



**Water Trust Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 2, 2026**

**Members Present:**

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| Elizabeth Anderson, Chair <i>virtual</i> | NM State Engineer   |
| AJ Forte, Vice-Chair                     | NM Municipal League                                       |
| Mark Thompson                            | NM Indian Affairs Department                              |
| Marquita Russel                          | CEO, NM Finance Authority                                 |
| Jesse Guillen                            | Designee, NM Department of Finance & Admin.               |
| Ben Bajema                               | Designee, NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Dept. |
| Priscilla Lucero <i>virtual</i>          | Environmental Community Representative                    |
| Tim McGinn <i>virtual</i>                | Irrigation or Conservancy District Ground Water Rep.      |
| Max Henkels <i>virtual</i>               | Designee, NM Department of Agriculture                    |
| Richard Garcia <i>virtual</i>            | Designee, NM Association of Counties                      |
| Dennis Romero <i>virtual</i>             | Designee, NM Environment Department                       |
| Michael Sloane, Secretary                | Director, NM Department of Game & Fish                    |
| Brent Van Dyke <i>virtual</i>            | Soil & Water Conservation Districts Representative        |

**Members Absent:**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Buu Nygren  | Navajo Nation                                       |
| Greg Alpers | Irrigation/Conservancy District Ground Surface Rep. |

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call.** Vice-Chair Forte called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. A quorum was established.
- 2. Approval of Agenda.** Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Sloane, to approve the agenda. The motion passed 12-0.
- 3. Approval of Board Minutes.** Member Sloane moved, seconded by Member Romero, for approval of the October 29, 2025, minutes. The motion passed 12-0.

Member Lucero joined via zoom at 10:12 am.

**4. Open Meetings Act Resolution.**

**4.1 Consideration and Approval of Open Meetings Act Resolution.** General Counsel presented the Open Meetings Resolution. The Open Meetings Act requires all meetings of a quorum of members of any board, commission, administrative adjudicatory body or other policymaking body to be open to the public at all

times. The Board is subject to the provisions of the Act. Section 10-15-1(D) of the Act requires the Board to determine annually what constitutes reasonable notice of its public meetings. The Resolution complies with the requirements of the Act. Staff recommends that the Board approve the Open Meetings Resolution for 2026, as presented.

**Member Thompson moved, seconded by Member Romero, for approval of item 4.1. The motion passed 13-0.**

## **5. 2026 NM Legislative Session Overview.**

**5.1 2026 NM State Legislative Session Overview.** CEO Russel highlighted two major actions affecting the WTB. The Legislature passed the regular authorization bill containing 113 recommended projects, as well as House Bill 109, which temporarily removes the requirement for legislative authorization before the NMFA can issue loans or grants to qualified entities. This three-year suspension will allow the agency to better time applications, reduce repetitive updates from applicants, and create a more flexible, right-sized application process that differentiates between large and small systems. Additionally, the Legislature appropriated \$100 million to the WPF, enabling potential off-cycle funding opportunities such as design-only grants to improve project readiness and expedite construction timelines. These changes should streamline workflow, improve efficiency, and support faster expenditure of funds. Board members noted the significant trust placed in the WTB by the Legislature, along with substantial recent funding increases, and discussed ongoing work with the Executive branch and the General Services Department to develop statewide price agreements to assist applicants and simplify procurement. NMFA staff will continue to support applicants throughout the process to ensure the Board fulfills the expectations associated with these new responsibilities and funding levels.

**Information Only.**

## **6. Water Trust Board 2027 Application Timeline/Amended Rules.**

**6.1 WTB 2027 Application/Amended Rules DRAFT Timeline.** Staff presented a tentative schedule for the rulemaking process, noting that in June the proposed rule will be published in the NM register, A public hearing in July will be held for comments, final adoption of the rules by the WTB will be sometime in August.

In order to continue the momentum of funding projects and to better prepare applicants for the upcoming 2027 WTB funding cycle, an application cycle focusing on design only projects would open in Fall 2026. In Winter/Spring 2027, a complete application cycle, combining the technical, readiness and compliance requirements would open with funding happening in Spring/Summer. Staff is currently working with State Board of Finance to determine alternate options for future cycles to meet the current bond sale requirements.

**Information Only.**

## **7. Consideration of Scope Change/Funding Increase.**

**7.1 Consideration of Scope Change and Funding Increase for the Village of Ruidoso Project No. WPF-5981.** The Board reviewed a request from the Village of Ruidoso to expand the scope and increase funding for their project. Ruidoso was originally awarded funding in the 2023 cycle for construction and rehabilitation of the Upper Canyon Surface Diversion, but the South Fork and Salt Fires, followed by severe flooding, caused extensive damage and ongoing flood risks throughout the area. After receiving \$1.16 million in 2025 for construction cost overruns, the Village has now submitted a 2026 request for an additional \$2.5 million to support continued flood mitigation, including installation of a new trash rack and excavation of a sediment basin and access road. These measures are needed to address recurring flood events that threaten safety and infrastructure, with benefits extending beyond the immediate project area. The request aligns with the Legislature's 2024 set-aside of \$18 million for WTB projects experiencing funding shortfalls. The Project Review Committee supports staff's recommendation to expand the scope for WPF-5981 and approve the additional funding due to the emergency nature of the needs and to avoid further project delays. If approved, the Village will withdraw its 2026 application from consideration.

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Sloane, for approval of item 7.1 as presented. The motion passed 13-0.**

**7.2 Consideration of Scope Change for Luna County Project No. WPF-5969.** Luna County requested an expansion of the scope for Project WPF-5969, originally funded in the 2023 cycle, for the planning and design of flood-prevention improvements in the China Draw, Rockhound, and East Florida areas. The County has completed a flood-prevention study, advanced the project design to 90 percent, and is currently working with the Bureau of Land Management to finalize environmental review and NEPA compliance, as portions of the improvements are located on federal land. The County has also secured \$3.465 million in construction funding from the Colonias Board and anticipates a remaining balance of approximately \$581,000 under the WTB award once design and environmental review conclude in May 2026. The County is requesting to expand the project scope to include construction so it may combine the remaining WTB funds with the Colonias award to complete the project, with anticipated completion by December 2027. The Project Review Committee supports this request, and staff recommends approval of the scope expansion to include construction.

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Guillen, for approval of item 7.2 as presented. The motion passed 13-0.**

## **8. Consideration of 2026 Water Project Fund Waiver Requests.**

**8.0 Consideration and Recommendation of 2026 WPF Waiver Requests.** The Board reviewed requests from 2026 WTB applicants seeking waivers from various WTB and regulatory policies. The 2026 cycle requires a two-step process consisting of a Project Application followed by a Readiness Application, the latter of which evaluates regulatory compliance, policy adherence, Executive Order requirements, and

mandatory spending of prior WTB awards. Of the 113 applicants recommended for legislative authorization, 105 submitted Readiness Applications by the January 22, 2026 deadline. Applicants with outstanding compliance issues were notified and given options to resolve deficiencies by March 20, discontinue their applications for correction ahead of the next cycle, or formally request a waiver. Staff noted that some applicants may achieve compliance after awards are made on April 21, and that a second iteration of awards may be recommended in August if additional funds become available. The Board then considered the applicants requesting waivers along with comments and recommendations provided by the applicable oversight agencies.

**8.1 Albuquerque Bernalillo County WUA (WPF-6836 & 6837) Water Conservation or Treatment, Recycling and Reuse; Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Projects.**

**8.2 Capulin MDWCA (WPF-6843) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**8.3 Claunch Pinto SWCD (WPF-6845) Watershed Restoration and Management Project.**

**8.4 Dona Ana County (WPF-6848) Flood Prevention (Project Continuation; State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**

**8.5 Eastern NMWUA (WPF-6851) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**8.6 Eldorado Area WSD (WPF-6855) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**8.7 City of Farmington (WPF-6859) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**8.8 City of Gallup (WPF-6861, WPF-6862, WPF-6863) Water Conservation or Treatment, Recycling and Reuse; Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery; Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Projects.**

**Member Sloane moved, seconded by Member Guillen, for approval of item 8.8 as presented. The motion passed 12-0. Member Romero abstained.**

**8.9 Greater Chimayo MDWCA (WPF-6866) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**8.10 Guadalupe SWCD (WPF-6868, WPF-6869) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery; Watershed Restoration and Management Projects.**

**8.11 City of Las Cruces (WPF-6873, WPF-6874, WPF-6875) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery; Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Projects.**

**8.12 Lincoln County (WPF-6880) Flood Prevention Project.**

**8.13 Luna County (WPF-6887) Flood Prevention Project.**

- 8.14 McKinley County (WPF-6889, WPF-6890, WPF-6891) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (2); Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Projects.**
- 8.15 City of Portales (WPF-6904, WPF-6905, WPF-6906) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (2); Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Projects.**
- 8.16 Ramah WSD (WPF-6909) Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Project.**
- 8.17 City of Raton (WPF-6910) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**
- 8.18 City of Roswell (WPF-6912) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**
- 8.19 Village of Ruidoso (WPF-6913-WPF-6923) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (4); Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment (6) Projects.**
- 8.20 Sangre de Cristo Regional MDWCA&SWA (WPF-6925) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance; NMED Regulations).**
- 8.21 City of Santa Fe (WPF-6928, WPF-6929, WPF-6930, WPF-6931) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (2); Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment (2) Projects.**
- 8.22 City of Santa Rosa (WPF-6933) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**
- 8.23 Southern Sandoval County Arroyo FCA (WPF-6934) Flood Prevention Project.**
- 8.24 City of Sunland Park (WPF-6941, WPF-6939, WPF-6940) Flood Prevention; Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (2) Projects (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**
- 8.25 Village of Taos Ski (WPF-6942) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**
- 8.26 Town of Taos (WPF-6943) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule-EO-Compliance).**
- 8.27 Chupadero W&SA (WPF-6844) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (2) Projects (NMED Regulations).**
- 8.28 City of Las Vegas (WPF-6876 - 6879) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery (4); Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment (1) Projects (NMED Regulations).**

**8.29 Regina MDWCA (WPF-6911) Water Storage Conveyance and Delivery Project (NMED and OSE Regulations).**

**8.30 Mora MDWC&SWA (WPF-6897) Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**

**8.31 Town of Moriarty (WPF-6898) Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**

**Member Thompson moved, seconded by Member Sloane, for approval of items 8.1 through 8.7 and items 8.9 through 8.31 as presented. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.32 San Juan SWCD (WPF-6945) Watershed Restoration and Management Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**

**Member Sloane moved, seconded by Member Russel, for approval of item 8.32 as presented. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.33 Canon MDWC&SWA (WPF-6842) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project.**

**Member Sloane moved, seconded by Member Russel for approval of item 8.32 as presented. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.34 EMWT Regional Water Association (WPF-6856 & WTP-6857) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Projects (NMED & OSE Regulations).** Discussion ensued with staff answering questions from the Board. Mr. Steve Anaya, Mayor of Moriarty and Vice Chair of the EMWT Water Board, provided additional comments related to this project. NMED and OSE do not recommend approval of these waiver requests.

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Thompson, for approval of the waiver requests in order to provide the Association more time to meet the required conditions. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.35 La Jicarita Domestic Water Alliance (Penasco MDWCA) (WPF-6872) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance; OSE Regulations).** Staff does not recommend approval of these waiver requests. Mr. Jody Garcia, member of the Community Water Engineering, representing La Jicarita, provided additional comments regarding this project.

**Member Anderson moved, seconded by Member Russel, for approval of the waiver requests. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.36 Storrie Project WUA (WPF-6936, WPF-6938) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Projects (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance).**

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Thompson, for approval of item 8.36. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.37 City of Truth or Consequences (WPF-6947) Wastewater Conveyance and Treatment Project (Project Continuation).** Staff does not recommend approval of this waiver request. Mr. Gary Whitehead, city manager of Truth or Consequences, provided additional comments regarding this project. Discussion ensued with the City's representative answering questions from the Board.

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Anderson, for approval of item 8.37. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.38 Village of Angel Fire (WPF-6838) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (NMED Regulations).** NMED does not recommend approval of this waiver request. Mr. Brett Wier, Village Manager of Angel Fire, provided additional comments regarding this project.

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Thompson, for approval of item 8.38. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.39 Duranes y Gavilan MDWCA (WPF-6849) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance; NMED Regulations).**

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Sloane, for approval of item 8.39. The motion passed 13-0.**

**8.40 Green Ridge MDWCA (WPF-6867) Water Storage, Conveyance and Delivery Project (State Audit Rule/EO-Compliance; NMED & OSE Regulations).**

**Member Russel moved, seconded by Member Sloane, for approval of item 8.40. The motion passed 13-0.**

**9. Next Board Meeting.**

- April 21, 2026, 10:00 a.m., Water Trust Board (NMFA Board Room) WTB 2026 Funding Recommendations
- June/July 2026, Water Trust Board Meeting - TBD

**10. Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 12:17 am.

*Michael Sandoz*

Secretary

05 / 06 / 2026

Date

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810 W. San Mateo Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505  
April 2, 2026

8