

**MORA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 31, 2023  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**1. Call to Order**

**Commissioner George Trujillo** called the meeting to order at 10:34 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**Deputy Clerk Trujillo** polled the board:  
**Commissioner George Trujillo - Present**  
**Commissioner John Trujillo – Present**  
**Commissioner Veronica Serna – Present**  
*Majority is present. Quorum has been met.*

**3. Pledge of Allegiance and Salute to the Flag of the State of New Mexico**

All in attendance recited the Pledge and saluted the Flag of the State of New Mexico.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

**Attorney Cruz** stated item 14 does not need to be on the agenda.  
**Interim Manager Sena** recommends approving the agenda as amended by the County Attorney.  
**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to approve agenda.  
**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.  
*All in favor, motion carried.*

**5. Discussion: Update on CDBG Project Status (Presented by Alex Tafoya)**

**Alex Tafoya** stated he does not have a lot to update the Commission on today, he stated the CDBG project consists of two phases. One is the Communication Repeaters on the four cell towers in Mora County, the second is the EMS facility building. In regard to the repeaters, bids were open, and a bid award was made by the County Commission in June to award the project to Advanced Communications. The week of October 10<sup>th</sup> they ordered the equipment and will be installing them in the Spring due to the winter months. He stated it is unfortunate that it took so long for them to get the PO because we lost the summer months to get those installed. He stated in regard to the EMS facility, local government division is requiring the County to conduct an environmental review of the EMS facility site. We have prepared letters that must be sent to the agencies that need to be consulted. The project is under design and there will be a process to put together the bid document.

**Commissioner Serna** asked if Advanced Communications would honor their bid even if it expired.

**Alex Tafoya** stated he spoke with Martin Trujillo from Advanced Communications and asked if they would honor their bid although the 90 days has expired, they said they would honor it, and nothing increased or changed in any way.

**Commissioner Serna** stated initially there was a certain amount allocated for the EMS through CBDG and when Michael Rivera was a County Manager, he was able to get an additional amount of money which took the amount to over one million dollars, she asked what has been expended from that.

**Alex Tafoya** stated the budget included \$953,005 for construction and \$60,000 for furnishing and equipping, but the County also has a cash match of \$44,495. So, the cash match plus the construction and furnishing and equipping amount gives a total of \$1,570,500.00 on the budget. But there is only \$1,013,005.00 to spend on the repeaters and the EMS facility. After the repeater portion is paid for, there will be a balance of \$828,550.75 for construction of the EMS building.

**Commissioner Serna** stated there was some CDBG money was waived from a project in Springer that had money left over, she believes DFA awarded it to this to Mora County for this project, but she does not know where he is accounting for that.

**Mr. Tafoya** stated he was unaware of this; he stated the last amendment to the budget he got was what he has in front of him, and it does not include that money.

**Brenda Casados** from EMS stated she has a letter from DFA relating to this.

**Mr. Tafoya** stated he will look into it.

**Attorney Cruz** suggested after the hire of a new County Manager, they should schedule a meeting with Mr. Tafoya, Charlie Otero and EMS to ensure everyone is on the same page.

**6. Discussion/Action: Consideration of Amendment to the Budget for the CDBG EMS Project for costs associated with the Architect's Fee (Previously tabled)**

**Attorney Cruz** stated this is an item that Mr. Tafoya had spoken about in a prior meeting. He wanted some additional dialog about what the next steps should be. Since the project is in a bit of a holding pattern, this does not require the attention of the Commission at this time. She suggests the manager participate in the meeting she described earlier and then there can be discussion about what this budget amendment might look like. Further discussion took place.

**Interim Manager Serna** recommended the Commission table this item.

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to table.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**7. Discussion/Action: Resolution supporting AOC Funding for Mora County to Plan, Design, Construct, Furnish and Equip Mora County District Courthouse Discussion/Action -**

**Attorney Cruz** stated on October 6<sup>th</sup> the CEO of the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Dr. Vidal Martinez, was in contact with the County regarding a funding opportunity through Administrative Office of the Courts. The AOC issued a memorandum on August 23<sup>rd</sup> advising counties throughout the State of New Mexico that they had over \$20 Million that they can disperse for District Court projects. They invited proposals, noting that if a County wanted to receive an excess of one million dollars, they would need to provide a feasibility study in order to be considered for the funding. A meeting was held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> with various stakeholders, including Senator Pete Compos, Representative Joseph Sanchez, District Court Judge Michael Aragon, the Chairman, Paul Cassidy (Chair of the Special Projects Committee), herself plus various others. They discussed the overall projects and the needs that were at play. One of the most notable points made by Judge Michael Aragon is that Mora County is the only county in the State of New Mexico that does not have a District Court. They then went over the Complex and did an inspection of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Southern Portion, they talked about what the District Court Complex might look like. Following that they had three days to put a proposal together, they also put together a plan and were able to submit a timely response by the 5 o'clock deadline on Friday. Attorney Cruz stated one of the requirements from the AOC is that the County adopt a

Resolution indicating that we support and approve the request for funding and that is what they have before them to consider today.

**Interim Manager Sena** recommended the Commission approve this item.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner V. Serna** seconds the motion.

**Commissioner V. Serna** stated after looking at the plans, the District Court will be taking up most of upstairs.

**Attorney Cruz** stated it will be taking up a good portion; there is a section in plans that is titled "future development fitness area" she would note that these are preliminary plans, there will need to be additional work in order to finalize the project.

**Commissioner Serna** stated, for the record, we also already have funding for a conference area. She stated these are our taxpayer's dollars and she would like effort being made to consider the use for the taxpayers, like a conference or fitness area that can be used more by the public than this much space for the District Court. She stated she is glad to see them coming in, but she doesn't believe all that space would be used every day. Further discussion took place.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated, for the record, he would like to thank Attorney Cruz for all the work she did last week. Commissioner V. Serna and J. Trujillo also thanked Attorney Cruz for working tirelessly.

**Attorney Cruz** thanked Paul Cassidy for all his efforts.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**8. Discussion/Action: Approval of Budget Adjustment (Presented by Edna Sena, Finance Director)**

**Interim Manager Sena** presented for Edna Sena, see attached. He recommends the Commission approve all 8 line items.

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to approve all 8 line items.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**9. Discussion/Action: Approval of Road Viewer's Committee involving County Road C-027 (also referred to as "Texas Road" AND Previously Tabled)**

**Attorney Cruz** stated she has not had an opportunity to sit down with the manager yet because of the time constraints with the AOC project. But now that things are a bit steadier, they will be able to work on a proposal for the Commission, it is not ready for consideration at this time.

**Interim Manager Sena** recommended the Commission table this item.

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to table.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated he had a discussion with the caretaker of the ranch and they are willing to buy that road from the County.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**10. Discussion/Action: Recommendation to Award Bid for Water Tank Installation for CHET Volunteer Fire Department**

**Interim Manager Sena** recommends this item goes out for rebid, people were not aware.

**Commissioner Serna** asked if it was advertised.

**Interim Manager Sena** stated it was advertised but he received some calls stating they did not see the advertisement.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated a lot of people do not see the newspaper anymore and some other people would like to bid.

**Attorney Cruz stated** it is not just that other people missed the advertisement but there are some cost issues if this moves forward with the sole bidder. She has been told if it is re-advertised there may be an opportunity for a more competitive process resulting in a cost savings for the CHET Fire Department. She also stated with regard to the motion, it should be that the item be put out for rebid because of the cost consideration but also if it is put out to rebid that process be followed by Sandra Romero. Within the RFP there would have been a process with regard to a rebid. As long as Mrs. Romero is following the process then that will be an appropriate vote for the Commission to take.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated the fire departments need to recognize that the Commission will approve these projects. They should come to the Commission with a plan so we can all be on the same page, and they do not do that.

**Attorney Cruz** stated a good practice moving forward regarding RFPs is that as a Commission you be informed that the RFP will be issued, this is the purpose and deadline, so everyone is informed. Further discussion took place.

**Attorney Cruz** stated the motion would be that the item be put out to rebid as long as it is consistent with procedure and the requirements set forth in the RFP.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner V. Serna** seconds the motion.

**Attorney Cruz** would like the record to be clear that this is not going out for rebid because people learned about it after the fact, it is because of the cost consideration and the liability issues.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**11. Discussion/Action: Approval of FY22 MainStreet Capital Outlay Grant Agreement (As Amended Following October 19, 2023, Regular Meeting)**

**Attorney Cruz** stated this is a Capital Outlay Grant Agreement for funds that will be provided to Mainstreet. This was previously presented to the Commission in 2022 where they voted in favor of it and then there were some questions regarding the match that the county would need to provide. The Commission then voted to rescind that vote until that funding can be addressed. Mora Mainstreet has since come back with an updated agreement and is asking for the Commission's approval. It has been updated so that Mora County will not be responsible for the match funds, Main Street will be responsible for those funds. The item is ready for the Commission to vote on today.

**Interim Manager Sena** recommends the Commission approve this item.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner Serna** stated before she seconds the motion, she would like some clarification on compensation on one of the items on the agreement.

**Attorney Cruz** stated she was informed the County will not be responsible for any funds. She asked Commissioner G. Trujillo to move on to the next item while she reads through the language.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated he would like to go back to item 10 before he moves on to suggest that when a new manager comes in, send all the fire departments a letter about what was discussed today.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated Interim Manager Brad Sena recommended we approve item 11, is there a motion.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

**Commissioner V. Serna** stated she is going to abstain because she has not had a chance to review the packet.

*Two in favor (Commissioners G. and J. Trujillo), one abstains (Commissioner V. Serna), motion carried.*

**12. Discussion/Action: Services Contract Agreement Between Mora Mainstreet and Mora County**

**Clarity Collins** stated this agreement is for the execution of the grant that we got for \$100,000 for the Creative Industries Division. She stated because this does involve a series for artists and development to help artists develop their craft, we need assistance in executing it. This agreement is for Mora Mainstreet.

**Commissioner Serna** stated this might be where she is confused.

**Attorney Cruz** explained each agreement to the Commission. She stated the agreement on item 11 is ready for approval, and the next agreement on item 12 is the agreement that Commissioner Serna had the question about compensation. Clarity is speaking about that agreement now. Attorney Cruz recommends the Commission go back to item 11 to approve it and then Clarity can finish presenting item 12.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated he attended the meeting with North Central and he wanted to thank Clarity for all she is doing for Mora County.

**Commissioner V. Serna** asked how much money is being awarded for this one.

**Clarity Collins** stated this grant is for \$100,000, and out of that \$100,000 the budget included supplies and a part time coordinator to manage the artist and development portion of it. 10% is to cover administrative costs. Further discussion took place.

**Attorney Cruz** stated this was an item that was previously presented for their consideration, the Commission already approved the Economic Development Service Agreement. The next step after approving the agreement is to have a MOU with a local entity such as Mora Mainstreet in order to put the grant into motion.

**Interim Manager Sena** recommends the Commission approve this item.

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**13. Discussion: Update regarding inquiry about Robert and Betty Martinez Quitclaim Deed and Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting Copy Tuesday, October 31, 2023, at 10:30 am Page 1 request for transfer of property from Mora County**

**Attorney Cruz** stated this remains a discussion item. The dialog with the attorneys and title company is still ongoing. She will be scheduling a time to go to the title company in Las Vegas to review some of the additional documents so we can get some resolution on this item.

**14. Executive Session: Threatened Litigation involving the RFP for Calf Canyon/Hermit's Peak Claim/Litigation and recommendation to award contract to Singleton Schreiber (meeting with outside counsel, Steve Kopelman)**

**This item was taken off the agenda as noted on item 4, above.**

**15. Discussion/Action: Recommendation to Award Contract to RFP Offeror Singleton Schreiber for the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claim/Litigation (Presented by Steve Kopelman, Esq.)**

**Steve Kopelman** stated this item has a lot to do with the physical beauty and culture in Mora County. He stated this is a contract to investigate and look into the County filing a lawsuit against the US Forest Service and any other responsible parties for the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fires. We know the extent of the damages is monumental and astounding. This will hopefully give the County an opportunity to have outside expert litigation counsel assess the possible causes of action and look into establishing new programs that are necessary. He stated the County issued an RFP for investigation services. He worked with Procurement Officer Sandra Romero, and there were three respondents, and they were all very professional. He stated an evaluation committee was set up to analyze the responses. The Committee recommended the Singleton Schreiber Firm; they had the highest score.

**Attorney Cruz** asked Mr. Kopelman to identify who was on that committee.

**Mr. Kopelman** stated the evaluation committee was himself, Joseph Garcia and Grace Phillips. He stated the contract in front of them is a result of the negotiations they had. He presented the contract to the Commission, see attached.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** thanked Mr. Kopelman, Sandra Romero and the Committee.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

**Commissioner V. Serna** abstains.

*Two in favor (Commissioners G. and J. Trujillo), one abstains (Commissioner V. Serna), motion carried.*

**Brian Colon** stated he would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity, they do not take it lightly to represent and advocate for the people of Mora County. He stated this is deeply personal for all of us and he wants to thank them for putting their faith in Singleton Schreiber. He stated they look forward to serving the people of Mora County and making the Commission proud to have given them this opportunity.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** thanked Brian and stated they will schedule a meeting as soon as possible.

**Brian Colon** stated as soon as the County is able to identify a County Manager, he would hope this is one of the first orders of business. He and his team of experts would then come in and start the process.

**Attorney Cruz** stated this is a project the County has been working on for at least 7 months. The timing is ideal because the coordination that will now be had with the incoming County Manager will ensure they are well informed regarding the work that Singleton Schreiber will be doing.

**16. Discussion: Interim County Manager's Report**

**Interim Manager Sena** stated he would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to serve as Interim County Manager during the last 6 weeks. Mr. Sena gave a summary of his roles and ways he has helped during his time as Interim Manager.

**The Commission** thanked Mr. Sena for all of his hard work.

**Attorney Cruz** stated there is plenty of other things Mr. Sena has done during his time and he deserves to be thanked.

**17. Discussion: Introduction of the Applicants for the County Manager Position and the Hire Process**

**Attorney Cruz** stated yesterday the Commission conducted their first work session, leading up to interviews for the County Manager position. She stated that was a very wise decision because that ensures that the applicants were well informed leading up to the interview process. She stated she is going to give a list of the applicants in the order they will be interviewed.

1. **Hector Cavazos**
2. **Estevan Vigil**
3. **Thomas Garcia**
4. **Jacob Regensberg**
5. **Robert Romero**
6. **Shelby Sparks**
7. **Joseph Garcia**
8. **Deanna Fresquez**

**Attorney Cruz** stated with the interview schedule they have in place this Commission can anticipate being here well into the evening. At the conclusion of the interview process, there is an agenda item to offer a conditional offer of employment for the County Manager, contingent to a background check and contract negotiations. She stated they will be entering into executive session soon; she suggests considering item 20 at this time because Brad Sena will not be here later.

**20. Discussion/Action: Extension of Brad Sena's Contract as Interim County Manager pending background check and contract negotiations for County Manager**

**Attorney Cruz** stated because the Manager's office is still needing support from her office, she prepared and posted this agenda item, and she did not have an opportunity to meet with Mr. Sena. She stated because interviews are being done today and the background check process will take some time, we do not know when the new manager can start. Manager Sena's contract should be extended. She stated we will have a void if we do not ask Mr. Sena to continue doing the job until the new manager officially starts. Mr. Sena has done a terrific, admirable job and has helped to sustain the County. She recommends the Commission to authorize her to prepare a contract for Mr. Sena, allowing him to continue to serve in this capacity, it will be subject to negotiations.

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** asked Mr. Sena if he accepts this offer to continue serving as Interim County Manager until a new manager is here.

**Brad Sena** stated, yes.

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to approve.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**Commissioner V. Serna** made a motion to go into a 20 minute break at 12:10 p.m.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**Deputy Clerk Trujillo** polled the board:

**Commissioner George Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner John Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner Veronica Serna – Yes**

**Commissioner V. Serna** made a motion to come back from break at 12:32 p.m.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**Deputy Clerk Trujillo** polled the board:

**Commissioner George Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner John Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner Veronica Serna – Yes**

**18. Resume Executive Session: Limited Personnel Matters including interviews for the County Manager Position and Discussion regarding Applicants and Potential Hire for the County Manager Position**

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to convene into executive session at 12:33 p.m.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**Deputy Clerk Trujillo** polled the board:

**Commissioner George Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner John Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner Veronica Serna - Yes**

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to reconvene from executive session at 8:43 p.m.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**Deputy Clerk Trujillo** polled the board:

**Commissioner George Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner John Trujillo - Yes**

**Commissioner Veronica Serna – Yes**

**19. Discussion/Action: Conditional offer of Employment for County Manager position contingent upon background check and contract negotiations**

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** made motion to offer a conditional offer of employment to Hector Cavazos, upon background checks and negotiations.

**Commissioner V. Serna** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**20. Discussion/Action: Extension of Brad Sena's Contract as Interim County Manager pending background check and contract negotiations for County Manager**

This item was voted on and accepted before, see item 18 above.



**21. Discussion: Other informational announcements**

**Commissioner G. Trujillo** stated they interviewed 7 excellent candidates and hopefully now we can continue moving forward with a new manager in place. He would also like to thank Attorney Cruz for helping us run the County.

**Attorney Cruz** stated the staff and Elected Officials should also be commended for their participation in the Work Session. She also stated the residents of Mora County need to know their three County Commissioners did their due diligence throughout this process. They should be recognized for their efforts.

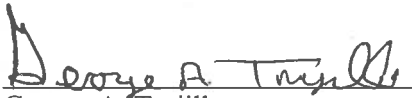
**22. Adjournment**

**Commissioner V. Serna** made motion to adjourn meeting at 8:49 p.m.

**Commissioner J. Trujillo** seconds the motion.

*All in favor, motion carried.*

**MORA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSION**



George A. Trujillo  
Chairman



John H. Trujillo  
Vice-Chairman

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Veronica M. Serna  
Member



Carlos J. Arellano  
County Clerk

