

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)
November 21, 2025 – 10:00am
UNM Continuing Education
South Building – Room 207
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque
Zoom Meeting I.D. - 940 8961 1991

Meeting Minutes Regular Council Meeting

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:05am MDT. Roll call of the Council members: Steve Polaco, Monica Rodríguez, Andrea Padilla, and Juan Sánchez were present.

2. Introduction of Guests

Juan Sánchez (NMLGC); Steve Polaco (NMLGC); Monica Rodríguez (NMLGC); Andrea Padilla (NMLGC); Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LGMI); Greta Archuleta (NMLGC); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández); Heidi McRoberts (Forest Supervisor, Cibola National Forest); Lisa Brown (NMDOJ – Treaty Division); Randolph Chavez; Lenora Chavez; Camila Romero (NM State Land Office); Mike Howsden (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); Bella Mollard (Carson National Forest); Eric D. Garner (Public Service Officer, Carson NF); Miguel Tórrez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); Eric Chávez (Office of Sen. Ben R. Luján); Tokey Boswell (BLM); James Durán (Carson NF) Richard Valdez; Leonard Martínez (San Joaquin del Rio de Chama LG); Enrique Romero (NMDOJ – Treaty Division); Manuel Luna (Office of the State Auditor).

3. Approval of Agenda

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the agenda; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion. Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 17, 2025 Regular Council Meeting

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the October 17, 2025 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

5. Discussion and Possible Action on Bureau of Land Management Update

Tokey Boswell (BLM) stated that he missed the last Council meetings because of the partial federal government shutdown and he is trying to catch up. He had no significant updates as the continuing resolution allowed funding through January 31st and there are no new projects planned. Land use planning for the Farmington-Mancos-Gallup plan and the Carlsbad area continues. Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LMGI) asked why the Council's request for land grant patents has still not been addressed. Mr. Boswell stated that he would be glad to work with the Council on a prioritized list. Mr. Archuleta identified the Cristóbal de la Serna, San Antonio de las Huertas, and Manzano patents as the highest priority.

6. Discussion and Possible Action on U.S. Forest Service Update

Bella Mollard (Carson NF, USFS) reported that prescribed pile burning is taking place in the Santa Fe National Forest, including the Española District (Hyde Park, Tesuque) and the Jemez District. There may be road and area closures associated with these burns. The Carson National Forest is processing a permit for a timber processing yard for the Las Trampas Land Grant. Carson National Forest Supervisor James Durán met with the Cristóbal de la Serna Land Grant regarding Miranda Canyon stewardship and access. There are pile burns on the Carson National Forest as well. A full list is available on the Carson NF website, but this includes pile burns near Ojo Sarco. Firewood permits available online. James Durán (Carson National Forest Supervisor) reported that Eric Garner is returning to New Mexico from Alaska and will be working with he and Bella. He reported that he was happy to present at the Interim Land Grant Committee hearing with Shaun Sanchez (Santa Fe NF Supervisor) and Laura McCarthy, New Mexico State Forester. Mr. Durán reiterated the commitment that he, Bella, and Shaun Sanchez have to working on the MOU.

Mr. Archuleta stated that the NMLGC and NMDOJ are reviewing the draft MOU. He stated that the Council is not necessarily interested in a high-level MOU and including the Cibola National Forest would be preferable. Mr. Durán responded that the HPCC and other recovery projects are providing significant fuelwood to land grant communities and that the Las Trampas special permit is an exciting test in small scale economic development and community firewood program. Councilor Rodríguez stated that some of the San Joaquín Land Grant's work with the Santa Fe NF has been curtailed because of executive orders and they were told they can only meet for timber, natural resource development and wildfire. Mr. Durán responded that this was especially true during the shutdown and the USFS did need to scale back other areas. The executive orders promote active management and the USFS is providing restoration activities, but projects and coordination remain the same.

Heidi McRoberts (Cibola National Forest supervisor) provided updates, including pile burning in the Mountainair district, prescribed burns across the Cibola National Forest and more projects ready when weather conditions allow. The USFS is focused on administration priorities, including resource development and active recreation. They are reviewing proposals for La Jara Mesa and Roca Honda Uranium mines and covered under FAST 41 (Fixing American Transportation) authority. The Cibola is working on fuel reduction projects in Las Huertas Canyon; Councilor Padilla asked if wood would be provided to land grants, which Ms. McRoberts affirmed. The Cibola National Forest is working with land grants on road maintenance congrats. Manzano is on board and Tajique is trying. She added that she is interested in discussing the MOU with the Council. Mr. Archuleta discussed the purpose of the MOU, which serves as a framework for

community engagement with land grant communities. The MOU is important and the Council had one with regional office that expired in 2016.

Councilor Rodríguez asked Mr. Durán about the Goodwin C50M Dry Prime Pump from the cañón that was stored in Coyote. It was reportedly transferred to a forest in Arizona. She was asked if it will be returned and why it was sent out of state when the forest service knew that the pump was needed for the project. Mr. Durán replied that he would ask Santa Fe NF Supervisor Shaun Sanchez about the pump and stated that Bella would follow up.

7. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative Update

Federal

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that Congresswoman Fernández will spend the remainder of the year in Washington DC. Her office has heard nothing on the traditional use bill but she is still pushing for a hearing. The cemetery bill was not included in this week's markup. The Congresswoman is happy that the government reopened and continues fighting for healthcare, SNAP, and other programs. RECA is back and claimants can qualify for up to \$100,000 and some healthcare. Uranium miners are eligible and the entire state qualifies as downwinders. Mr. Pacheco will share information for the Congresswoman's end of the year virtual town hall once its scheduled.

Eric Chávez (Office of Sen. Ben R. Luján) stated that the continuing resolution was passed, discussed provisions and negotiations. Senate Democrats are fighting to lower health care premiums and restore SNAP. Senator Thune committed to holding a vote on a subsidy extension and Speaker Johnson has not done the same. Senator Luján is the ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee and led the fight in the Senate to stop SNAP cuts in so called Big Beautiful Bill. He secured \$202 million for New Mexico in appropriations, from defense to Congressionally Directed Spending. He introduced an act to waive the cost share requirements from many Department of Agriculture programs in areas that were damaged through controlled burns. Councilor Rodríguez commented that the presence of heavy metals is adding additional costs, as residents are having to pay for their own testing. HPCC claims by residents are being denied over arbitrary items like the size of canoas. Councilor Padilla thanked the congressional delegation for their work on behalf of New Mexico.

State

The proposed changes to state audit act are in the packet. Manuel Luna (Office of the State Auditor) presented the draft language, which adjusts the tier system and allows future adjustments to the system to be made via administrative codes rather than statutory ones. He added that the small public body audit help application is open. Mr. Archuleta commented that it is good for OSA to have power to determine the tiers, though there is a concern that future auditors can make a one tier system or a nine tier system, both causing complications. He also discussed the land grant and acequia infrastructure bill. Page 2 added that the Council must promulgate rules within one year and progress in projects must be evident for renewal as the bill has a sunset clause. Page 3 adds language to allow for affordable housing development and page 7 needs to be changed to clarify that land grants apply to the Council, not DFA. Page 15 needs a start date to added to A., which gives time for fund to accumulate monies and for rule promulgation.

These proposed changes need to be discussed with bills sponsors, Rep. Garcia and Senator Jaramillo.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the NMLGC staff's recommended changes on the bill; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on State Land Office Update

Camila Romero (NM State Land Office) reported that the Bearcat Project will start in January and they are working with their wood hauling contractor to prepare.

9. Discussion and Possible Action on NM Dept. of Justice & Treaty Division Updates and Requests

Enrique Romero (director, Treaty Division, NMDOJ) reported that the Treaty Division is busy with ongoing work. They hosted a water rights adjudication training in October and are otherwise continuing with legal representation and advocacy. The Division filed an interrogatory appeal and amicus brief on behalf of Council for the Cristobal de la Serna case, with the NMLA serving as Council. As San Antonio de las Huertas, Lisa Brown of the Division assisted with IPRA responses and a quiet title suit from the Ciruela partnership, Ed Newville. They are also assisting the Grant with their tax protest case against Sandoval County. At Manzano, they are working with land grant attorney Narcisco García preparing for a trial December 8-10. They have continued work with acequias and honors attorney Thomas Davis has been helping the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama Land Grant with meetings with the US Forest Service. They have also assisted NMLA and the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant with Laguna del Campo, working with NM Game & Fish. They have also met with the Cebolleta Land Grant to discuss water issues.

The Division has reviewed the USFS MOU and is monitoring Mora County water issue and the use of fire retardants, which don't have the heavy metals themselves, but chemicals in fire retardants leach them out of land with certain geologies. The CGAC attorney should receive an offer soon. The Division was invited to present at Congreso by the NMAA. It hosted an acequia and land grant legal leadership conference and discussed the need for judicial trainings on land grants and acequias, holding more CLEs and the importance of county governments being properly informed about land grant and acequia status.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Natural Resource Issues & Concerns - Local, State and Federal

None.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on Council FY 2026 Budget

Mr. Archuleta presented a grant agreement with the Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG for payment of their bond and tort liability coverage. DFA requested that we use a Land Grant Support Fund especially since it was a third-party invoice. Total cost is \$2,840.00.

Councilor Rodríguez made a motion to approve the LGSF agreement with Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG for \$2,840.00; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Mr. Archuleta reported on the donation from estate of the late Senator Bill O'Neill. Monies were deposited at DFA in the Council's budget and he is exploring if the Council has the authority to invest these monies with state treasurer. They are currently in the general fund for Council and could theoretically get swept.

A budget update was provided, including \$122,097.42 in staff, \$7,882.46 in facility rental, \$26,723.46 in F&A for grand total of \$162,388.28 spent.

12. Discussion and Possible Action UNM FY 2026 Intergovernmental Services Agreement

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #3 for \$39,428.89, including \$30,523.78 in project personnel, \$1,970.66 in facility rental, and \$6,571.48 in F&A.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve Pay Request #3 for \$39,428.89; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

13. Discussion and Possible Action on Legal Services 2026 Contract Update & Legal Services Requests

Mr. Archuleta reported that New Mexico Legal Aid is working on various cases and the Community Governance Attorney Program attorney Victoria Lovato will start now in November.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on Professional Surveyor Services Contract Update & Requests

Mr. Archuleta shared (handout in packet) that the NMLGC has received 32 surveying requests made since Feb. 2020. 15 have been completed. Invoice #11182025 from Territorial Land Surveying, LLC is in the packet for work on the Cristóbal de la Serna and Manzano Land Grants, both of which are in litigation.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve Invoice #11182025 from Territorial Land Surveying, LLC for \$6,134.63; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye
Councilor Padilla – aye
Councilor Polaco – aye

The motion was passed.

15. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update

Mr. Baca reported that the following has been submitted to the New Mexico Community Land Grant Registry:

- Abiquiu LG- updated board membership
- Lower Gallinas LG - bylaws

16. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence

None.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments

Mr. Baca reported that he has continued to work on preparations for the Torreón LG election, including census research and review of historic records.

18. Public Comments – discussion only

The Land Grant Merced Institute has hired Fabian Valdez, who stated he grew up in Española and has family roots in Cañones and Cuba. He is an undergraduate student studying environmental design and planning and worked with Moises Gonzales in the past. Miguel Torrez (Santa Cruz Land Grant) commented that he helped the Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant with genealogy and membership work and did excellent work. Mr. Archuleta stated the LGMI is working on an MOU with SHRI regarding shared staff and services.

19. Miscellaneous Announcements

Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGMI) that capital outlay requests are due by December 12 and reauthorizations are due by February 1st, 2026. Councilor Rodríguez commented that the New Mexico Acequia Association's Congreso de las Acequias is taking place on December 5-6, 2025 at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas. She added that the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama also appointed Edward Salazar as its first mayordomo in 100 years.

20. Date and Location for December Council Meeting

The December 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on December 19, 2025 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

21. Adjournment

Councilor Rodríguez made a motion to adjourn; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye
Councilor Padilla – aye
Councilor Polaco – aye

The motion was passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:23pm MDT.

Approved:

Chair

Date