

**Regular Meeting/Joint with Village of Cloudcroft**

**January 13, 2004**

The Board of County Commissioners, in and for the County of Otero, State of New Mexico, met in a Regular Meeting at the Village of Cloudcroft in Cloudcroft, County and State aforesaid. Meeting called to order by the Chairman at 6:00 p.m., January 13, 2004; and he announced that reasonable notice for this meeting was given to the Alamogordo Daily News and to Radio Stations, KPSA, KINN and KYEE.

Present:

Michael Nivison	Chairman
Clarissa McGinn	Vice-Chairperson
Doug Moore	Member
Ruth Hooser	County Manager
Ray Backstrom	Assistant County Manager
LaDonna Perry	Department Assistant
Lynn Estrada	Deputy Clerk

Also present:

David Venable	Mayor
Barbara Springer	Trustee
Erich Wuersching	Trustee
Brad Rasch	Trustee
Jeff Rhodes	Village Attorney

Commissioner Nivison gave the invocation. Commissioner Nivison led the Pledge of Allegiance and David Venable, Mayor of Cloudcroft, the Salute to the Flag of the State of New Mexico.

**DRAFT**

Commissioner Nivison highlighted various projects that the County is working on for the people in the audience.

**1. Old Business: Update on Red Brick Schoolhouse.**

Commissioner McGinn stated that the Schoolhouse is in need of repair. As a historical building it has received a state and national historical status. There is a foundation that has been formed from the Tularosa community to restore the building and put it to use for the community. The foundation has been working for the last eight years to raise money for this project. Through the State with the anti-donation clause, they needed a fiscal agent to funnel the money so they could begin the restoration. For the last year the County has been working with attorneys, insurance and the Red Brick Foundation to make this project come to pass. Last week the agreement was finalized to lease the building with the Red Brick School Restoration Foundation. They can now utilize the money that had been set aside from private donation and the Legislature to begin restoring this historical building for all of Otero County.

**2. Update on Timberon Airstrip and other County projects:** Commissioner Moore stated the Department of Finance in Santa Fe has changed the way community projects can be funded through Community Block Grants and Legislative Grants. In order to support several entities, which we have historically supported, we have had to take the deed so the county physically owns the property. Some of the successful projects this year are the Timberon Airport, the Flickinger Center and the Red Brick Schoolhouse.

**3. Consider approving a “Proclamation” for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004.**

Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the Proclamation for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McGinn. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. See pages

Commissioner Moore read the Proclamation into the records.

**4. Update on the County's participation in the secure rural school and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.**

Commissioner Nivison stated that this is the 25% money off of each dollar that the county gets. 12 ½% go for roads and 12 ½% goes to the schools. The issue here is whether or not to tie that to the resource itself or tie it to our three highest years. The past Commission chose not to participate in the Community Self-Determination Act because we didn't want to be uncoupled from the resource. It was an issue that if they gave us this money it becomes a welfare issue with the Federal Government instead of a resource issue.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to consider for approval the reconfiguration of the way we receive our funding for the secure rural school and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McGinn for discussion.

Commissioner McGinn stated that when the Federal Government first established the 25% money it was because they had taken over ownership of the land. The way the money is distributed still allows the county some tie to the resource being the National Forest. Commissioner McGinn believes we need to stay with the 25%. The hundred percent full payment amount may be a greater amount but 15% of that money has to go back to special title programs and a sub committee set up to regulate and over see the spending of the 15%. Staying with the 25% is the best option for Otero County. Commissioner Moore stated that he would like to leave it tied to the resource, but the way the program works is if the forest service puts out a timber cut and somebody bids on it for a certain amount, of that amount the County receives 25 cents of every dollar. The timber industry has declined thanks to a multitude of factors and we no longer have a private held saw mill, he can't see between now and 2006 that the timber industry is going to come back and generate the type of resources that it historically has in our county. The infrastructure currently doesn't exist. Commissioner

Moore believes it his duty to generate the maximum amount of revenues for Otero County. He believes we could receive an extra thirty thousand dollars a year by switching and that is what he is for. A vote was taken with Commissioner McGinn voting against, Commissioner Nivison voting against and Commissioner Moore voting for. See pages

**5. Consent Agenda: 12/17/03 Minutes and Bill Lists #25, #26, #27.**

Commissioner McGinn made a motion to accept the consent agenda item A, minutes and item B, Bill Lists #25, #26 and #27. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. See pages

**6. Personnel: New Hire: Lori Tilman, DWI Dept; Status Change, Lynne Muller, Detention (f/t).**

Commissioner Moore made a motion to accept the new hire in the DWI Department and status change in Detention. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McGinn. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. See pages

**7. Road: Consider approval of a Co-op Agreement with the Developers and Home Owners Association of Meadowland Estates regarding Meadowland Drive.**

Commissioner McGinn made a motion to approve the Co-op Agreement with the Developers & Home Owners Association of Meadowland Estates regarding Meadowland Drive. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. See pages

**8. Mark Saiz (NM State Risk Management)- Discuss a “piggyback” state employee insurance plan for low priced insurance premiums.**

Commissioner Nivison stated that Autumn Suggs, Personnel Technician has had a workshop with Mr. Saiz and the employees to explain the benefits and the savings. Commissioner McGinn stated that the potential cost saving to the county is about \$85,000.00 a year. The coverage will be about the same. The co-pays are

a little higher but the lower premiums will make up the difference. There will be no penalty to break with our current carrier. We can start the State Plan, providing we vote on it tonight, March 1, 2004. Mr. Saiz gave a brief report on the Health Care Package. The Commission thanked Mr. Saiz for his report. Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve the piggyback State Employee Insurance Plan and fund the additional benefit at the current level of 65%. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Moore commended Autumn Suggs on her diligence and hard work to find this package for the employees of Otero County. See pages

**9. Canon Stevens-Discuss Otero County deputies pay raises.**

Ms Stevens approached the Board with a suggestion of how to find the money for the deputies. Why not put it to a vote to the people of Otero County? She has spoken with people from all over the county and according to Ms Stevens they are willing to pay more in property taxes to give the deputies a pay raise. Commissioner Moore stated that there has been some discussion at the State level that they may revamp the way their taxes are structured, this may come out of the legislation. This will possibly give us the ability to impose a tax and take it to the voters.

**10. Ed Carr- Presentation on BRAC (Base Realignment & Closure).**

Ed Carr gave a Power Point presentation on the Base realignment and closure. The base realignment and closure Commission of 2005 is going to happen over the next two years. Secretary Rumsfeld and the Secretary of Defense want to close 25% of the military structures in the United States. This will be the biggest base closure yet. Our goal is to keep Holloman AFB and White Sands Missile Range open. Mr. Carr gave a lengthy report of what the Committee of 50 is doing to keep Holloman AFB and the Missile Range from being closed.

The Board thanked Mr. Carr for his presentation. Commissioner McGinn thanked Ed Carr and the

Committee of 50 for all their efforts and communicating this matter to the local governments.

There being no further business before the Board the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Michael Nivison, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Mary D. Quintana, County Clerk