

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)  
February 21, 2025 – 10:00am  
UNM Continuing Education  
South Building – Room 207  
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque  
Zoom Meeting I.D. – 975 8997 8259

**Final Meeting Minutes  
Regular Council Meeting**

**1. Call to Order - Roll Call – 10:01 am**

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:01 am MST. Roll call of the Council members: Steve Polaco, Monica Rodríguez, Andrea Padilla and Juan Sánchez were present.

**2. Council Potential Quorum Disclosure –**

*Santa Fe – January 28, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, Steve Polaco and I attended the hearing for HB 21 and HB 24 on January 28, 2025, which created an inadvertent quorum. However, we did not discuss Council business or collectively discuss public policy during the event and make this disclosure in the interest of transparency.

*Santa Fe – February 2, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, Steve Polaco and I attended the 2025 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo Day celebration on February 2, 2025, which created an inadvertent quorum. However, we did not discuss business or public policy during the event and make this disclosure in the interest of transparency.”

*Santa Fe – February 18, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, Steve Polaco and I attended the hearing for HB 330 on February 18, 2025, which created an inadvertent quorum. However, we did not discuss Council business or collectively discuss public policy during the event and make this disclosure in the interest of transparency.

**3. Introduction of Guests**

Juan Sánchez (NMLGC); Steve Polaco (NMLGC); Andrea Padilla (NMLGC); Monica Rodríguez (NMLGC); Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LGSP); Greta Archuleta (NMLGC); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Krystelle Anaya (LGSP); Camila Romero (NM State Land Office); Mark Meyers (NM State Land Office); Jason Quintana (DFA); Lisa Brown (NM DOJ – Treaty Division); Megan Veach (NM DOJ – Treaty Division); Enrique Romero (NM DOJ – Treaty Division); Krystelle Anaya (LGSP); Belinda Mollard (Carson NF); Brian Martínez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); Kris Graham Chávez (NRCS); Peggy Durán (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); José Mondragón (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández); Lisa Rivera Morrison (BLM); Aurora Valdez (Office of Sen. Martin Heinrich); Eric Chávez (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján).

**4. Approval of Agenda**

Councilor Steve Polaco made a motion to approve the agenda with said changes; Councilor Andrea Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

- Councilor Padilla – aye
- Councilor Rodríguez – aye
- Councilor Polaco – aye
- Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

### **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 17, 2025 Meeting**

Councilor Monica Rodriguez made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the January 17, 2025 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

- Councilor Padilla – aye
- Councilor Rodríguez – aye
- Councilor Polaco – aye
- Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

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

Bella Mollard (Carson NF) reported that the Santa Fe National Forest and Bureau of Land Management postponed the meeting regarding the Upper Pecos mineral withdrawal. The Carson National Forest postponed release of the draft EA for Taos Canyon. Both of these actions were in compliance with recent executive orders. Ms. Mollard stated that any questions will be directed to superiors and she will forward them and bring back their responses. Regarding terminations, it has been estimated 5% of USFS (~4,000 to 5,000) staff has been terminated thus far. Fire management remains a priority. Councilor Polaco asked about the effect of layoffs on FEMA; Ms. Mollard responded that she does not have any information on FEMA at this time. Jason Quintana (NM DFA) asked about SAMs renewal solicitations. Ms. Mollard and Kris Graham Chávez (NRCS) responded that SAMs renewals are free and these solicitations either offer an unnecessary service or could be a scam.

### **7. Discussion and Possible Action on State Land Office Update –**

Camila Romero (NM SLO) reported that the State Land Office will start mobilizing the Villanueva fuelwood project. The contractor wants hauling to wait until all cutting has happened. The San Miguel del Bado Land Grant needs to decide if they will haul the wood themselves or use a contractor. Ms. Romero is working with Dee Tarr from the Claunch Pinto SWCD to continue the Bearcat project and they will work with a vendor to haul the wood off of the project site to a secure location given the past concerns of theft and security of wood. Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC) commented that the Council might be able to help fund transport of wood from the Villanueva project as it has natural resource monies available. Ms. Romero reported that Commissioner Stephanie García Richard is also looking for resources. An estimated 40 cords will be yielded, which cost \$15 per cord for a total of \$600 for the project.

### **8. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative Update**

*Federal*

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that the Congresswoman held press conference yesterday with farmers, acequias, and others affected by the federal funding pause. She is encouraging anyone having difficulties accessing their federal funding to let her know. Congresswoman Leger Fernández is following Senator Ben R. Luján's lead on the traditional use bill. Mr. Archuleta added that the Council sent Mr. Pacheco's request for information to land grants. Aurora Valdez (Office of Senator Heinrich) reported that there is lot going on right now as Senators Heinrich and Luján and other Democratic leaders are ensuring that Congress is acting faithfully, lawless acts are prosecuted and to stop the breakdown of checks and balances in this country. More than 10,000 federal workers have been terminated, including veterans, whose care is threatened, including urgent mental health care. There are reports of suicides and the Social Security information breach by Elon Musk demonstrates that the law has not been followed. There remains a lot of uncertainty as Medicare/Medicaid is threatened. Eric Chávez (Office of Ben R. Luján) reported that Senator Luján's office is receiving letters from agencies and he urges the public to let them know how the federal cuts are effecting their communities so they can take these messages back to Washington.

#### *State*

Mr. Archuleta reported that House Bill 21, which raises the caps on the land grant-merced assistance fund, is still in the House, which is wrapping up the budget bill (House Bill 2) and is working on the capital outlay bill. House Bill 24, the bill to amend the community governance attorney program, is on the House calendar. Senate Bill 47 passed the Senate and is now on the House side. HB 330, the land grant and acequia infrastructure bill, made it through its first committee.

#### **9. Discussion and Possible Action on Bureau of Land Management Update**

Lisa Morrison (BLM) reported that the USFS public meeting regarding the Upper Pecos watershed withdrawal planned for February 26 has been postponed. She asked that people email her questions and she will try to get responses.

#### **10. Discussion and Possible Action on NM Dept. of Justice & Treaty Division Update –**

Lisa Brown (NMDOJ) reported that Enrique Romero has planned a meeting with the 'Sandoval 7' land grants to discuss options for action on the *U.S. v. Sandoval* case. The NMDOJ is still revising their OMA guidance (IPRA guidance has been released) and they are planning quarterly trainings for leadership regarding IPRA. Regarding questions about the Rio Chama adjudication, unfortunately a decree in 2018 was issued so that window for making any new claims has closed. Mr. Archuleta reported that he is talking to individual to do some research and will need approval of scope of work to do the first phase analysis this fiscal year. The work would include looking at all active land grants to see which land grants have declared water rights. Councilor Polaco added that the final decree was issued on October 23, 2018 and that he and the Merced de los Pueblos de Tierra Amarilla were unaware and he would like to know why that happened (i.e., why notice was not given). They have not had meetings with anybody to tell them or answer their questions, need to be update, how and when the decree was made so that they can at least speak up about it. Mr. Archuleta and Ms. Brown discussed if there was a due process violation if no notice was given. Regarding land grant scholarships and anti-donation clause concerns, land grants may petition to amend the land grant statutes to allow the set aside of a percentage of their monies for scholarships. Councilor Padilla added that a bill reforming the anti-donation clause was killed. Mr. Archuleta added that David Benavides did some analysis on the Sandoval case and wanted to

share that analysis. Councilor Rodríguez added that the NM Acequia Association is prioritizing funding to assist with outreach to children and trainings on water rights. Mr. Archuleta added that trainings on fundamental rights for land grants and acequias, their operation of community centers, 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights, and so on would be important as land grants should be familiar with the rights of the general public to help them steer clear of unintentional violations.

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

Mr. Archuleta reported that NMAA's Vidal Gonzales has been working on comments regarding the statewide water plan. Mr. Gonzales reported that regional councils are to work on regional water restoration projects under the proposed plan. He is working with council staff on comments (*in packet*) to ensure that representatives of the NM Acequia Association or local community water associations, including acequias, are included in water planning. Land grants were not included in this draft and Mr. Archuleta asked Mr. Gonzales for clarification on the process and if any rules created are legally binding. He asked if this ties into the public access component of it and whether adopting rules will happen again in the process. Enrique Romero (NMDNJ) recommend the NMLGC spend sometime reviewing this proposed rules to differentiate between guidelines and actual rule promulgation.

### **12. Discussion and Possible Action on Council FY 2025 Budget**

Mr. Archuleta presented the budget update and Council members discussed the trip to Washington DC, including dates and attendees. More discussion will be held at the March meeting.

### **13. Discussion and Possible Action UNM FY 2025 Intergovernmental Services Agreement**

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #4 for \$74,727.65, including \$56,120.70 in project personnel, \$286.09 in personnel in-state travel; \$3,500.00 to the UNM Clinical Law Program; \$1,970.66 in facility rental, and \$12,454.61 in F&A.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve Pay Request #4 for \$74,727.65; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

- Councilor Polaco – aye
- Councilor Rodríguez – aye
- Councilor Padilla – aye
- Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

### **14. Discussion and Possible Action on Legal Services Contract Update & Requests**

Mr. Archuleta presented the Pay Request #3 from NM Legal Aid for the period of December 2<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 for a total of \$4,725.00.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve NMLA Pay Request #3 for \$4,725.00; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

Chairman Sánchez – aye  
The motion was passed.

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

Invoice #02212025 from Territorial Land Surveying was presenter for 20 hours of work and costs totaling \$4,039.88. Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve this invoice; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye  
Councilor Rodríguez – aye  
Councilor Padilla – aye  
Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

**16. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Merced Institute Update –**

Mr. Archuleta stated that he would like to do a closed executive meeting with UNM HR and Council members to discuss council employee’s performance evaluations.

**17. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update**

None.

**18. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence**

None.

**19. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments**

None.

**20. Public Comments – discussion only**

None.

**21. Miscellaneous Announcements –**

Jason Quintana (DFA) stated that a DFA Capacity Building Session will be held on 04/12/25. This course was put together to help entities attend to get off of the state auditor lists and the training is meant for people that have never been through OSA requirements, capital planning and policy in compliance for an annual audit. People should try to bring your own laptop device and at the end will be LGBMS Training on budgets. Sessions will be going through the COG districts, the COGS will coordinate, and hope to include DOJ on Saturdays so they can have that person as a contact and direct help toward that DOJ representative.

**22. Date and Location for March Council Meeting**

The March 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on March 27, 2025 (Thursday) in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

**23. Adjournment**

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

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye  
Councilor Rodríguez – aye  
Councilor Padilla – aye  
Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:37pm MST.

**Approved:**

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Chair

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Date