



Date 2/12/2025
Time 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Location The Eastern Plains Council of Governments
Present Roman Garcia, Fidel Madrid, Helen Casaus, Meadow Forget, Robert Serano, Kenny Flores, Heather Dostie, Victoria Villarreal, Dallas Baker, Cynthia Lee, Oscar Robinson, Jo McVey, Clay Kiesling, Ernest Sanchez, Jose Guzman, Sandy Chancey, Vincent Soule, Julie Surina, Branden Goebel, Raymond Mondragon, Kristen Holmes, Dewight Bell
Absent Representatives from: Town of Texico, Village of Fort Sumner, Village of Roy, Quay County, Village of House, Village of Logan, City of Tucumcari, Roosevelt County, Village of Causey, Village of Dora, Town of Elida, Village of Floyd, Village of Des Moines, Village of Folsom, Village of Grenville, Arch Hurley Conservancy District, Fort Sumner Irrigation District, and Celia Kirkland
Note Taker Kristen Holmes

Agenda

1 - Call to Order

The meeting was officially called to order by the Eastern Plains Council of Governments. Mayor Ernest Sanchez Clayton initiated the call, confirming the presence of other attendees. The call to order marked the beginning of the meeting, setting the stage for the subsequent agenda items.

2 - Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the New Mexico Flag

3 - Introductions

Introductions were made by those present both in person and virtually.

4 - Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed, and no changes were proposed by the Chairman. A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Cynthia Lee from the Village of San Jon and seconded by Helen Casaus, the City of Clovis. The motion was carried unanimously, and the agenda was approved as presented.

Decision: The agenda was approved as presented.

5 - Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting held on November 26, 2024, were presented for approval. There were no questions or discussions regarding the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Oscar Robinson and seconded by Mayor Ernest Sanchez Clayton. The motion was unanimously approved, and the minutes were officially recorded as approved.

Decision: The minutes from the previous meeting held on November 26, 2024, were approved as presented.

6 - Approval of Financial Reports

The financial report was presented, highlighting the profit and loss data for EPCOG. Revenues were reported to be on track, with administrative fees noted as slightly low due to delayed billing, which was being addressed. Expenses were generally in line, with some overages in accounting fees, telephone, and garbage expenses, which were expected to even out over time. The financial report was opened for questions, but none were raised. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Cynthia Lee from the Village of San Jon and seconded Meadow Forget, Village of Melrose. The motion was carried unanimously.

Decision: The financial report was approved as presented.

7 - New Business

No new business items were presented beyond those already stated on the agenda.

7.1 - New Mexico Finance Authority Presentation

John DuBois from the New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA) provided a comprehensive overview of NMFA's funding programs. He detailed the eligible uses for planning funds and the types of entities that qualify for assistance. DuBois highlighted key programs, including the Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF), which finances infrastructure and equipment, and the Water Trust Board awards, which offer a mix of grants and loans with \$163 million available for the 2025 cycle. He emphasized early applications and collaboration with NMFA to secure funding. Additionally, he discussed the Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund, the Colonias Infrastructure Fund for essential infrastructure, and the Opportunity Enterprise Program supporting commercial and housing developments. He also introduced the Charter Schools Revolving Loan Fund for school construction and leasing. DuBois answered questions, confirmed Vaughan's eligibility, and offered in-person consultations to guide communities through funding opportunities.

7.2 - Presentation & Approval of FY2024 Audit

The audit presentation was conducted by Shelley Garcia, who provided an overview of the final audit for FY2024. Garcia highlighted a few changes requested by the State Auditor, including clarifications on footnotes and disclosures. The audit was

reviewed in detail, with no findings reported. The final audit was approved by the Office of the State Auditor and posted on their website. A motion to approve the FY2024 audit was made by Meadow Forget and seconded by Cynthia Lee, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Decision: The FY2024 audit was approved as presented.

7.3 - Treasurer Election

The floor was opened for nominations for the position of Treasurer, as the previous Treasurer, Leona Powell, was no longer with the Village of Grady and thus no longer on the board. A nomination was made for Meadow Forget from the Village of Melrose. The motion was made by Cynthia Lee and seconded by Robert Serano. The motion was carried unanimously, and the new Treasurer was welcomed with a brief speech expressing pride in the organization and its staff.

Decision: Meadow Forget was elected as the new Treasurer.

8 - Director's & Staff Report

The Director and staff provided updates on various activities and initiatives through a PowerPoint presentation. Key points included the ongoing improvements to the office, such as the installation of a card-read door lock for enhanced security, window replacements, and addressing roof leaks. Sandy Chancey mentioned the need for minor repairs and the replacement of bathroom closets.

Kristen, the new executive assistant, was introduced. She shared her background, including her experience with the United Way of Eastern New Mexico and her extensive volunteer work. The Director praised her contributions and organizational skills.

The audit for the previous year was completed with no findings, resulting in an unmodified opinion. The Director expressed a strong commitment to maintaining this standard.

The Director discussed involvement with the New Mexico Association of Regional Councils (Newmarc) and efforts to formalize the organization into a nonprofit. An executive director, Pascual Maestas, has been hired to lead these efforts and improve legislative engagement. Sandy Chancy attended COG Day at the New Mexico legislature to raise awareness about the organization's work and its impact on the state.

Community development activities were also highlighted. The council picked up a new Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administration contract for the city of Tucumcari, focusing on replacing the roof on their recreation center. The project for Curry County was nearing completion and closeout.

Overall, the Director and staff report provided a comprehensive update on the organization's activities, financial health, and ongoing projects, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and community engagement.

8.1 - Approval of Out of State Travel

The Chairman requested approval for Sandy Chancey to travel out of state to attend the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Conference in Washington D.C. from March 9th to March 12th. The trip is deemed necessary to gain a better understanding of federal funding changes and to ensure continued support for their initiatives. Mayor Garcia made a motion to approve the out-of-state travel, which was seconded by Robert Serrano. The motion passed with no opposition. Sandy Chancey expressed her gratitude and mentioned that she would provide a report on the conference at a future meeting. There was a light-hearted comment about navigating the Metro system in Washington D.C., with Sandy expressing her concerns about the public transit system.

Decision: Approval was granted for Sandy Chancey to travel out of state to attend the NADO Conference in Washington D.C. from March 9th to March 12th.

9 - Community Updates and Public Comments

The floor was opened for community updates and public comments, inviting participation from both in-person and Zoom attendees. Robert Serrano shared information about Deb Haaland's upcoming meet and greet event in Santa Rosa on February 19th, encouraging community members to attend and discuss local needs. Jo McVey invited everyone to check out the newly installed outdoor exercise equipment at Rotary Park City Park, highlighting its accessibility features. Additionally, they thanked Raymond for his assistance in securing a new ambulance and mentioned ongoing efforts to secure funding for a second one.

Further updates included a student from San Jon School who will be shadowing Lieutenant Governor Morales on February 27th, with recognition of Morales' support for local initiatives. The importance of government officials visiting small municipalities was emphasized, as it helps build community ties and ensures that local voices are heard. The discussion also touched on the challenges faced by municipalities in securing audits and the need for more technical assistance providers. The State Auditor's office is addressing the shortage of auditors and is seeking additional funding to hire more staff. There was a call for better mentoring and guidance for municipalities to navigate complex accounting and reporting requirements.

10 - Adjournment

The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn. The motion was made and seconded by the newly elected treasurer. The meeting was officially adjourned without further

discussion, and the attendees were thanked for their participation and service to the community.