

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)  
March 27, 2025 – 10:00am  
UNM Continuing Education  
South Building – Room 207  
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque  
Zoom Meeting I.D. – 930 1716 9979

**Final Meeting Minutes  
Regular Council Meeting**

**1. Call to Order - Roll Call – 10:02 am**

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:02 am MST. Roll call of the Council members: Steve Polaco, Monica Rodríguez, and Juan Sánchez were present; Councilor Padilla was absent.

**2. Council Potential Quorum Disclosure –**

*Santa Fe – March 7, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, and I attended a hearing for HB 330 on March 7, 2025 at the New Mexico State Legislature, 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 – March 15, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, and I attended a hearing for HB 330 on March 15, 2025 at the New Mexico State Legislature, 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 – March 18, 2025*

“Andrea Padilla, Monica Rodriguez, and I attended a hearing for HB 330 on March 18, 2025 at the New Mexico State Legislature, 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); Monica Rodríguez (NMLGC); Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC/LGSP); Greta Archuleta (NMLGC); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGSP); Mark Meyers (NM State Land Office); Megan Veach (NM DOJ – Treaty Division); Bella Mollard (USFS – NNM Forests); Kris Graham Chávez (NRCS); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández); Eric Chávez (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján); Peggy Duran (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); Brian Martinez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG); Mike Howsden (Cristóbal de la Serna LG); Lesley Elser (BLM); Jacob Trujillo (Office of Cong. M. Stansbury); Rita Padilla Gutiérrez.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

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

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

#### **5. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 21, 2025 Meeting**

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the February 21, 2025 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

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

Lesley Elser (BLM) reported that the BLM has updated the fuelwood permits page (info in chat), which clarifies offices that sell permits and fuelwood areas available. Sales begin May 1 and run through December. Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC) asked if the BLM has experienced layoffs; Ms. Elser stated she would get back to Mr. Archuleta.

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

Bella Mollard (USFS), responding to questions posed in the February meeting, reiterated that requests for a fee for SAMs numbers are a scam. Approximately 2,200 probational employees and those considered “non-essential” were laid off from the USFS and they are in process of bringing many of them back, at least those that didn’t find other employment. The agency is going into a reduction in force and plans were submitted to DOGE last week. There has been and will be a continued effect of staffing at visitor centers and offices and the agency is prioritizing visitor services and public access and the Carson and Santa Fe National Forest staff are rotating to ensure coverage. No operational firefighters and law enforcement were laid off. The Carson National Forest has announced that the public meetings relating to the Taos Canyon draft EA have been postponed as they need to be adjusted to reflect the new executive orders. The final decision on Taos Ski Valley proposed improvements is expected this week. Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGSP/LMI) asked if the final decision outlines the amount of water the Taos Ski Valley can impound for snow making operations and if it prohibited the use of additives that slow snow melt. Ms. Mollard responded that she was not sure and reported that seasonal closures will be in effect. Councilor Polaco asked if those holding grazing permits are notified of closures. Ms. Mollard responded that they are informed. Councilor Rodríguez asked if the Taos Ski Valley EA allowed for expansion and if local communities were consulted; Ms. Mollard responded that the footprint remains the same but more uses are allowed under the special use permit.

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

Mark Meyers (NM SLO) reported that the two land grant projects (Villanueva and Bearcat) are on track. The Villanueva project, thinning piñón juniper, has started and they will perform an inspection soon. The Bearcat project has not started yet as they are working with the local SWCD to find a contractor and funding. Mr. Archuleta will schedule meeting with the San Miguel del Bado LG for the middle of April to assess their need of support for fuelwood removal.

## 9. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative Update

### *Federal*

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that they are starting conversations on the traditional use bill and are circulating bill text with the Council and the Pueblos soon. He asked for land grant communities to let the office know if you have had issues with accessing federal funds or if they were effected by layoffs. The Congresswoman is holding townhalls in Santa Fe. Eric Chávez (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján) reported that they are also working on the traditional use bill, circulating text with the Council and pueblos. Senator Luján voted no on the continuing resolution, which he characterized as a “GOP power grab” and underfunded critical services. The Senator was in New Mexico and discussed social security, Medicare, Medicaid and effects of federal cuts with 80 seniors and attended a routable at Roadrunner Foodbank in Albuquerque, discussing his efforts to support New Mexicans in the Farm Bill. He also visited El Centro Family health in Española and participated in a roundtable on impacts of cuts to Medicare and Medicaid. He was one of 31 senators that demanded the reversal of USDA cuts to purchase programs. Finally, he pointed out that the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office’s debt and deficit report estimated a \$4.6 trillion increase in national debt (214% of GDP) by 2040 under the Trump tax plan.

Jacob Trujillo (Office of Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury) reported that Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury visited with east mountain land grants (Chililí, Tajique, Manzano, Torreón and San Antonio de las Huertas) on March 20th. It was a great visit with good action items discussed and land grants shared their concerns with the Congresswoman. She would like to visit the San Antonio de las Huertas and Tomé Land Grants during the April work period. Mr. Trujillo reported (to Mr. Pacheco and Mr. Chávez) that the Congresswoman has some the ideas on a federal definition to be more inclusive of land grants. He added that the CDS application is open to non-profits and units of government for FY 2026. For those that won CDS funding in 2025 to return that approved CDS request, which was pushed because of the continuing resolution. Mr. Archuleta thanked Congresswoman Stansbury for efforts trying to pass HB 330.

### *State*

Mr. Archuleta reported on a partially successful 60-day session. House Bill 21– Land Grant Merced Assistance Fund Changes, (sponsored by Rep. Matthew McQueen), which sought to amend the Land Grant Merced Assistance Fund, *died on the Senate Floor*. House Bill 24 – Community Governance Attorneys Changes (sponsored by Rep. Miguel P. García), *passed and is awaiting the Governor’s signature. Passed last day of the session*. House Bill 128 – NMFA Local Solar Access Fund – Sponsored by Floor Majority Leader Reena Szczepanski and Rep. Roybal Caballero – *passed and is awaiting the Governor’s signature*. Land grants are eligible for the \$10 million appropriated and the bills proponents are interested in land grants applying. House Bill 330 - Land Grant Merced and Acequia Infrastructure Act (sponsored by Speaker Javier Martinez, Rep. Miguel P. García; Sen. Leo Jaramillo) – *died in the Senate Finance Committee*. Good language and mechanics were worked out and a stronger bill will be ready next year as a result of the work. Senate Bill 374 - *Land Grant Merced and Acequia Infrastructure Act* (Sponsored by Sen. Leo Jaramillo, Sen. Pete Campos, and Sen. Bobby Gonzales), the companion bill, *died in the Senate Finance Committee*. Senate Bill 47 - An Act to recognize the Santa Cruz de la Cañada Land Grant as a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico (sponsored by Sen. Leo Jaramillo and Rep. Susan Herrera), *passed and is awaiting the Governor’s signature*. SB 114 – Game Commission land acquisitions, was tabled in the Senate Conservation Committee.

Capital outlay received by land grants is in the meeting packet. 12 land grants received \$1,830,000; \$7,580,000 was requested by 15 land grants but not awarded. The Cristóbal de la Serna, San Joaquín del Río de Chama, San Antonio de las Huertas and Tierra Amarilla Land Grants reauthorized \$319,401.37 in funds. Land grants have proved able to spend their funding, as only four land grant communities were getting their funding reauthorized. Council members thanked staff for their hard work and Chairman Sánchez congratulated the Santa Cruz Land Grant and offered the assistance of the staff whenever needed. Brian Martínez (Santa Cruz de la Cañada LG) thanked the Council and staff for its support. Rita Padilla Gutiérrez expressed her displeasure at the amount the Town of Tomé received in capital outlay.

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

Meghan Veach (NMDNJ Treaty Division) shared information that Lisa Brown compiled information regarding the Rio Chama adjudication, including the consent order signed by Councilor Polaco for the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant. Some sections of the adjudication have been finalized and others have a partial final decree. There have been amended responses and deadlines. She reported that the Treaty Division met with the Lower Gallinas and Los Vigiles Land Grants and Council staff regarding FEMA settlements. Regarding scholarships, land grants should contact NMDNJ and they will address the situation case by case. The Division is still working on OMA and IPRA guides for land grants and acequias. They currently have 3-4 representation agreements with acequias and land grants. They hope to get an attorney in the future through the Community Governance Attorney Act. The Division attended the Taos Valley Acequia Association meeting and Socorro conference on water. Councilor Polaco and Mr. Archuleta asked for more information and the Rio Chama decree. In packet is included a 2018 House Joint Memorial passed by Rep. Matthew McQueen asking the NMAG to work with stakeholders (Taos County, NM TRD) to understand what happened with lineas; one meeting convened and nothing came of it.

Councilor Polaco made a motion asking the NMDNJ to examine the House Joint Memorial related to Cristóbal de la Serna LG; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

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

None.

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

Mr. Archuleta provided a budget update (in packet). \$240,000 is remaining in IGSA; \$347,538.90 spent. The Council will likely do a BAR at its April meeting to discuss a natural resource contract, funding assistance to San Miguel del Bado, planning work, and more survey work. The Council discussed travel to Washington DC to visit the delegation and visit federal offices. And identified the last two weeks of May.

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

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #5 for \$36,070.20, including \$28,055.68 in project personnel, \$32.16 in personnel in-state travel; \$1,970.66 in facility rental, and \$6,011.70 in F&A.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve Pay Request #5 for \$36,070.20; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

Mr. Archuleta presented the scope of work for the Council's sponsorship of Uncivilized Outdoorsman's youth fly fishing camps, which includes four engagements and four spots at each camp. Cost breaks down to \$300 per youth (8-18), or \$5,000 total (\$1,250 with GRT for each camp). In subsequent years the plan is to the camps in the summer with land grants that have water resources and access, such as Tierra Amarilla, Manzano, Anton Chico, and San Miguel del Bado.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the scope of work from Uncivilized Outdoorsman for \$5,000.00; Councilor Rodríguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Polaco – 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 #4 from NM Legal Aid for the period of Jan 1 to Feb 20, 2025 (57.7 hours) for a total of \$8,655.00.

Councilor Rodríguez made a motion to approve NMLA Pay Request #4 for \$8,655.00; Councilor Polaco seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

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

Invoice P0214961 from Territorial Land Surveying was presented for 83 hours of work and costs totaling \$12,418.88. Councilor MR made a motion to approve this invoice; Councilor SP seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

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

Mr. Archuleta reported that the LMI is finalizing the purchase of Malcolm Ebright's land grant materials. The honorarium for Moises Morales for his remarks at Treaty Day has been processed. Javier Sanchez will be defending his dissertation, which centers the history of the lower Estancia Valley, in early April.

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

Mr. Baca reported that the following has been submitted to the Council and will be included in the New Mexico Community Land Grant Registry.

- Current board membership of the Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant.
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**18. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence**

None.

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

Council staff will serve as election observers for the Anton Chico Land Grant election on April 7.

**20. Public Comments – discussion only**

Councilor Polaco reported that he plans to approach Northern New Mexico College President Hector Balderas about the College's property near Tierra Amarilla, but underatands that his decisions regarding the property need to go through their Board of Regents.

**21. Miscellaneous Announcements –**

ICIPs due June 13. DFA is holding a training on April 12, 2025 in Albuquerque. The Consejo meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 5.

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

The April 2025 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on April 11, 2025 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00 am.

**23. Adjournment**

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

Roll call vote:

Councilor Polaco – aye

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed. The meeting adjourned at 11:44 am MDT.

**Approved:**

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Chair

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Date