

New Mexico Land Grant Council (NMLGC)
March 20, 2026 – 10:00am
UNM Continuing Education
South Building – Room 207
1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque
Zoom Meeting I.D. - 982 0835 1630

**Final Meeting Minutes
Regular Council Meeting**

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Chairman Juan Sánchez called the meeting to order at 10:01am 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); Anissa Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); Jacobo Baca (NMLGC/LGMI); Leonard Martinez (San Joaquin del Rio de Chama LG); Michael Gilmore (DFA IPDD Rural Frontier Equity Ombudsman); Jonathan Macias (DFA IPDD); Tokey Boswell (BLM); A.J. Pacheco (Office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández); Macario Griego (Cañon de Carnué LG); Lisa Brown (NMDOJ Treaty Division) Randolph Chavez (Torreón LG); Leonora Chavez (Torreón LG); Eric Chavez (Sen. Ben Ray Lujan); Kendall Kappler (District Legislative Aid for Rep. Diane Torres Velasquez); Katrina García.

3. Approval of Agenda

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve the agenda; Councilor Rodriguez 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 February 27, 2026 Regular Council Meeting

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the February 27, 2026 Regular Council meeting; Councilor Rodriguez 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) reported on leadership transitions within BLM. Steve Pearce was nominated to be the next BLM Director, passed committee scrutiny and will be confirmed in the coming days. Melanie Barnes left her post as director of the BLM New Mexico office; Gera Ashton is now director. The BLM is working on the next batch of certified land grant patents for the Council.

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

No USFS representative attended the meeting. The Council will continue working on its MOU with the USFS.

7. Discussion and Possible Action on Federal and State Legislative & Policy Update - Washington DC travel

Federal

A.J. Pacheco (Office of Cong. Teresa Leger Fernández) reported that the CFP process has wrapped up and they are moving forward with recommending a few land grants for funding. He thanked the Council for their help with land grants applying for funding. The Traditional Use Bill (H.R. 2785) remains in committee and Rep. Leger Fernández working towards having it heard and making it a priority of the Federal Lands Subcommittee. The Cemetery Conveyance Bill (H.R. 4284) passed the House and has moved onto the Senate. The Congresswoman plans on visiting land grants in the near future. Councilor Polaco asked if the legislation applied to cemeteries in the Sargent Wildlife preserve; Arturo Archuleta (NMLGC Staff) responded that it does not, but similar legislation could be introduced at the state level to address cemeteries on these Game Commission managed lands.

Eric Chávez (Office of Senator Ben R. Luján) reported that Senator Luján's Congressional Directive Spending: deadline is March 27. Applications are available on their website and will be accepted from local, state, tribal governments and non-profits. He reported that the Cemetery Conveyance Act has been read twice and sent to the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. Senator Lujan published an opinion piece in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* about how he is fighting against the Trump administration, including the SAVE act and its negative effects on New Mexico. He issued a statement, opposing Mark Wayne Mullin's nomination as Secretary of DHS. With Senator Heinrich, they sent a letter to then DHS Secretary Noem and the director of INS demanding that delays to DACA renewals cease and asked for an independent review of the Dept. of Justice's redaction of the Epstein files. There still has been no movement on the Traditional Use Bill (s. 1363), but Sen. Luján is having conversations with Republicans in the Energy Committee to move the bill forward. The Farm Bill remains in limbo on the Senate side. Councilor Rodríguez asked if there are any updates on the San Joaquín's UEI number; Mr. Chávez reported that it was approved. Mr. Archuleta thanked Mr. Pacheco and Mr. Chavez for their help securing meetings with the Congressional delegation for Chairman Sanchez, who was traveling to Washington DC with the Association of Conservation Districts. The Council plans to make a trip to Washington DC on the week of May 11-15.

State

The capital outlay bill was signed by the Governor. Council staff will work on re-evaluating the infrastructure bill for the interim session. Representative Miguel García sent a request for \$180,000 of GROW money to the Council, but LCS staff misappropriated the monies to the Los

Vigiles Land Grant. The Council and Rep. Garcia are working with DFA to see if there is way to get that funding back to the Council. Councilor Rodríguez commented that funding for a feasibility study for a lowrider museum was vetoed and the land grant acequia museum feasibility study did not pass the legislature. Mr. Archuleta clarified that Rep. Serrato didn't advance the land grant acequia feasibility study because of a technical issue and that he suggested that monies might be used to create a report of the impact of the infrastructure bill on land grants and acequias.

8. Discussion and Possible Action on Infrastructure Planning and Development Division Update

IPDD Bureau Chief Jonathan Macias and rural ombudsman Michael Gilmore presented the work of the IPDD. They discussed the technical assistance that they offer, including assistance with ICIPs, funding navigation, their rural and frontier ombuds program, the Capital Connect Hub, and work with the Federal Grants Bureau. They also discussed the New Mexico Match Fund and whether monies can be used for match in Congressional Directed Spending applications. The IPDD presented on the Acequia Pilot Project for emergency debris removal.

9. Discussion and Possible Action on State Land Office Update

Camilla sent an update in an email for the meeting that the Bearcat Project will be up and running by the end of April.

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Natural Resource Issues & Concerns

Councilor Polaco commented that the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant applied for NRCS programs for brush management and to line its ponds. Headgates have not been fixed and the NRCS now stated that they might not fund the pond lining project.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on NM Department of Justice Treaty Division Update & Requests – Amicus for Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant Case

Lisa Brown (NMDOJ – Treaty Division) reported that the Division has been busy with depositions on the Tecolotito acequia case. The Sandoval Seven meetings are ongoing and they held their first meeting in the field in Santa Cruz LG and will hold its next meeting in San Miguel del Bado LG. The San Joaquín del Río de Chama MOU with the U.S. Forest Service is almost completed and the San Joaquín Grant will hold a meeting tomorrow to sign the agreement. The Manzano LG case ended, where the grant was successful in getting the land grant dismissed in a sovereign immunity defense. Cristóbal de la Serna case will go to trial on April 11th and the brief of the Cristóbal de la Serna case is completed. New Mexico Legal Aid requested oral arguments in the case. HM 24 was passed in the last legislative session and requests that the Council and NMDOJ conduct a study on the restructuring the Las Vegas Land Grant, possibly as a political subdivision. The title suit against the Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant has reemerged and the NMDOJ may need to play a role, submitting an amicus brief on behalf of the Council. Mr. Archuleta provided background of the case, which is ongoing since 2019, with the Council providing legal assistance to the land grant through the New Mexico Legal Aid, with research assistance provided by the Council. The case involves 112 acres of a 150 acres claim, and the district court ruled in favor of the Juan Bautista Baldes Land Grant, where they won on adverse possession. The district court issued a motion for summary judgement and quieted title to the land grant, but the appeals court withdrew the district court motion and withdrew title. The deadline to submit the brief is March 27.

Councilor Polaco made a motion that the Council request the NMDOJ submit an amicus brief on the Juan Bautista Baldes case; Councilor Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

12. Discussion and Possible Action on Council FY 2026, FY 2027 and FY 2028 Budget

Mr. Archuleta reported that with staff changes at DFA, we need to be sure that the donation from the late Senator Bill O’Neill’s estate does not get swept with end of year reversion. We also want to be able to invest it with the state treasurer. The Council also hopes to get before the Legislative Finance Committee and aim to include changes to the LGMAF, infrastructure fund and increase in Council budget in our presentation.

A budget update was provided, including \$ 4,011.46 in council travel, \$244,101.31 in staff, \$15,765.28 in facility rental, \$56,781.40 in F&A for grand total of \$379,072.37 spent.

Mr. Archuleta presented a BAR to move monies from the UNM Law School, which is not currently working on any land grant cases, to fund the Hispanic and Indian Fly Fishing Camps this coming summer.

Councilor Polaco made a motion to approve to a BAR to move \$3,500 from the Law Clinic budget item to community and youth development budget; Councilor Padilla seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

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

The motion was passed.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve the use of this money for the Indigenous and Hispanic Youth Fly Fishing Camp; 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 UNM FY 2026 Intergovernmental Services Agreement

Mr. Archuleta presented Pay Request #7 for \$40,127.26 including, but not limited to, \$30,414.52 in project personnel, \$1,970.66 in facility rental, and \$6,687.88 in F&A.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve Pay Request #7 for \$40,127.26; Councilor Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

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

New Mexico Legal Aid attorneys David Benavides and Victoria Lobato are working on the reply to the response to appeals court brief on Cristóbal de la Serna. The brief in chief was submitted last month, with the NMDOJ submitting an amicus brief on behalf of NMLGC. The response by the plaintiff was lacking.

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

Territorial Land Surveying submitted invoice 03202026 for \$1,496.25 for work on the Cristóbal de la Serna court case.

Councilor Padilla made a motion to approve invoice 03202026 for \$1,496.25 for Territorial Land Surveying LLC; Councilor Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sánchez – aye

The motion was passed.

16. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant Registry Update

None.

17. Discussion and Possible Action on Land Grant-Merced Institute Update

LGMI student Fabian Valdez is almost done digitizing purchased items from Malcolm Ebright. The LGMI is also working with a website developer to create a new website for Land Grant-Merced Institute and the Land Grant Council. Councilor Rodríguez commented that the San Joaquín backs all data on cloud services and is looking into a “.gov” website.

18. Discussion and Possible Action on Correspondence

None.

19. Discussion and Possible Action on Staff Assignments

Councilor Padilla requested assistance to create a map of all lands the Town of Tomé Land Grant has reacquired.

20. Public Comments – discussion only

None.

21. Miscellaneous Announcements

Greta Archuleta (NMLGC) explained her new budget method where budgets are going to be separated by project. Land grants need to follow procurement and/or purchasing policy and should start issuing purchase documents, including P.O.'s.

22. Date and Location for April Council Meeting

The April 2026 New Mexico Land Grant Council meeting will be held on April 17, 2026 in Albuquerque at UNM Continuing Education at 10:00am.

23. Adjournment

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

Roll call vote:

Councilor Rodríguez – aye

Councilor Padilla – aye

Councilor Polaco – aye

Chairman Sanchez - aye

The motion was passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:19pm MDT.

Approved:

Chair

Date