

COUNTY OF LINCOLN

New Mexico Special Meeting Board of County Commissioners

Preston Stone, Chair
Dallas Draper, Vice Chair

Thomas F. Stewart, Member
Elaine Allen, Member
Lynn Willard, Member

Minutes
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lincoln County Commission held on January 31, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Hondo Senior Citizens Center, Hondo, New Mexico.

1. Call to Order

Chair Stone called the Special Meeting of the Board of County Commissioners to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Roll Call

Present: Chair Stone, Commissioner Stewart, Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Willard.

Absent: Commissioner Draper.

Present: Others present included Nita Taylor, County Manager; Alan Morel, County Attorney; and Rhonda Burrows, Clerk; Robert Shepperd, Sheriff; Mike Wood, Undersheriff; and John Sugg, District Attorney.

3. Invocation

The invocation was presented by Chair Stone.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

- a. Pledge – US Flag
- b. Salute – NM Flag

5. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Acceptance of the Agenda and authorized the Chair to move items as necessary,

Action: Approve, **Moved by** Commissioner Stewart, **Seconded by** Commissioner Allen.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Yes = 4). **Yes:** Chair Stone, Commissioner Stewart, Commissioner Allen, Commissioner Willard.

6. Law Enforcement Concerns: Discussion pertaining to the Hondo Valley

Chair Stone informed the Special Meeting was called at the request of Hondo Valley residents to provide an opportunity for public comment on law enforcement concerns to the Board of County Commissioners. Chair Stone stated the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department would discuss current operations in the Hondo Valley and residents would have the opportunity to provide comment. Chair Stone expressed appreciation for those in attendance.

Robert Shepperd, Sheriff acknowledged the public concerns about drug use and the associated crime in the Hondo Valley. Sheriff Shepperd stated drug problems were not unique to the Valley but were a nationwide problem. Sheriff Shepperd reminded Lincoln County was the fourth largest county in the State of New Mexico. Sheriff Shepperd stated his office divided the County into districts for coverage but stated deputies were often called away from their assigned district to assist with active calls in other parts of the county. Sheriff Shepperd stated currently there were twenty one deputies in the Sheriff's Office including the Sheriff and Undersheriff.

Sheriff Shepperd stated these problems in the Hondo Valley and elsewhere were not simply law enforcement problems but also community problems. Sheriff Shepperd discussed the need to

establish better communication between the public and the Sheriff's department. Sheriff Shepperd discussed the lengthy process to pursue evidence and develop a case which was often frustrating for victims and the community. Sheriff Shepperd commented on the need at times for families to seek assistance and cooperate with law enforcement in the arrest of their own family members. Sheriff Shepperd stated the Sheriff's Department had a dedicated phone line for individuals to provide information and additionally were researching the use of a social media site for the publication of pictures and information about wanted individuals. Sheriff Shepperd discussed various interagency task forces and noted these were also very limited in manpower. Sheriff Shepperd discussed the direct relationship between drug use and crime.

John Sugg, District Attorney for Lincoln County discussed the three levels of information in the criminal justice system as "the things we think we know, the things we know, and the things we can prove". District Attorney Sugg discussed the nature of "hearsay" information and the need for information to come from a firsthand witness willing to testify in court. District Attorney Sugg stated his office needed community support to obtain successful prosecutions and incarcerate individuals to reduce local crime.

Approximately one hundred community members were in attendance. Public comment was received from but not limited to: Alice Velasquez, Reita Kiker, Bob Longwill, Guillermo Maldonado, Warren Hansen, Janetta Shuch, Monica Lopez, Reba Wright, Joe Switzer, Jackie Powell, Dolores Herrera, Eunice Muzyka, Alice Seely, Alicia Nieto, Corinne Prudencio, Teresa Polaco Quezada, Rebecca Zinn, Barbara Whipple, Jerry Gutierrez, Gabe DeLeon, Leann Soto, and Claudia Almager.

Chair Stone thanked Renee Montes, Senior Services Director for hosting the meeting and stated appreciation for the public's participation.

Chair Stone commented on the importance of rural neighbors watching out for each other and each other's property. Chair Stone urged the public to communicate any concerns to the Sheriff, Undersheriff, District Attorney, or County Commissioners.

Sheriff Shepperd discussed the concept of "community policing" and the importance of interacting with the public. Sheriff Shepperd responded to questions about resources and noted local departments had "cross commissioned" officers to assist each other. Sheriff Shepperd provided handouts on topics related to options for community members to protect themselves and other topics. Sheriff Shepperd recommended the utilization of motion lights, alarm systems, security cameras, game cameras, and dogs as crime deterrents. Sheriff Shepperd also supported community members looking out for each other and reporting suspicious activity. Sheriff Shepperd discussed the requirements for the Department's Animal Control Officer to issue a citation which includes the officer witnessing the dog or dogs running at large. Sheriff Shepperd stated he would on request provide officers to speak in the schools and would also speak with children at a parent's request.

District Attorney Sugg commented on the "good start" made during the meeting and reminded his office was available to assist the community in any way possible.

Commissioner Allen thanked the attendees for sharing their comments and stories. Commissioner Allen expressed appreciation for the beauty of the Hondo Valley and stated her commitment as a County Commissioner to assist the community.

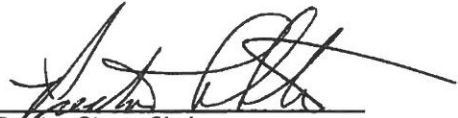
7. Next Meeting:

February 13, 2018 - Regular Commission Meeting

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board of County Commissioners, Chair Stone adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

County of Lincoln
Board of County Commissioners



Preston Stone, Chair



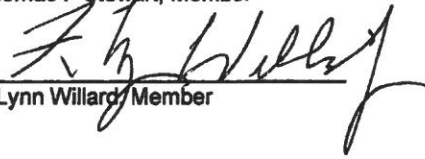
Dallas Draper, Vice Chair



Elaine Allen, Member



Thomas F Stewart, Member



F Lynn Willard, Member

ATTEST:



Rhonda Burrows, County Clerk

February 13, 2018
Date Approved

