

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

November 17, 2009

BE IT REMEMBERED that the Luna County Board of County Commissioners met at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 17, 2009, in the County Commission Chambers of the Luna County Courthouse, Deming, New Mexico, for the purpose of conducting a work session. The following members of the Board were present:

Commissioner Fred D. Williams, District 1
Commissioner Debra French, District 2
Chairman R. Javier Diaz, District 3

Also present were the following staff and elected officials: County Manager John Sutherland, Jr., Executive Assistant Glory Johnson, County Clerk Karen Smyer, Deputy Clerk Berenda McWright, Human Resources Director Danny Gonzales, Special Projects Coordinator Rheganne Vaughn, Budget/Procurement Director Joanne Hethcox, Sheriff Raymond Cobos, UnderSheriff Allen Carter and Lieutenant Jonathan Mooradian.

Chairman Diaz called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance and the salute to the flag of the State of New Mexico.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Forensic Audit: Budget/Procurement Director Joanne Hethcox stated she is awaiting guidance from the Board as to a specific scope of work so she can prepare a Request for Proposal for the Forensic Audit. An exchange of ideas ensued among the Board and Manager regarding which projects should be included in the audit. County Manager John Sutherland cautioned that cost is a consideration and the larger the scope, the larger the cost of the audit would be. Roxie Samaniego, Audit Partner with the firm of White, Samaniego and Cambell, LLP, recommended that the Board adopt an "agreed upon procedures engagement" similar to one used by another governmental entity. Ms. Samaniego explained the Board could choose to do either a sampling or an in depth audit of construction projects. The sampling option would be less expensive. Ms. Samaniego discussed the methods that may be employed to gain information regarding project records from the county as well as from contractors. She said contractors must make their records available for review to county auditors. She also said the State Auditors Office can be instrumental in gaining access to certain types of information from state agencies. Commissioner French indicated her interest in examining payment of bonuses. Larry Caldwell expressed concern that White Sands Construction did a lot of work for the county. He was also concerned about "quid pro quo" and kickbacks on projects. It was consensus of the Board that these projects should be the subject of the Forensic Audit: Global Housing Contracts, the cattle crossing, courthouse renovation and the day care center and change orders relating to the construction projects. Ms. Samaniego said it would likely take a week for auditors to go through records and an additional week to write up a report.

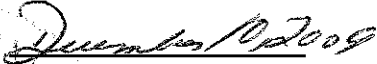
B. Strategic Goals and General Guidance for 2010-2011 Budget: Mr. Sutherland requested feedback from the commissioners to provide guidance for the 2010-2011 budget. He was hoping to provide the board with a preliminary projection of revenue for the coming year, however, the projection was not yet available. The county is currently working on a compensation survey and plan. The plan will be available at the December meeting. Mr. Sutherland provided the board and the public with a revised organizational chart for the county. The organizational chart is important to show the functions Luna County is engaged in and to show the way the taxpayer's dollars are spent. Commissioner French suggested that the dispatch center, road signage and the detention center become priorities. Mr. Sutherland suggested the board consider focusing on excellence in governmental operations by making essential services more effective and efficient. Mr. Sutherland suggested that the detention center invest their profits back into the center and possibly obtain a low interest loan for upgrades. Commissioner Williams stated that commitments have been made by the commissioners to upgrade the website and for the hiring of a fulltime IT position. They discussed a need for incentive spending in certain areas such as dispatch rather than depending on grant money. Commissioner Williams suggested that there may be a way to save some money relating to use of county vehicles. Mr. Sutherland suggested the county do a citizen survey for the upcoming budget. Mr. Sutherland requested the board consider capital equipment replacement for the road department and the possibility of using an NMFA ¼% loan. County Clerk Karen Smyer informed the board that there are issues with maintenance contracts on voting machines and election management software. She said the controversy is linked to the lack of current state contracts. Commissioner Williams expressed concern about the computer hardware and software for the county. The Gateway computers that were bought recently will need to be replaced prematurely. Mr. Sutherland informed the board that the county is currently operating slightly under budget. Mr. Caldwell suggested that initializing a central purchasing department and buying more in volume might be a way to save money. Mr. Sutherland stated that this work session is a just a start for providing strategic goals and general guidance for the upcoming budget.

C. Discussion of Ethics/Responsibility: The item was tabled.

ADJOURN: The meeting concluded at 3:30 p.m.


ATTEST:


KAREN SMYER, LUNA COUNTY CLERK

APPROVED: 

LUNA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS


FRED D. WILLIAMS, DISTRICT 1


DEBRA FRENCH, DISTRICT 2


R. JAVIER DIAZ, DISTRICT 3, CHAIRMAN