

Special Meeting  
June 18, 2018

The Colfax County Board of Commissioners met on this date in a Special Session in the Commission Chambers with the following members present:

William Sauble, Chairman  
Landon Newton, Vice-Chairman  
Roy Fernandez, Member

Also present were: Mary Lou Kern, County Manager and Rayetta M. Trujillo, County Clerk.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Sauble called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Fernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Salute to the New Mexico Flag

Chairman Sauble led the Salute to the New Mexico Flag.

4. Approve Agenda

Commissioner Fernandez made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Newton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Recognize Visitors

Others present: Amanda Segura, Carol Bridge, Scott Berry, Dan Campbell, Thomas Vigil, Joana Apodaca, Dave Kenneke, John Celley, and Kevin Dowling.

6. Discuss/Action – Resolution #2018-17, Colfax County Sponsorship – Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Chairman Sauble stated the reason for the Special Meeting is for Resolution #2018-17, Colfax County Sponsorship – Emergency Watershed Protection Program. County Manager Kern stated the Resolution is to authorize the County to work as the fiscal agent for the USDA Grant concerning the watershed from the Ute Park Fire. She read the Resolution agreement for Colfax County Sponsorship of the USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

Thomas Vigil stated as of 1735 hours yesterday the Ute Park Fire is a hundred percent contained. He stated he feels strongly, this containment will be maintained but burns will continue until the area gets moisture. Thomas presented a Ute Park Fire burn intensity map outlining the area that burned. He stated approximately forty percent of the fire was high intensity burn which damaged soil and vegetation. Thomas stated a high intensity burn has a vegetative recovery time of approximately six years and there is some moderate intensity burn. He stated the Ute Park Fire was an intense burn throughout ninety percent of the fire. Thomas stated it was suggested to pursue NRCS for funding with the County acting as sponsor. He stated there are requirements expected from a sponsor and he read to the Board what the requirements are.

Thomas stated Philmont Boys Scout Ranch, Vermejo Park Ranch, Chase Ranch, New Mexico Game and Fish, and residents and/or land owners in Ute Park are the five key land owners affected by the fire. He stated Cimarroncito was moderately impacted by the fire which is the primary water source for the Village of Cimarron. He also stated the entire Cimarron River watershed was highly impacted by the fire. Thomas stated there are three municipal partners directly affected by the damaged watershed and they are Cimarron, Raton, and Springer. He stated the Village of Cimarron will have limited water until Cimarroncito is restored and the water quality can be established. He also stated there are concerns for debris or sediments affecting the water intakes, filtration differences, and flooding in certain areas. Thomas stated the Town of Springer primary water source comes from Springer Lake which draws water from the affected area.

He stated the County will obligate to secure all permits and land rights before any scope of work can be performed on the affected land. He also stated the private land owners are willing to work with the County on preservation efforts. Thomas stated the County is estimating a 75/25 split between NRCS and the County. He stated NRCS will approve the qualified work and the completion of all work. He also stated each scope of work will be approved by the NRCS and the engineer will designate a completion date. Thomas stated there are other funding sources he is considering.

Commissioner Newton stated the board received copies of letters sent by NRCS and they are awaiting approval to proceed with the watershed preservations. Raton City Manager Scott Berry stated when the city acquired the Track Fire, they confided on local resources and Colfax County for assistance. He encourages Colfax County to seek assistance from NRCS because the city applied for the Emergency Watershed Program after the Track Fire. Scott stated this program is an outstanding resource and he recommends the County utilize it. He stated NRCS offered technical assistance, assisted with expenses, and responded promptly to the application. He also stated Mr. Campbell and himself are offering their partnership and support for the County with the process. Chairman Sauble questioned the amount of time NRCS took to respond to the city application for assistance. Scott replied it was approximately four weeks or less and they offered exceptional support. He also stated the city received emergency funding from different sources. Scott stated they went to the Water Trust Board and found funding which supported watershed activities. He also received funding from the State Forestry, Emergency Management, and encouraged the County to seek out additional resources that are available.

General Manager of Philmont Scout Ranch, Kevin Dowling stated Philmont brings in around fifty to sixty million dollars of revenue to the Colfax County area. He stated the heart of Philmont was affected by the fire and commended all volunteers involved with the fire on their rescue efforts. Kevin stated the boy scouts also give Amtrak, Southwest Chief, and local businesses additional revenue. He stated there is an estimated twenty-seven thousand acres of damage done to Philmont from the fire.

Ranching Director of Philmont Scout Ranch Dave Kenneke stated Philmont is in the process of utilizing NRCS for assistance with the damage acquired to Philmont and encouraged the County to proceed with the process.

Raton Water Works Manager Dan Campbell stated the Emergency Watershed Protection Program is the most prompt resource to access. He stated the Water Trust Board is a longer process to acquire. Dan stated getting NRCS involved to see what type of efforts will be required is the first step in the process. He also stated maintaining decontamination of the river will be an ongoing activity. Dan encouraged immediate action to proceed urgently before heavy rains come to the area and more devastation is encountered.

County Manager Kern requested the Commission Board designate someone to sign the forms. The Commission Board stated County Manager Kern should sign the forms but if a second signature is required then Emergency Manager Thomas Vigil may also sign the forms. Commissioner Newton stated the Board has possession of the templates for the letters of application, they need to be filled out, and encouraged County Manager Kern to complete them urgently. He also encouraged the forms be filled out specifically to the information required. Chairman Sauble asked if anyone had any other questions or comments but none were raised. Commissioner Newton made a motion to approve Resolution #2018-17, Colfax County Sponsorship – Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Commissioner Fernandez seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## 7. Adjourn

Commissioner Fernandez made a motion to adjourn at 9:26 a.m. Commissioner Newton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.