 A NM 516, Flora Vista, NM to operate a Cannabis Manufacturing facility. The proposed facility is within 300 feet of two (2) residences and of those residences, one (1) is within eighty-seven (87) feet of the proposed grow structure. San Juan County Community Development Director, Michele Truby-Tillen, determined in Staff comments that the variance would not be contrary to the intent of San Juan County Ordinance 120. Staff recommended approval because there being no objection from the impacted residents and the majority of the variance criteria are being met. A public hearing was held before hearing officer T. Ryan Lane on April 30, 2025. The requested variance was not opposed by any of the residents, however, owners of the closest residence participated in the hearing and expressed concern over odor but were not in opposition to the variance being granted; the property addressed as 866 NM 516 is an existing short term vacation rental. Mr. Johnson was willing to address any issues expressed at the hearing and in the future volunteering to install a carbon filter system to prevent odor impacting the clientele of the property at 866 NM 516. Mr. Johnson also submitted two letters, one from the second residence within 300 ft of the proposed cannabis business and the second from the owner of the commercial structures adjacent to the proposed cannabis business, both of which had no objections to the variance request. Hearing Officer Lane recommended that the variance be granted based on the hearing findings as follows:

- The granting of the variance would not be contrary to the intent of San Juan County Ordinance 120, only two of the criteria for variance were not met; the applicant has agreed to install carbon filtration to address issues related to unwanted smells; and only staff members (no public access) will be accessing the business.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lanier, seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Gonzales to approve the Application for Variance from San Juan County Cannabis Ordinance No. 120 for Burnin' Barrels – 870A NM Hwy 516, Flora Vista, NM. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

5. Proposed FY2026 Interim Budget

Kim Martin, Chief Financial Officer, explained that upon approval by the Commission, the FY2026 interim budget will be submitted electronically to the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) by June 1, 2025, into their Local Government Budget Management

System (LGBMS) for approval. DFA will approve the interim budget by July 1, 2025, and will become a legal binding document until the final budget is approved. The final budget is due to DFA by July 31, 2025. After approval of the interim budget, additional County Commission changes can be addressed in the final budget which will be presented for approval during the May 20th commission meeting. The final approval from DFA will be received by September 6, 2025. Budget adjustments can subsequently be made as operations demand changes throughout the fiscal year. Ms. Martin highlighted the following:

- The Commission requested the funding allocation for Shemot Psychosocial Intervention - Mobile Food Bank and Pantry be increased to \$2,500.
- During the budget workshop, the Sheriff proposed implementing longevity pay for certified employees. The tiered pay structure begins at 3-4 years of service and extends up to 23+ years. The total estimated cost for this implementation, including associated PERA, Medicare, and New Mexico Retiree Healthcare contributions, is \$419,357 and reflects the full budget impact of the proposal.
- During the budget review the Criminal Justice Training Authority Director's (CJTA) budget was omitted. Upon further evaluation, it was determined that the most appropriate placement for these wages is under professional services, which aligns with the current structure. CJTA has only one employee and holds a contract with the City of Farmington for the Director's services.
- The County Clerk requested a new revenue line be added to the General Fund to track income from marriage licenses, in accordance with legislation effective July 1, 2025. The expected budget revenue is approximately \$6,750.
- The Adult Detention Center requested a reclassification of one Lieutenant position to an ADC Captain; this adjustment will result in an increase in one Captain position and a corresponding decrease in one Lieutenant position. The total budget impact for this change is an increase of \$15,181.

A motion was made by Chairman Pro Tem Gonzales, seconded by Commissioner Lanier to approve the Proposed FY2026 Interim Budget. Upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Report from County Manager

Mike Stark reported the following:

- The Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan public input meeting will be held on May 21st, at 5:30 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.
- The change to the County's compensation system moving from a grade/step to a salary pay range system will require a revision to the employee handbook; this will be completed via ordinance during the next two meetings and adopted by emergency clause, effective July 6th.
- McGee Park will not offer their parking lot for people to light off fireworks this year, due to the County's insurance carrier and the lack of appropriate coverage. Public notice will be released to the citizens; firework sales begin June 13th.
- Due to the New Mexico County Summer Conference the only Commission meeting in June will be held June 10th.

Reports From Elected Officials And Department Heads

Chairman Fortner announced that the San Juan Rotary Club Healing Field flags will be displayed May 23rd-25th at the Boys and Girls Club in Farmington, to honor fallen or injured Veterans.

Alyssa Kuhn, County Clerk, reported that on April 22nd an election was held in her office to elect a representative to the New Mexico County Board. Ms. Kuhn announced that Chairman Fortner was elected to the Board.

Roberta Padilla, Chief Human Resource Officer, explained that the County will again participate in the Summer Internship Program which is grant funded through the New Mexico Education Department. The program is 8-weeks beginning on June 2nd and will conclude the 3rd week in July; there were 159 intern applicants that applied, however, only 80 intern applicants and 4 adult coordinators will be selected.

Comments / Input From The General Public

Susan Furry, stated that the Farmers Mutual Ditch Company held an election in which John Beckstead, County representative, cast the deciding vote to elect Robert Lang as Ditch Officer. Ms. Furry is concerned that Mr. Lang's objective is to change the Farmers Mutual Ditch voting system and suggested the County Manager and legal counsel investigate further to protect the County's voting rights, assets, and interests.

Adjourn

Being no further business, Chairman Fortner adjourned the meeting at 5:24 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 10TH DAY OF JUNE 2025

BY THE SAN JUAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:



Chairman Terri D. Fortner



Chairman Pro-Tem Sam Gonzales



Sandra L. Lanier

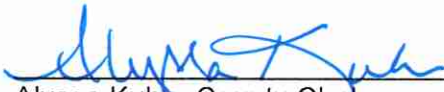


Gio Jean Todacheene



Gary McDaniel

ATTEST:



Alyssa Kuhn, County Clerk

