SANTA FE COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL BCC MEETING

May 20, 2026

Justin Greene, Chair - District 1
Adam Johnson, Vice Chair - District 4
Camilla Bustamante - District 3
Hank Hughes - District 5
Lisa Cacari Stone - District 2

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1. A. This special budget meeting of the Santa Fe Board of County Commissioners was called to order at approximately 1:00 p.m. by Chair Justin Greene in the County Commission Chambers, 102 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

B. Roll Call

Roll was called and indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present:	**Members Excused**:
Commissioner Justin Greene, Chair	None
Commissioner Adam Johnson, Vice Chair	
Commissioner Camilla Bustamante	
Commissioner Hank Hughes	
Commissioner Lisa Cacari Stone	

C. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes offered and Commissioner Johnson moved to approve as published. Commissioner Hughes seconded and the motion passed by unanimous [5-0] voice vote.

2. Presentation and Discussion of Fiscal Year 2027 Interim Operating Budget
A. Presentation and Discussion of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budgets of Specific County Elected Offices and/or Departments

Assessor's Office

CHAIR GREENE: Assessors. Please come up and do it one more time. I like that vest. For everybody at home, our Assessor has a very styling vest on.

ISAIAH ROMERO (County Assessor): Thank you, Chair Greene, Commissioners, good afternoon. I'll be going over the 101 fund. Ivan will go over the 203 and our capital request. The 101 fund budget consists of salary, including budget overtime, benefits, and insurance costs. We did see a significant increase to employee salaries due to the

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Excuse me. I'm sorry. Can we get a page number? 83. I'm sorry. Thank you.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Okay. So we did see a significant increase to employee salaries due to market adjustments, which impact not only our general fund, but also our 203 fund. Due to this increase, we made significant decreases to our budget to help offset these increases. In this budget, similar to past fiscal year requests, our budget, our office budgeted funds for our annual website maintenance needs.

In addition, we need to continue to share the costs with this fund and the 203 fund for our biannual aerial imagery flyover. The only significant change to this fund for the new fiscal year was made in an effort to share some of our operating and contractual services costs between 203 and the general fund.

We worked with Finance to split the expenses for following needs: our chat vendor, Comm 100, our mapping services, licensing provider, Sidwell, our workflow and scanner provided, Terralogic, and our operating needs includes office supplies, cell phone service, and water for our employees. I guess in summary, we did decrease many items in our 101 fund from travel to our legal services.

We decreased them significantly to support the increases for staff. And we started to migrate some of the items that weren't part of the reappraisal fund, because everything within the 101 fund are part of the reappraisal and have to be earmarked for reappraisal. So we started to migrate, as I stated earlier, some items from the 101 fund to the 203.

IVAN BARRY (Deputy Assessor): I'm going to talk about our 203 real quick and our capital request. So in our 203 fund this valuation fund does not include significant changes other than increases due to salary and benefits and a rise in maintenance and software licensing costs with concurrent contractual vendors. Our capital requests include our annual shared cost of $157,043 to conduct business with Pictometry and is necessary for our biannual aerial imagery flyover and our agricultural flyover.

It also includes a carry-forward of a workflow PO with Terralogic in the amount of $9,328.40. And lastly, we requested to reclassify our systems programmer to an IT generalist three, the estimated increase of $11,345. In June of 2026, the chief mass appraiser is expected to retire. And to prepare for his vacancy and ensure operational stability, we are requesting this reclassification, including changing the range and the corresponding salary increase to include incentive pay.

Currently, the Assessor systems programmer and chief mass appraiser positions work closely together to manage the valuation of improved and vacant land using the computer-assisted mass appraisal or CAMA system, and are both essential to the creation of property values. The IT generalist three will also lead in possible future implementation of a new CAMA system. And for that, we will stand for any questions.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you very much. Commissioners-

MANAGER SHAFFER: If I could add, Chair, just a point of clarification. So the requested reclassification has already been approved by the Human Resources and Risk Management Director. So the budgetary impact is accounted for in the approved, I mean in the proposed budget. So just wanted to provide that point of clarification that given her operational authority, that the approval has already been given and the upward impact has been accounted for in the budget that's before you for approval. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you very much. Commissioners, questions for the Assessor? Yes, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. Thank you Assessor and Deputy Assessor. Really appreciate your work, especially the invite you gave to us BCC members. I'm going to take you up on it with my liaison. Do you, in looking at your budget increases, do you think that you have adequate equipment and latest technology needed to do the work you have? Or if you had another wish list, what else would you add to the list?

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Chair Greene Commissioner Cacari Stone, the way I look at things as a leader in the office is, yes, there are long-term goals and short-term goals, but a lot of times what is possible for me are goals within a four-year period, right? And some of the items that you see out there that may help the office would be a new mass appraisal system, right? That is something that we look forward to in the future. That would be something that we would like to purchase. However, your office has to be prepared and ready to take on that new change. And, that would have to be another Assessor to make that decision, but that, that is going to have to be a decision the next Assessor will probably have to make.

I believe currently we have, in cash, enough money, I'm not 100 percent sure, but I'm like 99 percent sure, in cash per reappraisal. We have saved enough for that for the time that decision is made. But that's going to be one of the larger items or one of the bigger things that would improve our office and prepare our office for the future.

I know a lot of times AI is loosely talked about, right? And a lot of these new mass appraisal systems do have AI integrated within the system that would assist the mass appraiser in making decisions, in valuing neighborhoods individually. Not individually, as a whole. But yes.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you so much. And what is the budget amount for that, more, more or less? Millions?

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Chair Greene Commissioner Cacari Stone, it's hard to get a good grasp on what it would be, but if I was a used car salesman, I would probably tell you, ah, about $2 million, give or take, right?

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Yes.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: And then you got your warranties and your other warranties that you're going to have to purchase, things of that nature, and your maintenance plan. And so it, it'll be roughly around probably $2 million or so. Would you agree with that?

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Again we'll keep it in mind for the future. Okay. And I really appreciate you thinking about stepwise, and we wish the next Assessor, whoever that may be, well.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: who might it be? Chair Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone, I didn't answer one of your other questions. The other question was, do we have sufficient resources for our office? I think currently we do to sustain what we're doing, but as we continue to improve, I think there may be FTEs that we may consider, right? Other systems, other programs that may be able to assess the Assessor's office, but a lot of times, if you would speak to a lot of our supervisors and managers, they may say, we could just use one more person. We could just use one more person. It seems like in each area that is something that is often stated.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you. And I, I don't know if we're going to see you in the chambers again, but I really want to thank you for your leadership, your management, your innovations. I know you've won national awards, and also I'm sure your staff will miss you very much in terms of the role that you're in, but I wanted to personally thank you.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Chair Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone thank you. Thank you so much. I don't know how to take compliments, but I appreciate that. However, I do have to state that much of our success is because of the people that work in this office. It's from every beginning point of our office to the Deputy, we have quality people who are passionate about their job. And the fact that they're passionate at their job doesn't mean they always agree with me, right?

So I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful for those individuals in the office who, quote-unquote, check my ideas or our thoughts or our opinions and really, we keep each other and everyone accountable, right? And to say that we're perfect, that would be a misstep for me. But I feel like something I often say within the office is, progression opposed to perfection.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: So I do appreciate all the work you do, as well as specifically the concept of really looking at succession planning, right? When you look at you've cultivated a Deputy that is going to step into your shoes, that's fabulous, right? Also looking at your team and knowing that people are going to retire, and making sure that these people that have institutional knowledge that you train up people, and you've done a great job in building a team. And that's and the continuity is definitely going to serve Santa Fe County next year. But in the next seven months while we've got you, thank you.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Thank you. We really appreciate this.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Come to us if there's things that we can help with, and thank you.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Chair Greene thank you for the compliment, and I feel like that compliment needs to be heard by the Martinezes before me, right? That could be a book, The Martinezes Before Me. There were three Assessors that with the surname Martinez prior to me that in their own right, made great decisions for the office that I continue to benefit from.

CHAIR GREENE: Great. We don't see that all over the place, and so this is, we've got a pretty well-run operation here, and you should take some credit, so enjoy it.

ASSESSOR ROMERO: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Anything else? No? Thank you, guys. Thanks. Good luck in the next year.

Treasurer's Office

CHAIR GREENE: Treasurer Manzanares and team, come on up and they produce the bills and you collect the money. This is how it works.

MANAGER SHAFFER: And the Treasurer's Office is noted on the agenda. Their budget begins on page 103.

JENNIFER MANZANARES (County Treasurer): Thank you, County Manager, good afternoon, Commissioners, Chair Greene. We start with good news. It's always a good place to start. Ryan's done, the Deputy Treasurer has done a great job at breaking down our May collections, $54.7 million. And so we wanted to share some important facts before we go into some of the reasons why we had a decrease this year in our budget, and that was interestingly, we had more bills by about, let's see, we have 84,916 bills in '24. In '25, we had 88,277. So I feel like there's some efficiencies going on even though we've had an increase in property tax bills.

So one of the reasons why we have decreased in total was we didn't have any attorney fees this year. We've been able to work closely with Attorney Boyd and County Manager Shaffer, so that has been important when addressing whatever issues need to go through the legal department. We have had no investment software, so that was a $8,000 más o menos savings.

We've not yet engaged with an investment manager. That was a big savings of $100,000. And Wordswork, we've been doing our in-house meeting minutes. That was a $4,000 savings. And we had no digital archives, and that was a $31,000 savings. So in total, we have decreased by $169,175. And I stand for questions.

CHAIR GREENE: Great. Commissioners? Wow, pretty easy. Does the ERP, you're fully integrated and getting integrated into the ERP system? Does that- -

TREASURER MANZANARES: The Deputy Treasurer has been the master at attending so many of these meetings. I feel like I lost a deputy for about a year, but he was great in balancing both. He was fantastic. So I have a lot of appreciation for him. The answer would be yes, and I think that with Deputy Treasurer involved in the details of it, I feel like the integration should go fairly smoothly, and I think there's more to come as to next steps.

MANAGER SHAFFER: If I could just add to that Mr. Chair and Commissioners, I wanted to thank the Deputy Treasurer as well as the Deputy Assessor and everyone else who has been an active participant in the steering committee for the ERP and then, radiating out from there all the individuals at the County that will be instrumental in its implementation.

So not only was the Deputy Treasurer part of the Steering Committee and the Selection Committee, but I think it's fair to say that the treasury functions of the County Treasurer's Office were at the forefront of the requirements against which the systems were judged. Again, the Treasurer's Office was very much involved in the scoping and selection and will be involved going forward with the implementation of the ERP system.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. And my apologies to the assessors who've stuck around to watch me miss – forget that I should have asked you about the ERP system. So thank you. Glad that everybody's being integrated into that. Commissioners? Yes, Commissioner Cacari Stone.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. Thank you Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer for your work. When serving on the Finance Committee, I always experienced you guys to be very organized in terms of the budget amount, what we're talking about, staying on top of everything. So I learned a lot in being on that. I want to thank you for that. I do have a question, and maybe you covered it and I'm just having a bad listening day.

But page 109, you mentioned that there's no budget allocated – there was a result, a decrease in services for $102,000 because of no budget allocated towards the County's new investment advisor. Are you working towards a new one? And did that – that must have hurt you to not be without one. So I just want to hear a little bit more.

TREASURER MANZANARES: Yes, Chair Commissioner Cacari Stone, that is currently in process, and we had at the Board of Finance, that approved, so we can go forward with our investments in a more fiscally responsible way. And so that's what took so long to not spend that. So it was a lot of diligence on our end.

MANAGER SHAFFER: If I could add to that, just from a technical perspective as it relates to the budget is those resources were supplied not knowing exactly what the form of the investment advisor arrangement would take. As I understand the direction that the County Treasurer is leading towards with the advice and consent of the Board of Finance as well as the Investment Committee, it's actually to contract with an entity that would be a fiduciary manager of assets. So their fee would come out of the investment income.

And so Yvonne can explain the technical terms, but it's a contra-revenue account, so it doesn't result in a budgeted expenditure. It actually is netted against income. So the fact that those funds aren't reflected in the budget, just want to assure you that the Treasurer's Office is in no way being deprived of any resources they need to move forward in that direction. It will just be paid for through a different mechanism. And if I got that wrong, Yvonne, correct me.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Just to, to that point, if it still should be somehow accounted for, so even if it doesn't become its own line item as in a separate expense, let's try to track it as a net of expenses so we know what that apples to apples amount is, even if it gets consolidated under one line item. Please.

TREASURER MANZANARES: Chair, yes, and noted.

YVONNE HERRERA (Finance Director): Chair Greene just to clarify when we net expenses against income, we actually do have a separate GL account to track those costs.

CHAIR GREENE: Perfect. Thank you. Commissioner Johnson.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Manager Shaffer actually anticipated my question and answered it. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, Commissioner Bustamante.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I would just like to commend your good work. Thank you very much. I appreciate it as well. As Commissioner Cacari Stone stated, it's very organized and well done. So thank you. I don't really have any questions, but I want to thank you for a well-run operation. Thank you.

TREASURER MANZANARES: Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante, thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Likewise. Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes. I just want to add thanks to you for managing this office so long, almost as long as I've been Commissioner. Very good.

TREASURER MANZANARES: Chair, Commissioner, we're on the same two years, so when you were talking about succession planning, that's definitely something that I keep in mind every day.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes. Top to bottom, right? It's not only at the top, but it's also people that are moving up and getting trained, and that's great. Anything else, Commissioners? No? Wonderful. Go forth and collect. Thanks. And invest. Thank you.

TREASURER MANZANARES: We'll do that. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Commissioners.

Community Development

CHAIR GREENE: Moving right along. Community Development. Mr. Butler

JONATHAN BUTLER (Community Development Director): Good afternoon, Chairman Greene and Commissioners. We begin in your budget book on page 111 for the Community Development Department. If I remember correctly, Commissioner Cacari Stone, I think we set this time based on you having to be present celebrating the life of someone in your community. So I do want to acknowledge that and offer my condolences to you and recognize the humanity that exists within all of us. And so thank you, and thank you for the invitation to participate yesterday in your district community meeting. So we were glad that our department was able to represent quite well, and so I want to thank my team for showing us well.

And I know many of them are sitting behind us, and some of them are online. For your benefit, the Community Development Department serves the Santa Fe County community by expanding access to affordable housing, fostering economic development, promoting local attractions, and supporting sustainable practices for the benefit of current and future generations.

Our department is comprised of Housing, The Housing Authority, Economic Development, Sustainability, Tourism And Marketing, and we partner with the City of Santa Fe to support our efforts regarding film and television. Our vision is a thriving and equitable Santa Fe County that is a desirable and affordable place to live and work, a leader in promoting clean energy and healthy ecosystems, renowned for its outdoor recreation, art, and cuisine, and a world-class hub for film and television production.

Although we've recommended significant cuts for our FY27 budget, our focus will remain on maintaining core services, supporting our strategic priorities, and executing the substantially transformative programs and projects that shape our short-term and long-term economic success while continuing to preserve and produce more affordable housing and advancing our efforts to build a more resilient and sustainable place to live, visit, work, grow, and thrive.

Our budget decreases total approximately $4.6 million, representing a percentage decrease of almost 17.4 percent. With the significance of what we do, you might ask, why such a significant reduction? Our reductions are largely based on decreases to contracts for services, we are proposing reductions in some services through increased partnerships with County departments, reductions in demonstration projects, printing, advertising, sponsorships, promotion materials and events cost, reductions in project costs, and reductions in operating costs, efficiencies gained in the reductions in promotional supplies and more integrated combined costs in our administration instead of each division allocating its own resources in some specific categories.

The FY27 budget does propose some increases associated with salaries due to Board-approved increases and step increases, maintenance costs in our housing authority, and specific transfers from the County to support Housing Authority with specific appropriations. Of particular note, next month, we will present our recommendations on the work of the Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy Council.

In anticipation of some of what you will hear in June, we are in the process of hiring an economic development specialist whose work would also include servicing our Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy Council. During the first year of the Council's official work and throughout FY27, we believe that we can adequately address both the needs of the Council and advance the work of our arts and creative economy without the need for an additional full-time staff person.

We have also accounted for the creative economy work in the proposed budget that is before you for your consideration. With that, I will stop and stand for any questions you might have.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. Thank you Mr. Butler. Commissioners.? Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Thank you. Yes. I was just wondering is your Office of Sustainability, did part of that work get over to Public Works? Is that why they have less –

MR. BUTLER: That is a great question. So we have an MS4 opportunity that we have previously included in budgets that with Public Works working with us to do project management in association with that, we will see reductions then in what we propose in this budget.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioner Johnson

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Jonathan. We do appreciate your work. I'm looking at page 117, specifically the Developer Assistance Program, and I see that the budget for FY26 was, in around $10 million. The actuals were just one million so far, but I doubt we'll make nine up. And so we're budgeting $8.4 million. And I just wondered if you could walk me through that a little bit because I'm wondering if that program is not working. It seems that's something that if I were a developer, I would want to access, and it may – there may be some, red tape or something that we are coming to understand.
And I just hope that you might help me understand that difference.

MANAGER SHAFFER: Chair and Commissioner Johnson, those funds were allocated with the expectation that they would be spent over a multi-year period, and so the housing investment strategy that was recently presented to the Board showed basically $10 million being spent over three years. The practice has been, and it certainly wouldn't need to be done this way, is that the entire amount is budgeted even though there's an expectation that it's not going to be spent. Again, we could leave that money in fund balance and just budget what is anticipated. But I just wanted to assure you it's not for the fact that the programs aren't working. It's simply that they're being – that money was designed to be spent over time. But I do appreciate how looking at the numbers, it looks as if it's underperforming. But that's a single pot of money that again could be budgeted in smaller increments per year rather than putting the whole amount into the budget.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Manager Shaffer. Under that, assumption or that logic rather we are now reallocating that tranche to $8.4 million. Is that the correct way to think about it, or is that banked and then – it's not on the order of 18, right? It's on the order of eight.

MANAGER SHAFFER: That is correct. Those are one-time resources that are carrying forward from year to year

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. I'll yield for now.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. And things like that, footnotes would be great to say this is expected to be drawn down over three years one way or the other, right? Either you can say what you expect to spend one year, or you can say it's a balance to be worked over a few years. Commissioners, other questions? Yes, Commissioner Bustamante.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Chair. Thank you. Appreciate it. The question that I have for the work that the Arts Council will be doing, is that wrapped into the projects line item? So you said there, there will be various activities that'll be funded, that there will be an individual, and I'm – I was just trying to find how those activities get supported and that would that be under projects?

MR. BUTLER: So it is within the Economic Development Division budget, and so some of them are spread out in different categories. So it's existing work that the division is already a part of and supported, and it depends on the nature of the activity, how it would then be classified. So for example, we have some small business grants, micro-grant programs that we partner with the Regional Development Corporation to implement.

But it's quite possible that people who would be applying for resources might be in those parts of the economy. And so when we think about it, we also think about the culinary arts as being a part of that. And so those opportunities are spread throughout the Economic Development Division budget in various categories. So it's not one direct line, we would point to. And so the absorption of those activities we're looking at as expanding and continuing some of the work that's already been done. What we hope to do, Commissioner Bustamante, is be more direct and more focused within the next year to be able to come back to you at some point, and then we can itemize out and line out and say, this is where you could see those resources would be spent in 27.

That is the hope. What we anticipate doing and presenting to you next month is a plan that would be able to account for what you all might contemplate doing in furtherance of the Arts Council work and also what you might consider in terms of a work plan that would specifically spell out what our activities would be in association with building on and developing that work.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. I appreciate that. When I look at it and it has projects, services, other operating costs. Can I just assume then it's other operating costs?

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: So it's not projects. Those are already defined projects, operating costs for things that are already underway. Anything new that would come up would fall in which category?

MR. BUTLER: I think a better answer again is simply saying some of it is operations; some of it would be in projects.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Appreciate it.

MR. BUTLER: Some of it would be in programs.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, Commissioner Cacari Stone, please.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. Mr. Butler, thank you for your human sentiment. I think it reflects well on your leadership style, and I appreciate that. Also appreciate your team that came last night. It was phenomenal, and community members mostly appreciate that. I did have a question. Okay, so you had mentioned with your community development, one thought I had, and I didn't see it in here, and I think the kind of complexity of organizing event last night with more, quote-unquote, vulnerable populations or vulnerable – or populations that typically get left out of meetings, there's always last minute preparations, but doing everything bilingually or multiple languages, Spanish speakers translating services, going from two to four.

I wanted to know if there's anywhere in your line item, because I really want to support that. Housing, more than anything, as is the vehicle to social mobility particularly for our, some of our Southside Spanish-speaking residents. They are trying to have their own HOA. They were expressing their sentiment last night around the need to get ready to purchase homes for their families. So do you think you could benefit from additional resources for translation services and outreach, and where would that be?

MR. BUTLER: I think everyone who sits at this table will always say they can benefit from additional resources. So I will say we always can benefit from additional resources. But to your specific question, we do believe that we can absorb any of those costs associated with it within the Community Development administration budget as a whole. As you can see that there – we are trying to be much more in alignment with where our actual spends are, but we are also accounting for the nature of our work that might cause for some of those services to be anticipated. I think we've done a good job of being able to think through our administrative budget in being able to account for some of those challenges and needs.

I will say this to you. I think if I look at the arc of what I have been doing in this past year it's really been a learning year for me in full. I think if I think about where we are attempting to be in this FY27 cycle, I would think we are looking to think about efficiency, stabilization, and then execution.

There are some specific things that we have been tasked with over a myriad of years that we're going to focus in and drill in on making sure that we execute that work. And I think, Commissioner Cacari Stone, we've got the resources already allocated to be able to do that. Now, sometimes they are spread over what you all are paying attention to now, and then we'll have some conversations in a few weeks about what the capital expenditures would be.

But I think just the heart of your specific question, I think we have accounted for that in our budget to be able to account for those needs.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I appreciate that and I respect your – you and your management team's assessment what you need, but I am going to request that you as well as Growth Management consider sharing a Spanish-speaking person for more outreach and really look at the cost of the translation and contract services that are live, as well as translating forms because codes are I'll speak to it with Growth Management. Codes are already difficult to navigate and the forms for affordable housing as well. I know HomeWise does that and they've been very successful, but maybe they can offer you some numbers. Again, I respect what you do. I'm sure your team already has that. I just want to put a plug for it, so thank you.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: The other question I had is Commissioner Johnson addressed the line item around Community Development. The affordable housing,, it was budgeted just over a million to $118,000. Did I miss anything? What accounts for that decrease?

MR. BUTLER: You do have resources that are allocated, which we will speak to more in the capital budget.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Gotcha.

MR. BUTLER: That are specific to affordable housing and some of the things that Commissioner Johnson has already referenced.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Excellent. Okay. And then as Commissioners, if we want to look at changing up the game, as you know, Ms. Benavides has been working with me and we've been working with their scientists and developers and environmentalists up north on building homes that are this cellular concrete which warrants itself at under $188 a square foot. They're working on mock-ups that we went to see that are adobe, and they did so for the Pine Ridge Nation. They're picking up a lot of speed. I just wanted to know if we can have a budget to do some innovations where we're actually sponsoring it and we're not supporting other developers or HomeWise, and what would that cost? And I wanted to bring it in the public for transparency sake, but if we're going to look at intergenerational home wealth as well as workforce housing we certainly could dedicate, 80 percent of a 20-home – they said they could do 20 homes; they could do up to 40, but I'd like to pilot something. They've even talked to Community Solar. So this is a very promising, innovative opportunity, but I think a small win and a pilot would be good. Where would that fit in giving us some pilot monies?

MR. BUTLER: So I think that's an excellent question one that we have already been thinking about because we know you and Commissioner Greene, Chairman Greene have brought these types of things to our attention before. One of the conversations we had recently was with our real estate team in Public Works, and one of the things that we have agreed to do as we continue to meet is we have agreed to begin to look at what real estate the County has to be able to think through what could potentially be some initiatives that we might pilot in this way.

Specifically, Michelle was thinking about where do we have access to some smaller lot sizes that we really don't know what to do with. They may be awkwardly shaped, it might be an acre or two, but they might be ripe for some consideration for how we can pilot exactly what you're talking about. And so I do want to say to you that we are thinking about that, and Denise and her team are already sourcing those types of things.

In addition to conversations, I know Denise just had folks from the Jacona land grant and people who she was meeting with earlier this morning, and we are continuing to talk through potential development ideas and prospects. So yes, we will continue to be in the prospecting landscape, and we will also be much more proactive and intentional about looking for those opportunities.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I appreciate that, and I think we all want to change up the game and for developments and developers that name these subdivisions based on local cultural words like Dos Acequias when they killed Tres Acequias. And I think our communities are, like, busting out with ya basta moments. So if we could offer, as a Commission some courageous innovation and opportunities and have some small wins over the next 10 years, I think we're really could be the leader, and you guys are already getting national recognition and awards. So let's do it, and I'm with you. Thank you.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you, Commissioner Cacari Stone. Commissioner Johnson.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Greene. Before I forget I, I think, not to speak for my other colleagues, but what you just mentioned, Commissioner Cacari Stone, I think the Commission would – I'm personally interested in that, so I'd love to learn more about sort of building materials and a pilot project like you referred to. That's at least three of us, I'm sure. I think my colleagues probably agree.

Okay, with that said, I want to look at economic development for a second. There are no FTEs in Economic Development. Is that because they are in lodgers' tax land? And I know that you Manager Shaffer, you mentioned that the one was forthcoming, or maybe Director Butler did, but –

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Johnson the individuals that work under the economic development activities are actually funded through the Community Development Administrative Division.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. So the kind of core group.

MS. HERRERA: Right.

MANAGER SHAFFER: And the economic development, to add to that, it's broken out, and I understand the question and appreciate it, and the org chart in that way is we do have an Economic Development fund, and that is what is being captured there as having zero FTE because it's, it doesn't have, again, FTE associated with it in that sense. But it is a fund that could be used to further economic development activities.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And so the new, unless I misheard, there, there is a forthcoming or a position posted for, or that will be posted for an economic development specialist. Would that be listed as an FTE under the administration pool?

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay.

MR. BUTLER: It would still be in the same category, yes. And that position is actually replacing – we had a-previous person in that position. We purposefully withheld on hiring and advertising for that position, anticipating that we needed to make some determinations about how we might service the needs coming out of the arts and culture and creative economy work.

And so we asked to hold off on that, and now we have thought through that process and are moving forward with attempting to hire that person, anticipating what we might hope for.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. And that just helps me understand the organization. I'm not trying to micromanage that aspect or anything like that. So I like where we're going with the arts and culture area. And I've had opportunity to work with the City's Economic Development Department, which is more robust than ours. And I, in the future, not necessarily this in this fiscal year budget, but would love to see the economic development area of activity increase because I think that it's important. Obviously it if we do it right, it'll increase our gross receipts tax. So it can be a generator for additional funds for the County to pour back into the community. So I would encourage you to think over the next year how we can kind of develop that. I'm happy to chat with you about some ideas.

I think there are paths that we shouldn't take. There was a study about tax incentives at the legislature. Not quite the exact same thing, but they found basically that there's no savings, and in fact, it costs us money. So there are, there's a balancing act with economic development initiatives. On the next agenda, I have something with Commissioner Bustamante about urban agriculture. That's something I think the County would be do really well in especially as we, have mixed-use developments along 14 or in other growth areas. So that's just a little pitch for economic development.

I want to support that. Yes, moving forward. And I have a question about lodgers' tax, and if you have a response to that, I'll obviously –

MR. BUTLER: Sure.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: If you'd like to respond on the first part.

MR. BUTLER: I just want to say I'm with you.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay, great. So can you just help me understand the difference between lodgers' tax facility and lodgers' tax advertising as line items? I guess I'm looking at page 117. It's probably in a couple different places. But and then there are FTEs associated with that. So just a little bit of the organizational picture. What is Facilities? I imagine it's open spaces or something like that. And what are –advertising kind of speaks for itself, but if you could explain the organization of those two.

MR. BUTLER: Yes. Basically, you have two buckets in which we are allocating grant resources within the diaspora of lodgers' tax. And so that's where the distinction lies. It lies really in which category in which we are doing those distributions of resources. And so when we come and we ask you all to approve allocations based on those resources, you basically are approving two different grant processes, and that is the breakdown in what you're experiencing.

One of those grants is more open-ended, whereas the other one is really targeting those events and supporting the activity within those events to be able to give those grant resources and allocate them accordingly.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. And I guess this is a question for you or Manager Shaffer or Yvonne. We can bank lodgers' tax, can we not? If one year carries over to the next year. And I know that, those funds are designated to specific areas only. Do I have that right?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Chair Greene and Commissioner Johnson, the short answer to your question is yes, within limits. There is a certain amount, which I don't recall top of mind, of funds that have to be allocated to the advertising function of the lodgers' tax. And if I recall correctly, those funds need to be expended within a specified time period. Yvonne probably knows it, so I'll defer to her.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Johnson, it has to be spent within two years, for the advertising fund.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thanks.

MANAGER SHAFFER: And then with regard to the amounts that, and support for tourist facilities and attractions and the like are comprised of the two grant programs that Jonathan just, described. Separate and distinct from that is the lodgers' tax facility fund which is what currently supports at least one FTE in the Growth Management Department and which could support additional operational as well as capital cost associated with County Open Space and Trails that fit the definition of a tourist attraction. So that's separate from those two funds or those two functions that you were just talking to Mr. Butler about.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Manager Shaffer, and thank you, Ms. Herrera. If we – just help me understand a little bit more about these two lines on 117. There's a reduction in the lodgers' tax advertising of budgeted resources on the order of $431,000 this fiscal year. So if we presume lodgers tax revenue is flat, why is it decreasing? What's the sort of general logic there if the funds are earmarked for that in the first place?

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Johnson, that specific difference is related to funds that were carried over from fiscal year 25 on the advertising contract.
And so it was our opportunity to try to get that money spent down, whereas this year the accumulation isn't that big, so we don't have to carry over those additional funds. However I believe we still dipped into our cash balances by about $200,000. I'll have to double-check. So in addition to the full amount of the estimated revenue, which a portion of that was allocated to salary and benefits, the rest of it is being allocated to advertising in addition to about $200,000 of cash balance.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. That helps me understand all of this a little bit more.
I appreciate your work and thank you for those answers.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes, thank you for all the work you do, and I think all these questions show how important and how interested we are in what you do, and we're appreciative. But I was wondering, I have two questions. One is why is the fund for Housing Administration, why is the budget for that going down? Because, we just passed – isn't that the Housing Authority Administration?

MR. BUTLER: I'm sorry, Chairman Greene and Commissioner Hughes, can you repeat the question again?

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: On page 117 the budget for housing administration goes down from 26 to 27.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Hughes, the biggest portion of that decrease is actually related to projects which the capital fund projects are specific HUD funding, HUD funds that's used for maintaining the Housing Authority units. In addition to that, in fiscal year 2026, the Housing Authority also received some additional funds related to capital that whatever is unspent will get carried over as part of that final budget.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. But that's counted as Housing Administration even though it's actually capital funds?

MS. HERRERA: Yes, it is.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. My other question is related to what Commissioner Johnson was asking you about. Is the lodgers' tax, and maybe this is from someone else, but are the lodgers' tax funds for – we could use for county rangers in a different spot than in here?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Yes. They're not that's not-- Those resources are not reflected in the Community Development Department's budget. Some of that funds in terms of what are currently allocated are in the Growth Management Department's budget. But the placeholder that we've discussed relative to waiting for the staffing plan to be completed, you would want to look at the actual fund budget, the page for which I can give you in a second. But it's a lodgers' tax facility fund, which is where all those resources are tracked. But again, it doesn't show up in the Community Development Department's budget.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Right. Okay. I thought that was the case. Thank you.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. Commissioner Bustamante? Nothing? Great. I do have a question or two. You had mentioned some reductions in specific programs and grants. Can you list what they were? Things that –

MR. BUTLER: Largely it is in our services, Chairman Greene. We had allocations for resources to be able to do everything from contract with different providers to be able to do work, provide consulting services, those types of things. That's the largest sort of chunk of resources that we're accounting for. Give me one second and I'll run through a list when I say, it's really we had a lot of allocations for promotional materials, events that we might sponsor. We made some decisions, for example, not to do a demonstration project for Earth Day.

Traditionally, we would do those types of things, and we've made some decisions to continue to promote those activities, but scale down what we might be doing. And so that's when I say the reduction, if you think about it as programmatic work it's much more in alignment with some of the ways we've thought through how we've allocated resources in the past, and we're trying to be a little bit more efficient with what we're doing. So we scaled some of those things back. That's the recommendation.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. Thank you. I know that we do paper catalogs for tourism, and that's probably paid for by lodgers' tax. I know we've had conversations about really migrating to electronic. I want to reiterate that. It's scalable, it's easier to distribute. It is so much more targeted at the future than a hard copy of something that only has one life and then goes into the, if it's lucky, into the recycling bin. And I hope that maybe some digital tools could be explored for those expenditures in this next year.

MR. BUTLER: Reductions in printing costs, those types of things are also considered in this budget. But your point is also well-received in terms of how do we continue to advance what we do much more in a digital space, much more in, in a more effective space in that way. All of those things we're working on.

I will say this, the advantage of having a great staff person like Lisa, who comes in and really is open to thinking about how we move forward in these arenas can best be exhibited, I think, in just recently what happened as we helped support SWAIA's Fashion Week. She also hosts digital content providers who are then invited sitting with us, and then they're going out and putting this content into the marketplace.

So those influencers are ways in which we are pivoting and moving from all of these different modes in which you might just be looking at printed material to where we are actually much more effective in the digital space. Kudos to her for being able to work and advance product in that way and promote us as a County in that way. And so again much like I responded to Commissioner Johnson, received. Your point is well taken.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. And then when we talk, this is, the next is going to be Growth Management, and this is where the crossover that you have in the housing space and with their growth plans versus your actions as it may be. We've discussed a housing study. Longitudinal, everything from, hotel rooms and shelters to second homes and mansions and everything in between, so that we have something very comprehensive that looks at workforce, affordable housing, second homes, ADUs, all of the above by size, by type, by location, and working with all of the jurisdictions that are under Santa Fe County.

I hope that sometime this year we can put together a really data-driven study so we know accurately what we need, what people can afford, what they're looking for, to help us target development in the right form, not only for you in the affordable housing space, but also for growth management and have something more strategic for us to work with developers and to work with the community, right?

The community's not thrilled with apartments right now. I hear it all the time. So we need to look at alternatives to that. The demand might be there for that price point and that size of unit, but that format, that typology of architecture, is not necessarily the right one. So how do we start to study that? That's through a housing study that I would say is data-driven and has all of the partners. I would love really to put together, six months from now or so, a housing summit, all partners to look even all the way down to Albuquerque and to have folks from Rio Rancho and Albuquerque, because at the end of the day, a good number of our people that work in our economic development in our economy here, commute from down there.

So that's part of our economy and the housing moves down there, and we have leakage of that money to, stores down in Rio Rancho.

So we need to look at our, ourselves regionally. I'd like to see that in a housing study, but also an economic development strategy to work from Los Alamos and Española in the north all the way down to Albuquerque and Rio Rancho in the south, understanding that's a humane drive, right? To get down to Albuquerque is not so – we poo-poo it sometimes, but honestly, that's part of our metropolitan area. And we need to be collaborating with those communities. And so an economic development summit would be on my next year to-do list if it's possible to collaborate with the cities and the counties that are adjacent to us. Commissioner Bustamante?

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Don't mean to interrupt.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, sure.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: When you're ready.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, sure.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I have a different perspective. So as much as I appreciate the urban core of Albuquerque, I really do believe, and we've seen it happen, that we really start to destroy our rural communities up north. And I've worked on numerous projects in trying to work with our northern smaller towns and villages, frankly, in building economic development where we are because most of, a lot of those people will actually go to work at the lab as they grow up.

That's our opportunity. So with all due respect, I really don't believe in partnering with Albuquerque. We tend to lose people there anyway. And I think that the greater opportunity is cracking the nut of the – especially in the construction area. A number of studies have been done in this regard with several thousand contractors north of Santa Fe to the Colorado border who get contracts to Los Alamos National Lab and housing to respond to whatever additional housing is needed.

Now, it's not about more of an expanse, but it's more about supporting communities because then they will die. And I get the value of the urban core for the urban core's sake because it doesn't support us in Santa Fe. I think Santa Fe has a lot to do to support Northern New Mexico, but I appreciate that.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: And happy to have, we could have an economic debate all day long.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes. I'll just give you my, one of my logic points, theories of this is that if a small business spins out of the lab, a technology company, and they say, we want to get to 35, 40, 50 people company, they can't handle it in Los Alamos, and it probably spills over to an opportunity for Santa Fe and Santa Fe County.

If we get an opportunity that gets to 100 to 150 to 200, we probably can't handle it, and we should be having a warm handoff to Albuquerque because we don't necessarily have the housing, the capacity, the industrial space. And so rather than leak, have it leak out of state, we should hand it off to Albuquerque.

And the same thing is a flip side from Albuquerque, I've heard, where Albuquerque doesn't necessarily look north when they have a, either something that's too small for them or is so big, like a 500-person company, but they fail at recruiting that company to the Albuquerque area because the executives that come with a 500-person company don't necessarily want to live in Albuquerque.

And so they should be shown the whole area and including Santa Fe and Santa Fe County. To say, look, you can live – this is one region and we're always working together collaboratively. I understand that we need to make sure our small towns, especially in the north, but I find that we leak too much out of state when we don't hand off to Albuquerque, and they miss the opportunity to attract some companies when they don't use Santa Fe.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I appreciate that. Our challenge, and I strongly believe in it and have worked towards it, is to qualify people in Northern New Mexico to take those jobs and to do what we can to have people from those communities supported in a way that they can take those jobs and be where they are. Even if they end up going to college at Occidental, they can run an IT program out of their home in Truchas.

I just strongly believe in the value. I get what you're saying about out of state, and sincerely understand it. But I think our challenge is to qualify and support those people who live in those villages to meet those economic opportunities. And I see that we have someone from the community of Española that you can recognize.

CHAIR GREENE: Right. Yes. Thank you, Denise. Thanks. And, to that point, broadband, right? The solo-preneur that sits at home and works on their laptop, and that's a big aspect of our economic development these days. And so meet them where they are. Yeah.

DENISE BENAVIDES (Affordable Housing): Thank you, Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante. I wanted to mention that we just had a graduation for a year-long housing symposium that we called Homegrown. And the reason we called it Homegrown is because it consisted of 10 cities and counties that participated, all from the northern region. And part of that symposium included education, and it was something that a lot of the northern region communities were looking for because they needed desperately assistance with how do you start a development? How does it work? How do we go after funding? What's the expertise required for that? And all of that was communicated to them within the classes that we held within that symposium. And so that northern coalition is in process of being created because each of those communities has its own need, right? And challenges, especially some of the smaller ones like Raton that was there, Santa Rosa, Gallup, Grants. There were several of them that were included there. Unfortunately, there was no representation from Rio Arriba County or the City of Española. However, we're in process of creating the next session. But because of that collaboration, there's also three funding sources to get any one of those communities started, and the funding is coming from Anchorum.

So that's going to help them get the start that they need. And then on the other side, of course, I think you had heard me mention at the last meeting, there's also that regional collaboration on the economic development side. That collaboration will include Albuquerque and Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Española. But it's also going to be incorporated in the homegrown piece of that symposium in the next session so that we can bring the two together so that we can identify what resources are actually required and how we're going to move forward with the challenges that we currently all face today regarding both housing and the economy, because they go hand in hand and it's a big theme for everybody right now across the board.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. And I do have a question about revenue that might be able to be targeted from short-term rentals to help pad the budget of affordable housing, right? So that we can show a direct correlation of gross receipts tax. I know we can't use lodgers' tax for that, but we might be able to show gross receipts tax from short-term rentals and just say, 75 percent of that money goes right into the affordable housing bucket, 25 percent goes to general fund, but maybe there's some proposal in there that we could use to show a connection there so that there's a direct benefit there.

MS. BENAVIDES: Thank you, Chair Greene. Those are some of the things that Jonathan and I are collaborating on and talking about, and ideas to present in the future to the County Manager, for instance. But we have a lot that we've got on paper that we want to propose in the near future. Director Butler talked about some of the acreage that we have sporadic, and we were excited about that.

One of the things we talked about was creating a new ordinance, right? That would be more of an infill type ordinance to accomplish some of the one- and two-bedroom units that are desperately needed out there. So we're thinking outside the box, and we're reaching out, and we're partnering a lot more with Growth Management as well. I had a conversation with Alex. We're going to have a meeting so that we can see how we can further improve processes and work together to accomplish some of the things that we want to accomplish in the near future. So I think we feel really good about the coming years, and so we'll see what we can get done.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Commissioners, anything else for Community Development? No. Thank you. Let's stick around for Growth Management because I think there's a lot of overlap in this conversation, especially around housing. Please. Thank you.

MS. BENAVIDES: Thank you.

Growth Management

ALEXANDRA LADD (Growth Management Director): Good afternoon, Commissioners. I wanted to start briefly with kind of a high-level overview of how Growth Management is structured and what our tools are and our guiding policies just to put our functions into context so that then the budget makes sense. I think all of you know this, but for the benefit of anyone in the public and also just as a reminder to all of us, we have we have a land use regulation that we are in, we are charged with enforcing and implementing.

But more importantly, the land use regulation is an expression of our growth management plan. The growth management plan is based on a lot of public input, a lot of community comment, and what it expresses is our community's vision for the future. And the regulation then is a way to implement that vision. I think the other piece that is underrepresented in the public discourse but equally important is the collection of data, and that is through our GIS division. So anytime we need to express data, what's happening on the ground we use GIS data a lot in our regulatory oversight. It's through our GIS division and our maps. And as we all know, a picture is worth a thousand words, and we do also provide that service to other departments as well as the public to help with data analysis and other supports for policymaking. So with that said, for fiscal 27, we have several initiatives and as well as continuing improvement as well as ongoing work. I think many of you are interested and inspired and have been following a lot of this.

But I did want to just touch on a couple of items. We will fully complete what we're calling our technical corrections to our land use regulation. This is not revisiting the community's vision. This is fixing things that either need to be updated. There are emerging conditions that we need to address. We have parts of the code that directly contradict each other, and that causes confusion on everyone's behalf. So we've learned a lot over the last 10 years since the code was first written, so we're going to be bringing that to the Board for its conclusion for your review and consideration within this fiscal year.

But at the same time, we are starting that revisioning process with the community because our growth management plan, which is the County's comprehensive plan, is now also 10 years old, so at the next meeting, you will hear from Herbert Foster about the public participation plan that we will begin to finalize and implement over the next several months.

The idea is to tap into the voices that are typically underrepresented in planning processes but also really try to capture what does our world look like now compared to 10 years ago, and how do we want this place we care about and where we lived, how do we want it to look in 10 years, in 20 years?

So I'm really excited to support that work, and you will learn more about that in upcoming meetings. Our community planners continue to work with our smaller communities to help them with their own community plans, which, and once a community plan is approved by the Board, after it's co-created with the community, then our staff turns that into an overlay district to help express particular, unique community values for that geographical area.

Specifically, Cañada de los Alamos just began a plan. One of their priorities is to figure out safe evacuation routes in the event of a fire, so our team is starting with that on that item. Also the La Bajada Ranch, which is an initiative of the Board's from years ago, we are going to begin that, assembling all the past work that was done on that plan and see what it's worth, where we can leverage value moving those items forward. We continue to expand our reach and our efficiency and our, I think, our timeliness, both in our online permitting application process and review process, but also our code enforcement process. Two areas that have created a lot more work for our code enforcement team are the short-term rental regulations, and we have just made, I think, a nice improvement to our online presentation of the information for the short-term rentals. I feel like we're looking at it more through the customer's experience, because oftentimes we find that people aren't following the rules, not because they don't know that rules are there, but because they don't understand them or they don't know how they apply to them. So I encourage everyone to check it out on our website. We had a lot of help and support from our communications team and I'm excited about that.

The Clean and Lien Ordinance is also fully underway. That's probably one of our bigger expenses in our budget. We never know how many we're going to get, so of course, it's an educated guess. But we've got-- we've had some great success. We've had property owners who actually did the work themselves when it came down to it, which is nice. But our team is also committed to really helping folks who perhaps can't, don't have the capacity themselves to do the work. I think, as always, our open space planning team is undertaking lots of projects that the community values and cares about and are very visible.

We have, and this is one of the places where we collaborate very closely with our colleagues cross-departmentally – we're looking at a conceptual trails plan and a management plan for the newest property in the County's portfolio, Bobcat Crossing Ranch, and then also a master plan for the San Pedro Open Space. So there will be a lot of work coming out of our Open Space team.

We continue to implement road safety projects, bike lane projects the Madrid Walkway project, as well as looking at La Cienega, and we completed a road safety study down there. So we're also working hand in hand with communities to help with safety issues and roadways and trying to create additional avenues for alternative transportation and mobility.

Our Transfer of Development Rights program, you're also going to be hearing shortly some more updated information about the TDR program. I think we are in a position where we need to figure out how to make the demand side work better because it's not effective to have an incentive if you can't use it. So we continue to work on making that piece of the equation work better, which is the idea that we want to encourage and facilitate development, a variety of development, where we have infrastructure, where we have roadway capacity, where close to amenities and schools and future or current transit routes.

So that is ongoing work and as always I appreciate all of the places of collaboration with our other departments and we do seek to, to build on those relationships and to make sure that we can both, from an operational point of view, but as well as programmatic, really work together to serve our community.

And with that, I'll stand for questions.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous, Alex. Thank you so much. Commissioners? Commissioner Bustamante.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Alexandra. Excuse me. So I appreciate everything that you're doing, and I really – I see a huge improvement in the operations in this area, so it's really appreciated very much. The question I had with regard to each area where I couldn't find budget numbers specifically for open space planning and TDRs, but also it would apply to the Clean and Lien. What budget does, when we have to procure something, well, I guess we put a lien on Clean and Lien, so that's not something where we're paying for it outright.

But if it's how much funding is available for the open space planning and what money, like how much was it last year? How much are we doing this year? And the same for the TDR, understanding that some would be purchased by the County or sold privately, but where is that budget number? Where are those budget numbers?

MS. LADD: So Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante, I'll start with the TDR budget. That is not a budget. That's not expressed in our general fund budget. That would be in our TDR bank. If so, if the County were to sell the TDRs that it holds, which were severed from County Open Space, that is where those revenues would go, and that would be the budget to use for purchasing additional TDRs from private property owners presumably.

I think all of the open space planning money for contracts and maintenance is in our planning budget in the – and of course, my budget person would know the number off the top of his head. But most of that is through contractual services. The Clean and Lien, we do pay for that. We have the hope that someday we get paid back. And that is a mechanism for getting a property owner to pay us back, but we do have to pay for that upfront. And I should – I wanted to explain this as well. In addition to our four divisions, so admin and then the three different programming, parts of our programming we have part of our budget called the SLDC, which is stands for Sustainable Land Development Code, and that is the part of the budget where we put the funds that we need to enforce the code, to implement the code. So it's the studies, the third party experts that we have to hire for additional studies to review the studies that developers do. It's where the Clean and Lien money, so we have to hire an architect to put together the demolition plan or the renovation plan.

And in prior years, or at least last year, and I think you all remember, I was just a deer in the headlights. It was my first time, but I also didn't have any admin staff, and so Yvonne's team was amazing, and they helped me out. I would've never made it otherwise. But I didn't, I hadn't really been around long enough to understand the way the budget was set up, and we had a squirrel approach to it before, so everyone had a little bit of office supplies. Everyone had a little postage. Everyone had a little bit of this and a little bit of that. And so this year around that didn't really make sense to me, so you'll see a couple little fluctuations between the divisions. So we put all of the admin costs in the admin budget, so we don't have everyone at once saying, oh GIS needs new Post-its. Building and Development just got a huge bucket of them, and all of a sudden we have more Post-its than we know what to do with. We did a little bit of streamlining there. All of which is to say that the most of that money is going to be in the SLDC section of the budget for any kind of either code enforcement or the Clean and Lien.

MANAGER SHAFFER: If I could add, the specific dollar amounts for Clean and Lien, there was $700,000 that were budgeted this year and scored as recurring to ensure that there were adequate resources to address those nuisance properties as they were identified. The hope would be, as you alluded to, Commissioner Bustamante, is that yes, the idea is to recoup those funds if spent from the property owners through the lien. And so at some point, we should reach an order of magnitude where that can operate more as almost like a revolving fund, where money's going out, but money's coming back in as you foreclose on the lien and you recoup the money. But until we reach that point we are making sure that, the program is adequate, we believe adequately resourced to the tune of $700,000 so that again, nuisance properties can be abated as they're identified.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. The next question, the question related to that. So am I understanding, so we just purchased some TDRs as a result of a development or did we just accept them as TDRs?

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante, we severed development rights from the property that the County owned. Yes. So we did not purchase any development rights.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Yes.

MS. LADD: I stand –

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I understand.

MS. LADD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: And that being said, actually I'm going to hold that, the next question. The other thing that I will say is, yes, you were a deer in headlights. No, you weren't, because you come very experienced, and I know that you're very good at what you do. But –

MS. LADD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: When people are experienced, they know that there's a lot to learn, as opposed to those that are not experienced and they think they know it all. That's right. So that's it. Yeah. They don't – Yes. She knew what she didn't know, which is great. Great place to start from. Commissioner Cacari Stone.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. Alexandra, I just want to appreciate you and your team. Definitely Joseph Scala, Herbert Foster, Valerie Rangel. I don't think I saw Nate last night. No, he wasn't there, but we really appreciate them coming to the community. The folks were on them like bees to honey, so thank you.

My questions are just around some an HR questions. The other one was just some line items looking at differences. So I'll start with the HR.

It looks like you have seven vacancies and you're asking for one more planner. I want to be sure because you're – especially when we get constituents calling, it's Public Works and Growth Management, and you guys are in really high demand. You're doing future-oriented things, current things, putting out fires, responding to us. Do you really have enough FTE with your team, especially for, like, when we met, we were talking about the short-term rental space. Is this really you only want one more FTE, or is it, are you trying to stay within parameters?

MS. LADD: Commissioner Greene, Chair Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone. That's a great question, and I neglected to mention that we are taking on an additional FTE, the volunteer coordinator, who was housed in Community Development. So that will add some capacity to our Open Space team, which is exciting because Commissioner Johnson has a long family history of volunteerism on the trails, and so we're excited to bring that capacity back to the community.

The position we requested was to bring on another open space ranger because as the County acquires more properties, we have a lot more needs to be out there, not only to enforce the rules, but also because our current ranger has really – she has a background in being an interpretive ranger, so she's really brought some interesting, innovative, fun programming to the County's properties, and we want to continue expanding that because we feel like that's a really great way to engage folks, especially folks who may not otherwise, think going hiking on the weekends is something that would immediately occur to them. So it's nice to bring more awareness to the open spaces here in the county.

I would echo what my colleague from Community Development said, which is we could always use more people. I imagine that we are still a little bit – we're definitely in a training phase. A lot of our building and development staff is new. Some of them, this is one of their first professional jobs so we're really building capacity on that side of the house from the ground up. And I think within this fiscal year for certain, we will have a much better idea of where do we need additional capacity.

Our one area, which to some extent has the potential to reduce at least time and increase efficiency is once we bring all of our permitting online. That helps a lot with obviously not having to shuffle papers around between different staff or even different departments. So we continue to work on making those processes a little bit smoother. But

I think one area in the future where it would be great to have more capacity is, I would love to bring all of the building permitting in-house because right now we have a situation where even if someone just wants to build a house, not only are they having to get zoning approval from the County, then they get their actual building permit from Construction Industries Division at the state. They have to go to the State Engineer for their well permit. They have to go to New Mexico Environment Department for their sewer or their septic tank. And then if they need to access a state road, they have to loop in the DOT. And then they still have to come back to the County for their final approval.

So I think we, we just set people up for this merry-go-round of governmental agencies and we would love someday to be able to do that better by at least being able to do the start to finish the actual building permitting piece.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you for that vision. It makes so much sense and I remember when I first ran for office and filed, I had to go from the City to the County to the State and they sent me in circles and nobody would know. And I think people have a story for every bucket that they could do that and that would be a big win. So thanks for thinking of that.

Just a quick question on the budget. So if we go to page 169, and I was – just educate me a little bit about the services. It was budgeted at over $2.6 million. We're just at $677K. Why is there such a big difference in how we've drawn it down?

MS. LADD: Commissioner Cacari Stone, I'm sorry. Could you, I think you put your head down when you were saying the last part of that.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Yes. It's page 169, and if we go to the services line item, budget fiscal year $2.6 million, actuals $677,000. Just curious about why it's so low and where we're at with pulling that down.

MS. LADD: So I believe a chunk of that is that for last fiscal year, we paid for a very expensive flyover to, to do the – Len Vander's not here to use the right word, but the type of data collection, the imagery that, that results in the LiDAR. Being able to do the LiDAR maps, which is the three-dimensional imaging on the ground, and that was quite expensive.

So we don't have-- You know, that's just a once every five or six years expense. So there was, I think the other place in which we had a few projects, larger ticket projects that are wrapping up this year. So again, it's just a little bit of the, of a workflow issue as well.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay. Thank you. My same question was for capital purchases as was, as well as the SLDC. There's such a big difference in how we're behind and lagging and drawing down what was actually budgeted. So I was just curious.

MS. LADD: Commissioner Cacari Stone, the capital budget last year, we had two vehicles which is – and we also bought new computer equipment for our GIS team. So those were big capital expenses that we don't have this coming year. I know that we have several big contracts and some travel for our GIS team. We have a couple of other end-of-year expenses that aren't shown in this in this expenditure report for the current budget yet. They're not reflected there.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay. I'm a little fuzzy on that. So the capital budget was actually pretty low. Going back to fiscal year 2024, it was budgeted for $1.1 million, but we're only at $232K and drawing down. I'm just curious why we're lagging or what's happening.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone, will you give me a minute and I will find that answer for you?

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay. And you know the old saying, use it or lose it, and people from the public always ask, are we really spending what we plan to do? What about the SLDC? That was quite a bit – it was budgeted pretty high, $1.3 last year and then we're only at 289K. And I'm happy to wait for an answer later. I don't want to put you too much on the spot, but it just seems really glaring, it so seems appropriate to talk about it now if you have an answer. If you don't, we can wait.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene Commissioner Cacari Stone the reason for that difference is because the Clean and Lien funding was, is in that cost center now, fiscal year '26, and it was moved. So that's why we have that large difference. They, in addition to what to what Alexandra said, reallocating some of the budget to the more, more appropriate cost centers. So while it's a decrease here, we should see a slight increase. We did have a larger dollar amount now fiscal year 26 budgeted for that. While we did provide $700,000 for fiscal year 27, it's, it was less than what we budgeted this year because we don't believe that we need the full amount that was budgeted in 26, which was – we'll confirm that amount here in a second as well.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Yvonne. And I think that since we're gearing up to update the Sustainable Land Development Codes, just, $1.3 million and we're at $289. I didn't understand why the lag in pulling, drawing down, and we're halfway through the year almost, so –

MS. LADD: Commissioner Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone, the budget, the budget status reports that we look at are formatted really differently than this, so I don't, I can't really speak to these exact numbers without finance's help, but, we can certainly get that answer for you because we're not – when we look at our budget status reports, it's not as big of a discrepancy, so I'm not really sure where - I'm not really sure how to explain it.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: I appreciate that, and I understand. But if there's such a discrepancy, are we really looking at numbers that, that we should be considering as a BCC? Should we wait until this budget's updated? Maybe that's an answer for the County Manager. Because your department is so important.

MANAGER SHAFFER: We'll follow up with the detailed information that was requested. I believe, also some of the funding as I recall for the SLDC, it's hard to track exactly to historical numbers because you don't know what sort of cases are going to come in. So the amount of work and experts, for certain cases is going to differ than, than from others.

But in addition, I believe there were some funds that were put in the budget, in anticipation of work that is really kicking off at this point. But in any event, we'll follow up with the detailed information and explanation.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you all. And again, we want Alex, for you to be successful with your team, so I appreciate that.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioner Johnson.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair Greene. Thank you.

Director Ladd. I want to reiterate what Commissioner Cacari Stone said. I am a little bit confused about why we allocated in FY 26, a million dollars and $200,000 was expended. So looks, sounds like we're going to hear that. I really liked what you said, Alex, about bringing building and development in-house. I think it's just smart for going forward. I like to think that the County is really well run, so kudos. At least that's from my perspective. And we don't have control over the State in the same way. So I think that the fewest amount of steps that someone who wants to do something to their property or develop an area of land or what have you is best.

It'll increase the kind of growth that we want to see. It'll just make people's experience with the County and our emphasis on community service better overall.

Same for online permitting. I haven't had opportunity to go through that process myself recently, but I think I commend you for looking to improving those processes all the time. The way that people encounter government is often in frustration in these bottlenecks. And that is, someone, one of my colleagues mentioned, we hear from constituents regarding issues that involve Growth Management and Public Works. So I think we're just by streamlining those by, removing unnecessary red tape, by improving the code and its clarity, that's all really good.

One small question. This is more of a hunch that I am seeking confirmation for. It sounds because – so there was an FTE requested for the open space ranger, but we're going to delay that for a couple of months to complete this study, right? So we should anticipate a BAR and some change to your budget after that study, given what we decide. Is that an accurate assumption?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Yes, that would be correct certainly to the authorization of any additional FTE either in the Growth Management Department or in Public Works, which would likely be the other beneficiary of the study. It's both to how to make the trails again, as Director Ladd mentioned both with regard to ranger programs, but also, first and foremost that we are adequately allocating resources to take care of this vast portfolio that we have to keep visitors safe and to keep everything in good repair. But both departments I imagine will benefit from that. And you're right, that would be subject to Board approval, and any necessary BAR would be done at the same time.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Manager Shaffer. I don't think I have another question at the moment, but I want to commend your staff and your leadership. Yes, it's always a pleasure to work with you all. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thanks. Commissioner Hughes.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES:: Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Alexandra. That was a very clear presentation, so I don't have that many questions. You answered a lot of them as we went along. I did want to say that the Clean and Lien Ordinance was the work of me and Commissioner Hanson to get that passed, and so I'm glad you're taking it seriously and moving ahead with it.

It's good that – we each had a house in our districts that was a big problem, and as soon as we passed the ordinance, the guy sold the house in our district to a responsible person, and the problem went away that way. So that was very nice.

I did want to ask you just real quick whether you have enough resources to do all the changes to the SLDC and SGMP that we're requesting, and when you're going to present those to us? I think you said this year, but is that going to be the whole thing or what's going to be the –

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, Commissioner Hughes, thanks for that question. We will be able to – we have a consultant under contract helping us with the redlines of the code piece and we will be able to finish that in fiscal year 27.

The public participation plan for the Sustainable Growth Management Plan, that will be kicking off right at the beginning of the fiscal year. I think public participation is expensive. It is very labor-intensive if it's done correctly because it's not just a question of running a legal ad to say, oh, hey, people who read the legals, we're doing this thing. Because most people don't read the legals or they don't speak English or they're really busy trying to survive.

So we have an okay budget for that work. I think as we begin to implement some of those activities, we'll see where we may have some shortcomings or where we may, for the following fiscal year, ask for more budget to really make sure we do it in a way that is both bilingual as well as really reaching all of the different communities we have in our county.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes, as far as District 5 goes, I could help you with some of that because I have a regular following that pay attention to what we're doing, and I have a long email list. And perhaps all of us could somehow collaborate with your staff to reach some of the people, our constituents.

MS. LADD: Commissioner Hughes, thank you so much for that offer. I think all of you have demonstrated that you do have these really engaged networks, and we will for sure lean on your personal networks in the community to get the word out. I think the event last night – I'm sorry I wasn't able to go, Commissioner Cacari Stone, but, that's a great example of bringing items of issue to the community and really encouraging those conversations. So, 100 percent we'll lean on you.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. Thank you very much.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. Commissioner Bustamante.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. I did want to hold on this because I think it is going to require further conversation. And I have talked to the County Manager about this. The property, maybe not to the depth that it ought to. First, I sat on the review group for the use of La Bajada Ranch as the representative from La Cienega. And after that, I worked at the Community College and under contract with the County had a viticulture and enology proposition, and it usually requires dedicated faculty, et cetera.

But I have been working with, and you're familiar with, a particular constituent whose land is proximate to the County property that has a nonprofit working on a very large integrated cultural, ecological, et cetera. I'm not sure if those details have been shared with you all on what that would be. It's very much a hand-in-hand with what the County could do with the land that we have proximate to that particular property.

The issues are whether or not we would be in the position to purchase the TDRs. It is not a secret that I've sat here at this dais and have said we have to do something to prioritize agriculture in our communities, and it's this would be one way, but we had other people from Pojoaque. If we – and I'm working on an initiative with Commissioner Johnson about urban agriculture, but I'm also very invested culturally in the acequia growth culture.

I met with the Food Policy Council and asked for some support to look at ways to make the agricultural areas, I won't say protected, but a priority for how we're doing work on the Commission. It didn't go very far, but I've since, in the time since then, have learned about the complexities in getting there from that.

I am wondering, and this is one of those where if we come months later or maybe even years later, but hopefully months later, to say the County should pay for those TDRs doesn't make that, or in any location, it doesn't make that property our ownership or our burden. It's so that would be able to stay in agricultural hands.

And I don't know that we have anything in place. Either it's a TDR mechanism, it's obviously not going to meet the open space definitions, but to identify funding that will allow us to help. I would say the agricultural traditions of Northern New Mexico and largely in Santa Fe County, because we would be remiss in supporting our future generations if no one has the ability to grow food in the future. That's not even hyperbolic.

So I say that: it's largely a question. It's why I didn't really want to start that after not having heard from the other Commissioners, because I understand we wouldn't have necessarily an answer like that, but it's something we need to focus on. Or I'm asking to focus on.

MANAGER SHAFFER: Sure. Chair Greene and Commissioner Bustamante, again, depending upon the size of investment that you wish to make the most natural source of funding for TDR purchases would be unassigned and uncommitted general fund balance. And that's why we've suggested that you look at all of the competing potential demands on that finite and very flexible resource at the same time so that you can make those allocation decisions.

But in, in my view, that would be the most logical source of funding for a purchase of that sort. I don't believe that our bond counsel, again, our independent bond counsel believed that TDR purchases would fit within our general obligation bonding authority. I don't think that it would really fit within the restrictions of our capital outlay GRT since it's not, again, County capital where we would be buying an intangible, development right. So I think that's the source you would look at. I think when the board is making those decisions about how to allocate those resources, that would be the time to, to have that policy discussion amongst the Board as to how much you want to allocate to that purpose. I think then, as part of that as well, we can discuss, whether, what portion you may want to allocate to open space purchases or other acquisitions, separate and apart from TDRs because again there are trade-offs between all of those mechanisms. But to sum up, that's where I think the money would come from.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I appreciate Chair Greene and Manager Shaffer and Alexandra Ladd. I appreciate that answer and the information that you've just provided, and I think though this project that I'm talking about is exciting and they are also talking to the City, and I think I have to share thank Elvis over here for the support that he's provided to this particular – I think we all know why. He's Elvis. [laughter] That's been very helpful and the conversation or in the presentation that we had that the City is looking at doing this as well. And I know that this particular project is also talking to the City because there's opportunity there clearly.

The other part that I don't want to lose in this conversation is to somehow formalize a commitment to supporting agricultural projects. Agri-Gate's great, but how do we help people? We saw a family who one of the members came to every meeting thereafter and was very frustrated because they weren't able to get the TDRs to keep a particular part of agricultural land in production. I understand, or actually I don't know what the status of that is, and Commissioner Greene might, but I would put forth that in a culture that has the propensity to build and build and build on land that's irrigable under the 14th century Law of the Indies that said we don't build houses on land that you can grow food on, a lot of time has passed.

But I think the wisdom of assuring that future generations can grow food where they are, despite our growing seasons, people were able to live here with food that was grown in the area, and that is a sword I'm willing to fall on. Don't take it literally, anybody. That being said, it's also the formalization of that capability.

So I put that out there for consideration, yes, with the next project that we're looking at, and having the opportunity to speak with you and have a meeting with regard to the plans for the La Bajada Ranch and how it could – because on the other side of that is the Caja del Rio that has now been – not yet – has now been presented to be protected, and this is a very culturally significant area to our native tribes, to those who came after, and there's opportunity in the illustration of ecological, hydrological, et cetera.

The formations are grand, and it doesn't get argued very much. People recognize that. So that's the opportunity that I want to put forth and have a conversation with you, even as how those could work together and what if – what can go forward if it's possible. So I appreciate that, and that's more of a statement and a request for being a participant in that conversation. But thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thanks. I'll take the mic for a second. And I look at great work this second year around. Things are moving in totally in the right direction. Under all of these different tasks and area of focus, I think that there's one area that we talk about a lot, but it doesn't really have a very specific thing. So I give you an example. We have transportation planning. Fabulous. Makes sense. We have open space planning. Fabulous. It makes sense. I'm going to give an area that I think that has to have an intentional sort of space within our planning portfolio, specifically water planning. And I know we do have water planning, but it should almost be its own office that manages the water, the WPAC and really finds that interface between our growth plans and our water resources.

That is probably our, number one resource that we need to manage in some way. And I wonder if there's a comment about that in some aspect to a very specific person understands what's literally the go-to person for all water questions in and it may be Andrew, but it seems to need its own office.

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, I think that's a great point and water planning is part of what our community planners work on. I think there's also a distinction between water supply and water infrastructure, as well as water planning and the longer-range work. And we have so many – water obviously affects everyone's every minute of every day practically because we need it to survive.

So I would say this is one area that we are continuing to make improvements, which is to connect the water planning function of the community planning team with our water supply function in our Utilities Department. Because obviously we need a lot of collaboration with them to make sure that if projects, especially a big project that's going to use a County supply of water, which in some ways it's easier to manage that data and to understand what's going on than multiple people using wells.

So it's, we're constantly refining that process, and I think somebody next to me might have something to add.

CHAIR GREENE: And, I do appreciate the overlap here of what I would call institutional water versus outside of our system water, right? So in collaborating and making sure that we work with, whether it's a mutual domestic as a, another organization that manages their own water but has a system, or whether it's the wells and the aquifer in a basin that isn't really necessarily part of our purview, but could be and probably should be. But Brian, go for it.

BRIAN SNYDER (Public Works Director): So Chair Greene, I just wanted to add to what Alex was saying. The water planning function as a water planner is definitely in growth management. And her team, I would say is in charge of that. So Andrew, as an example of the leader of that group is involved in the community, whether it be mutual domestics, to your point collaborating with them, pulling together information on them, with them.

He's involved in Pojoaque Valley as an example from a long-range plan from a water standpoint. Public Works, we don't have any planners within my staff. That being said, we do planning from the standpoint of we recently are wrapping up the utility master plan. We're wrapping up the effluent management plan. We are partnering with the City and our partners at the City Water Division on the 40/80 year water plan, return flow pipeline and around that. And then out of Public Works from a project side, we also manage the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System, which is in some ways, a long-range plan for water for that basin.

So- There is definitely overlap but there's a lot of planning that's done in Public Works. But there's in the planning effort from the standpoint of mutual domestics and looking for, I'll call it new partners and new interests, definitely Growth Management and their team from the planning team takes [inaudible]

CHAIR GREENE: Yes, it's complicated and it falls between you and it falls between the cracks because there's stuff that either both of you don't have in your radar there, but it is a resource, right? Groundwater doesn't –there is our groundwater, but there's other groundwater that is not really on your balance sheet, but it is one of our resources that should be managed, I think. Other folks might disagree, but –

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Respectfully, I think you're just giving a great case for a unified water authority, but I don't really want to step in that one.

CHAIR GREENE: I know. I love it. Yes. That's right.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Well, I'm definitely not going to step in that one.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay, so let me go to the next sort of outside of your space, but things that have been brought up here that are starting to talk about strategic planning, even though we just prepared our strategic plan a couple days ago. If you and a few of us up here agree that we want to bring permitting in-house, that really didn't find its way into the strategic plan. And that may take years, but that needs to have a strategic plan on how that would happen, how long it would take to do it, how we would do it, what it would cost, and what our expectations would be in that space.

And I agree we should investigate it and probably try to do it, but I'd like to know what sort of study would be done to say, yes, let's bring that all in-house. And then whether it's a unified watering authority, all of those long-term, big, complicated things, is that a one-year, two-year, three-year, five-year thing to get us to a point where we could stand something up, and when would you start and how much money would you need in year one, two, and three?

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, I think in terms of the in-house permitting, we were really looking at it through the lens of better customer service as well as a little bit more quality control. If we're more engaged throughout the whole process, then people aren't going to break the rules as much. Because we do spend quite a bit of time with helping people with after-the-fact permits because they bought a property and they had no way of knowing that something on the property hadn't been permitted. That, I think our code enforcement supervisor used to work for CID, so he's got some great ideas about, what that looks like.

We did an initial study to just look at what would the fees be? Like, could we offset the extra cost of having this expanded function because we would be collecting all of the fees? So that's a place to start to update what that was. And to just – I think we, it's not hard to figure out what the volume would be and what the capacity would be.

I think we could certainly come up with a plan for that within the next fiscal year. And then it would be, of course, up to the Board to decide whether that was the direction to go in. I can't really speak to the Water Authority, but maybe Brian has thoughts.

MANAGER SHAFFER: I think that the Water Authority is moving forward in terms of a draft MOU relative to the City and the County working together to evaluate that. So I think that's in process.

CHAIR GREENE: And does that also include the pueblos that are on the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System?

MANAGER SHAFFER: As I understand the scope at this time it is between the City and the County. There might be implications relative to certain aspects of the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System but those wouldn't be insurmountable. But, it may be that if there were a unified water authority, absent an agreement by that authority to operate the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System, that, that system would need to find a different operator

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. Seems three quarters of that water is tribal water in that system. Yes, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I have had this discussion briefly with Jeff Montoya. He's aware of this initiative. There are ways it makes sense, there are ways it might not for them, but I think that's something that will come out of this exercise.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. I'm always in favor of consultation and bringing them in early. If they don't want to be a part of it, that's fine, but they need to be aware of it, so Jeff's great for it. Fabulous. And then back to what was discussed with Community Development, a housing summit, right? If we're updating our SGMP it should be data-driven, right? Let's not build housing that we don't need. Whether it's the wrong type of affordable housing, whether it's the wrong type of housing for workforce. Again, how can we change the codes and the SGMP and the SLDC in a way that really targets the growth that we want, right? I

It's just, the study, six months of research and data, working with all these partners, understanding what's in the pipeline, what's out there, using GIS and all the data that we've got, and then coming and asking all of these other jurisdictions that are going to be in this conversation together with us to come with really good data so that we can understand not only what's out there, but the demand and trends and how we can set our general plan as it may be for the next 10 years, 15, 20 years, whatever that horizon is. It's data-driven, and I recommend that we, hopefully somewhere in this budget there's enough consultants and research that you can get to that, and that we can bring everybody to the table. Maybe it's six, maybe it's eight months from now, whatever it is, but with really good data so that we can make sure that we're doing that.

And also, again, maybe it's that water aspect to this as well, because water seems to be every time we have a question up here about development, hey, where's the water going to come from? How many times have we heard that, right? So it seems it's not necessarily only the land, it is really the water use, and making sure that we're intentional with all of that.

Additionally, I think if I remember correctly, two years ago when we passed the STR ordinance, we discussed having a report back to us after a year to discuss how the program is working. And we're kind of two years, we're not, maybe not quite a full two years into this, but I'm wondering if this is the time to look at adjustments to the plan in a way that, again, is more intentional to what our community wants in terms of the STR program.

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, the vendor that runs the compliance platform for us, they did a report but it's a little bit before my time, so I think we have a lot more lessons learned now than we did two years ago. So we are in the process of looking at where we want to make some improvements. I think there are certainly some places where the regulation is confusing, and it's, again, a situation where good intentions make something complicated to adhere to and complicated to enforce.

So as we're started with streamlining and making more clear the customer's experience with the information they need from the County. That's our first step. We're going to then move into how do we make sure that we're collecting the right data to understand where the compliance issues are, and whether we want to bring forward some recommended changes to the Board.

CHAIR GREENE: And do you have a horizon for that?

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, I'm sorry. Say that again.

CHAIR GREENE: When should we expect some recommendations?

MS. LADD: I would say as we bring forward the other technical corrections to the code, we're trying to do it hand in hand so we're not starting from scratch every time we look at a different part of our regulation.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. It'd be great to hear a little update of that periodically. Also it's a different way of looking at a budget here, but I think there's an opportunity to have a Clean and Lien balance sheet that shows the properties that are, and how much we have into them, so that we can track what we hope to recoup. Maybe we have to, I don't know, if we're, we can write them off or whatever. But there's definitely an opportunity to show that there's, 13 properties and these, each property has this much due on it, and so that we can track how much debt we're carrying on these things, because we do front load the payment into cleaning up these properties.

Same thing could actually happen in a TDR sort of balance sheet, possibly. And then in support of what Commissioner Bustamante said, and I think I got this right, I would really want to prioritize if we're going to go into the purchasing of TDRs, that we prioritize agricultural land, right? There's a lot of other land that could have TDRs off of it, but for my money, for our, the County money, I would like to see TDRs, if we're going to go buy them, prioritizing the agricultural land.

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, if I could just make a quick comment about that. I think we've struggled with understanding that there is additional value to irrigated land, but part of what the TDR does is it ensures that development cannot happen on that property. It does not ensure that irrigation will continue to be used and food will continue to be grown. We don't have a legislative way to bring that piece to the sort of full circle on that piece. And clearly preserving the property is the first step, but there may be additional tools we want to bring into that conversation to, to achieve that goal community-wide.

CHAIR GREENE: Okay. And just thinking out loud, maybe the current TDR program doesn't quite work for buying acequia water rights or irrigating water rights, but I think there could be a way to buy those as well and have it in a basin or along an acequia so that it is reserved for agriculture in a certain area.

But I'm just thinking out loud in a way to – if the current ordinance doesn't quite work for that, maybe there's an add-on program that we can do to do that.

And then in the transportation planning space there are a lot of projects that are collaborative or where a little bit of leadership seems to be needed. They may be State projects, but they're like, sometimes the County does projects on State roads. Sometimes they're continuations of a City project. So for instance, the Bishop's Lodge project ends abruptly at the County-City line, and it's in the middle of a hill and it could continue for another quarter or half mile to a good trailhead spot that actually has a trailhead, and it seems like it would be an ideal place for it to continue and have a sort of comfortable spot for it to end. And I would hope that we start looking at ways that either a), we can collaborate, or b), we can start leading on projects that might be lingering because the State doesn't necessarily want to do this, but it is a great project for a 592 corridor, for instance. That's a State road. That might be a bike lane that we want to actually look at developing.

Hyde Park Road up to the ski basin and so on, or at least to part of it the lower parts of that. That's City, that's County, that's federal land, that's state park. It's a whole bunch of things, but sometimes the State just seems like they're not jumping on it, so maybe an organization like us has to take the opportunity to lead that. And having that proactive stance in our transportation planning.

Yes, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. I'll be short, Alex. I just want to weave the thread that I brought up with Community Development, and it's been great, by the way, to have the second quarterly meeting with your team. And doing that, it's been gnawing at me in the last year, but it was even more apparent that having Spanish speakers and having our forms, dashboards in Spanish is really needed. And when I started to look at some of the data, it's not very good. It's estimated that over 65 percent New Mexico statewide is of laborers and builders are Latino. And I would guess that if we had numbers, and maybe you do, a large majority are Spanish speakers and even a higher percent in Santa Fe.

So I'm thinking about families that I know in District 2 and District 3 that are builders, they're Spanish speakers, and in some ways we eliminate their opportunity to follow the codes if it's not in Spanish. And so I was just looking at the possibility of baking in some money for your department on Spanish translation forms. On the low end it could be $25K, it could go up to $100K. But if we stick with the low end plus a bilingual planner at maybe $80 or $90K, I don't know what that would be. Or what we call – we don't call it temporary staff here. We had some temporary positions in another line item. What do we call them, County Manager?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Chair, Commissioner, it depends upon how long they're being funded for. Term. So we have temp and we have term positions.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Term. Okay. So yes, I was thinking maybe term positions as a pilot, and then also in terms of the GeoCivics. Is it? Yeah, GeoCivics. It looks like they allow a platform that we could purchase the application what is it called? It allows it to be translated in Spanish for basic things like our landing page. I'm throwing out ideas out there, not assuming that you haven't thought about it, because I know you think about a lot. But I really want to support that. I think we're – it's an economic opportunity for builders who are Spanish speakers. Most of them are family-owned businesses. Most of them need the income. They're smaller builders. So I'm putting a plug for adding at least $150K to your budget for that, all the whole package, and a video in Spanish that explains everything.

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, Commissioner Cacari Stone I appreciate that a lot. I think our planning staff has an ongoing contract with a translator and interpreter for the community planning work. But we also have on the Building and Development side, we have right now, I think our receptionist, the first person people see is fully bilingual, and one of our experts in permitting is fully bilingual. And then I think we have at least two other staff members who are basically bilingual. So the staff will sit down and go through every single form and assist anyone who doesn't have language abilities right now, which doesn't mean we can't do it better, and I appreciate improving on this as well. But I do want to assure you that we do have the services provided in analog format through a person in our office.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: No, I appreciate that. I don't think it's all or nothing, and I didn't assume we didn't have anything. But since we are launching GeoCivics, and I looked, they do have an opportunity to purchase the customization in Spanish. So I'm putting a plug to add that to your budget, and it looks like just from an eyeball, it could be anywhere between $40K and $85K. I don't know. You guys would know better. So I'm asking you and the County Manager to maybe look into that with your team and coming back with an opportunity to have our dashboard and our landing page in Spanish. It could save your staff a lot of time, too, of people able to understand the forms. And we take for granted being monolingual English and how frustrating it must be if you're a builder or you're a family-owned business to feel so disenfranchised to not even understand complicated codes and permits and things like that, but to not even know the language. So thank you for considering that.

CHAIR GREENE: Yeah, go ahead please.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Chair, thank you. In support of Commissioner Cacari Stone's statements, this is codified constitutionally in New Mexico in 1910 or 11, and reaffirmed in 2025 that non-English speaking citizens would have their materials provided to them in Spanish. And I say that, I see that you're aware, and I think people are aware, but I think it's important for those who say why would we do that? We're an English-speaking government. In the, in this state, it was acknowledged very early that we have a Spanish-speaking population. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. I do support that as well. We need to be supportive and give everybody with that language barrier as it may be, or language ability to have as much information at their fingertips as possible and to make it as easy as possible, not only with language translation, but potentially a facilitation, right? Does somebody in your permit intake department speak Spanish? Do we always make sure that we have at least one Spanish speaker on, if not all the time, at least available with an appointment?

MS. LADD: Chair Greene, we always have a Spanish speaker available.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. Great. Okay. Excellent. And then I do – this sort of flips over to something that was something, one of our requests for our budget up here, the Commission budget that we talked about on the first day, but it does fall into your space as well, is the idea of a county architect, somebody that can help really bring design for community intention and for our intention when we hear it into solutions.

I love planners. Planners are a verbal set, and drawings are what an architecture is that interface that gets built, and the visual medium is necessary. So we'll talk about that later but I just wanted to put it into your mind too. Anything else, Commissioners? I see shaking heads. All right. Thank you very much, Alex. Great job. Second year around, better all the time.

[The Commission recessed from 3:25 to 3:42]

CHAIR GREENE: And we're back. It is 3:42, and we are on to the last of our budget discussions here with Public Works. Brian, Greg, and Yvonne, please take it away.

Public Works

MR. SNYDER: Good afternoon, Chair Greene and Commissioners. Public Works budget starts on page 196 of your budget book and goes through page 298.

CHAIR GREENE: You get the biggest part.

MR. SNYDER: The Public Works operating budget is approximately $43.8 million, and we have 188 positions within Public Works. I'm going to run through a little summary of some of the items we cut from the budget, in the proposed budget. Our recommended budget totals a reduction of $870,000 total, and $142,000 of that was from utilities, and $728,000 was from Public Works. That does not take into consideration the cost increases for COLAs, as well as insurance. But that was to help offset some of those additional costs.

And what we did was we continued to work to streamline our budget, and we aligned the budget with historic actuals, expenditures while we maintain core services. Last week, when Greg gave the budget overview, he used one of the examples from Public Works of reduction in the budget, which was our roads group and specifically how snow has not really materialized in the last couple years. With that in mind, we reduced the budget line item in there for material costs. We have a material stockpile from this year that we can use later this year and into next year that we believe is sufficient for any snow that we would be getting. That's just one example. Another example of how we reduced the budget was recently the County, we did away with the fuel pumps at the Public Works complex, and that was a strategic decision, one, to not invest more capital into an old system. Two, to reduce the risk and liability of owning a fuel station. And then three, a lot of the County, including the Sheriff's Office, was already using Wex cards and operating at local gas stations.

Another way we reduced the budget – these are just examples – we brought some contracts in-house. Annually, we stripe our, all our roads and prior to striping the roads, we sweep the roads and that was part of this road striping contract. We brought those sweeping services in-house this current fiscal year, and therefore we're reducing the budget next year to continue that.

As well as a little bit smaller scale, but just representative of something we're looking at the way we do business, we clean windows at the facilities twice a year throughout the County, and we brought a portion of that in-house. So the community center windows will be cleaned in in-house by our Public Works staff because they're all single-story buildings

And last example of how we reduced the budget, we initiated this current fiscal year a LiDAR reassessment of all the county roads. Should be on a five-year cycle, and we're meeting that timeframe this fiscal year. So we're reducing the budget next year by that amount, understanding that in five years we will need to reincorporate that back into the budget. However, we believe that the road implementation program that we have can absorb that cost in five years.

So those were some highlights of some things that we cut through from the budget. Some of the areas of strategic focus and initiatives that we have within Public Works. Public Works, we have a priority to focus on employee development and training. We have, as an example, we added to the budget for a Community College maintenance certification as well as additional training and professional development at national seminars, AWWA, APWA, GFOA trainings and conferences.

In addition, we this last fiscal year, we rolled out 12 annual safety training courses along with HR as well as accounting, Word, Excel, just to improve what we do within Public Works and grow our employees. And lastly, I heard it mentioned in the introductory remarks by Greg, we have three staff currently in the New Mexico EDGE certification programs, just here again, trying to support some of its financial from our budget, others of it's just career growth and development.

Public Works has also continued to focus on technology upgrades by improving management and customer service. I have four examples of that, that are either underway or will be as part, or as part of next year's budget. First is the community center rental portal. We're bringing that to the finish line. We've talked about that in the past BCC meetings.

Next item is getting online functionality at our bulk water stations so that you can put money on your card online so that when you, you don't have to come into the Public Works office. The goal of these, as you can see a trend, is Public Works complex isn't necessarily convenient to everyone. Hours aren't convenient. So let's make it more convenient by having it accessible online. The other area that we have and we're looking into is a point of sale for bag tags at solid waste collection centers. This year, this current fiscal year, we expanded wi-fi and internet capability to each of the collection centers, as well as we got computers at each of the collection centers. Prior to that, we had not had that functionality. So that sets us up to start having the conversation about point of sale at those facilities and eliminating the need to come into Public Works.

And then the last example of technology upgrades, and I should have mentioned this, Commissioner Greene, and when I interjected a little bit in growth management's conversation on water. Our environmental compliance officer, one of their functions is to look at the domestic well metering program. And as part of this budget, we have, he's looking at standing up an online countywide domestic well metering program to help, collect the meters and work with different communities. So that's in our budget as well.

Several other initiatives that we could continue to carry on just to highlight some of the service that we provide to the community and to Public Works. We initiated in fiscal year 26, and we're a partial year of funding, and we're implementing a full year of funding roadside assistance for all County vehicles, similar to a AAA program. And then in addition, we are including additional operations and maintenance expenses for our new – some of the expenses for building maintenance services at the new buildings we purchased over on St. Michael's Drive for the DA's office, as well as Rodeo Park East. We have not incorporated all the services, operations and maintenance services, but things like elevator maintenance and those types of things that we know we need to have, we've incorporated into the budget.

Public Works continues to expand our work order management system throughout all operational areas. We continue to expand our use of and how we plan on using our project management tool, ProjectMates. We've talked about it in the past. It's not necessarily the most efficient tool, but it's a tool we have right now that we're making good use out of and plan to expand the use of that this year to connect to more updates through the website as well as dashboards.

And then last item I wanted to touch on of what Public Works is working on, and this is Countywide. It came up in the last week in the budget conversations a request to better understand or at least a high-level overview of our fleet management system and how that is we approach that. Currently, we're using GPS as well as our vehicle maintenance system and a decision matrix that we've built to help inform us how vehicles are used, how frequent, where they're driving those types of tools. But that is well coupled with our carpool that we're going to be rolling out countywide this upcoming fiscal year, we believe that these tools will be able to help us have the right data to know when to replace or repurpose vehicles within the County, all leading to if we can reduce our inventory of fleet and how we use it, more efficient we'll be, the less insurance we'll need, the funding we'll need, the less maintenance funding we'll need for these vehicles, as well as the reduction in cost in vehicle space leases.

So downtown, we spend $60 a month per parking space at the vehicle spaces we lease. That accounts for almost $100,000 a year in budget of leasing spaces. So all the more reason why we want to look at how vehicles are used, make sure that employees have the vehicles that they need, the appropriate vehicle, but also if we can get some of the needs met by a carpool, we may not need a vehicle that just sits there. So that's what we're working on within Public Works but also throughout the County and working with the team.

Next area I wanted to focus on was personnel and fixed assets. Public Works is not requesting any new FTE at this time as part of the fiscal year 27 budget. One note I want to call out and we've talked about this before from the standpoint of as we bring on new infrastructure, new square footage of buildings, new lane miles of road, new lane miles of trails, et cetera, investing in our capital, there is maintenance required on those.

So recently, this last year we purchased two buildings. I mentioned them earlier, St. Michael's Drive for the new DA's office. Once the DA moves into that new office, if the old DA's office is used for something else, we will need to revisit that and see if we need custodial support there, maintenance type support there as well as then over on Rodeo Park East with the behavioral health facility. It's a large facility.

Once Anne and her team identify what the needs are at that facility we may need to provide custodial and maintenance support. There are other different models that we'll also be exploring to see if they provide it themselves. But that's just something I wanted to put a pin in that future conversations may be had with the Board on additional staffing needs to support the infrastructure that we're taking on.

I mentioned this earlier. Currently, Public Works has 188 positions. Currently we have 26 vacancies. This is a large number, but, in talking with Valerie and looking at it with our Public Works admin team, this number fluctuates continuously. As an example, we have, at this time, though we're at 26, we have five or six hires in the process, meaning they're going through the background check. They've already gone through interviews, so very quickly we can be back down in the teens. So we continue to work with the Human Resources as well as our Public Works team, as well as the AFSCME union on looking at positions and the needs.

And the last topic I wanted to touch on was the fixed asset budget. We have the request in for $3.4 million of fixed assets for Public Works. And these can largely fall into four different areas. First area is equipment that will allow us to be more efficient. Second area is equipment that has reached the end of its useful life. Third area is equipment that provides improved safety for the public as well as our staff. And the last area is equipment to support ongoing expansion programs. And with that, I'll stand for questions.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you, Brian. Commissioners, who wants to lead off here?

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you, Chair. One quick question. So the funds when you have, would this be something that we would have to go for capital outlay when we have now these –

I've been receiving a number of requests for traffic calming throughout the. General Goodwin, et cetera. I didn't – I'm not clear. I didn't catch where that's in there for that type of project. What item would it be in?

MR. SNYDER: So that would be within our roads maintenance budget. So similarly, we have two traffic calming projects that are at some form of underway right now up on County Road 84, as well as down on Valle Vista. And because of construction of water lines up on at County Road 84, plus the water line projects, water meter valve projects we're going to be doing down in Valle Vista, they're we're coordinating with a contractor on those. So those would be coming out of, primarily come out of the roads maintenance budget.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: So for the up-upcoming year, if there was something for the future year, it would be prudent to get legislative funds for anything additional that wouldn't necessarily be in our – I'm trying to think about how to go and acquire more money for it.

MR. SNYDER: Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante we have a certain, I'll say, a threshold within the budget which- that we can absorb. We consider that to be road maintenance. If there are large numbers of traffic calming that's being asked for over and above that, yes, the additional funding would be warranted.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. Commissioner Hughes

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Just a quick question. As the roads expand, I know you aren't planning on additional staff this year, but do you think next year we'll, you'll need additional road staff?

MR. SNYDER: Chair Greene, Commissioner Hughes, staffing-wise within Roads right now I believe we have something like six vacancies within our Roads Maintenance team. We had on hold since the pandemic a seventh foreman and a couple of staff to support that foreman. I recently initiated the hiring process for those positions. The reason being we have five maintenance districts with a team in each district, a foreman and four heavy equipment operators, senior heavy equipment operators and senior equipment operators, as well as we have a another foreman and a team of three that do hauling of material as well as if we need additional staffing within the district for a certain task, they go and help out. The reason I initiated the hiring of this other crew was to put more of a focus on our culvert maintenance and management of those.

Within the maintenance districts, they already do that, but if we have more of a focus on that, I believe we'll be better served. Several months back, we brought a capital request in for a jetter, a new jetter to support that operation. We've, we're procuring that at this, as we speak. So I feel that with the current staff that we have now, we can absorb some the lane miles. But at the same time, we're continuing to do analysis on how many miles can they serve, because they do anything from pothole repair to mowing, to grading, to culvert and ditch maintenance and a lot of other things.

I think we will have to have the conversation as it, as new roads will come on, what that means. And we would have a staffing matrix that helps support that.

COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioner Johnson.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you, Brian, and thank you to everyone at Public Works. We ask you all for a lot. Constituents ask us questions or have specific requests, and you, you all do a great job of helping us out in that area.

MR. SNYDER: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Not to dig up the past, but on page 202 there is a line for depreciation 2024, 2025, not in 26, not in 27. What happens to that? This may be a question for Yvonne.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Johnson, that's actually related to the Utilities Enterprise Fund, and we only do that at the end of the fiscal year as part of the preparation for the audit and the financial statements.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: So we don't need to budget for that? Or I guess I'm confused by why it doesn't show up any, any longer.

MS. HERRERA: No, it is not a budgeted line item. Along with if we were to also recognize accounts receivable that are uncollectible, we would increase our allowance for doubtful accounts and a bad debt expense. It's the same thing also with our pension liability expense. So we do have certain amounts that are not budgeted and truly relate to the financial statements. And depreciation is just, as we all know, is just the allocation of a fixed asset. So we've already budgeted that when we purchased that, so we would be duplicating the depreciation if we budget that in future years.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. That makes sense to me. Another question. So in 2024 the – oh, I'm just kidding. I read this wrong. I'm going to, I'm going to yield for now. Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: No problem, Commissioner Johnson. There are no dumb questions in this business. Maybe not. Commissioners, over here?

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you, Chair Greene. Brian, thank you. And it's so complex but expansive what you do, and I just want to appreciate it. And it's a large budget. I'm almost embarrassed with my micro questions here, but I'm going to ask them because they come from the lens of a community member in my district, right? One of the questions was, and I don't know if it's your budget that handles it, but the trail and specifically the New River Trail, is it in your purview to be able to put signs? You know how some communities have signs and QR codes, you are here to tell a story. And we have the Camino Real Trail, right? And it's such an opportunity, at least with the county section, to tell the story, and they already have all the histories. Like you're here at the river, and these 13 women contributed to the river in this way.
I see when I travel, a lot of cool cities. Cities are cool because they do this, and they tell the story of their community on the trails. And I don't know if we have money for that this year. I'd like to go for it when we launch the trail and see how much that would cost or if you could come up with estimates. I don't know if we want to do that on a couple other trails that have a lot of historical significance.

The other piece, again, with the expansive budget, I have another micro question coming from community. Will we get the high-speed internet broadband access in the community centers and specifically the Nancy Rodriguez Center? Is that budgeted in this year? And flat screens so people can join remotely. We have people aging. Sometimes they can't get out in the winter. This would allow them, some people to be in person, some people to be remote. Those are two micro questions.

MR. SNYDER: Chair Greene and Commissioner Cacari Stone, thank you for the questions. Regarding the Santa Fe River Greenway Trail signage, we would probably work directly with our peers in the Growth Management Planning Group just to, get their insight and some vision on that. But then as it relates to the project, that's in the capital budget side which we'll be speaking about in the coming months.

But one of the things we can look at is what the cost would be to put those in and see what we could do contingency, project contingency-wise to see if there's any available funds to answer that. But we can continue to look into that.

Regarding the high-speed internet access to the community centers, specifically Nancy Rodriguez. Yes, it is in the, in this year's budget. The understanding was it was put in the mid-year budget of IT for IT to handle and that they are currently contracted to bring high-speed internet to Nancy Rodriguez. And I think their focus is on the higher utilized facilities, Nancy Rodriguez, La Cienega and Max Cole. And then in addition to that, we have in our budget and as a project once the internet is in place to add access control and security to each of those facilities.

Right now we don't have that ability. Here again, better customer service can be provided once you can get online and register and reserve a community center, a code will be given to you. You can go and enter the code. You don't have to come to Public Works and pick the key up the day before and come back after. So it's about customer service, but it's also to provide accessibility and community service to the community. So I'm not sure your last point on the flat-screen TVs. I'm not sure if that's part of what IT is doing. But I can look into that.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you so much. The other piece is last year, mainly due to the work that you do, the County received the American Disabilities Award, Access Disability Award from our disability coalition, and I think that was phenomenal. Part of it was the trails in Romero Park. And I want to explore if we do a pilot, how we have electric chargers for mobile devices for people who are in. And it would connect and allow people who are in chairs and their mobile devices to charge. It's a huge fear. You want to go, we want to promote them to go on the trails, and I would like to pilot that on the Camino Real Trail because it connects with the HUD housing.

Once we get Lopez Lane done, folks could actually go, and then they don't have to have the fear that I'm going to run low on my electric or my charging, and they won't be stranded. And that's what's keeping them. So I really want to explore it, and if that could be a pilot as well, where we could do the whole section of the new trail and pilot it with the narratives and stories of the community and the river.

This is also a nice exchange for people who feel very spiritually and emotionally disturbed that we're changing the river and all these engineers, and you guys have gotten all kinds of calls and, their perspective and experience is legitimate. But if we're also promoting things and they see things that really build community, it might soften change to them a little bit more. Thank you.

MR. SNYDER: And Chair Greene Commissioner Cacari Stone, I, first thing that comes to mind, and I'll look at Greg, is, capital planning budget process is coming up and so we can-- our Projects team can work with Olivia or whoever that you would recommend on what that scope may look like for that pilot and see what we can –

what devices you had in mind so that we can get a ballpark price to see what are we talking for that capital conversation. I think that's probably the appropriate venue.

MANAGER SHAFFER: I would agree with that. And then as Brian mentioned also, working with our Growth Management team really on content relative to what some of that signage might look like we'll, try to bring that forward as part of the capital planning and budgeting process.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Commissioner Bustamante, we might come back to you. We'll give you a chance. Okay. A question about community access to some of our senior centers and our community centers. I have groups in the north that I would call governments, right? Government partners, acequia associations, land grants, that have been requesting access to Nambe and El Rancho and Chimayo, and they've been given a feeling like they weren't able to access those.

And I would hope that in our program that we can find a way to make it easy and affordable for them to, to use these facilities with low barriers. I do appreciate in past years you working on the Project Management team. I hope that there's some additional training that you can continue to get project managers, cohorts of training not only for Public Works, but for everyone around the county, because at the end of the day, it doesn't matter where they are, right? We've got a project manager over at the Fire Department now. We should have our liaisons able to take project management concepts, and so people can get better at that, and that's a training thing. I would also like to look at the planning pipeline. So that may be something that, interfaces with Alex Ladd and the planning space, but it's like that handoff from planning to the PER. And again, looking at project management, looking at a timeline that both looks at our organizational timeline and oh, this, this is going to go through Procurement or this is going to first go through planning at Growth Management, and then it's going to get handed over for a PER, but there's going to be a procurement process to go get a PER lined up, and then it's going to get there, then it's going to go to go get money.

All of these internal and external things that need to happen to get projects completed, and that maybe when we start to look at our capital outlay and our capital projects, that we look at a timeline of realistically, we want to do this project. Okay, we're going to scope it. That's going to take us six months. Here's our capital budget process. Next year, we're going to get a PER or we're going to go through the planning. And so we can see and communicate to our communities that this is – government doesn't work that fast, and these projects take a long time, but we can give them, here's how, best case scenario, how fast we can get that going.

Visual aids help with these things. It's not so much of just here's a project and here's a budget, but actually a timeline so people can know that's happening.

And then additionally, lastly, Fleet Management, really looking having a presentation about that sometime soon. That's something that's been lingering on my mind for a while, and I know that there's been, it's been worked on, but maybe not presented in a way that makes me feel that we've got a management strategy, especially when it comes to EVs. And now that we're going to have a whole bunch of EV chargers maybe in the next few months, or if you gave me a timeline that I knew when they were going to get built. I would say in months or years.

But great. You guys do great work. I'll tell you that when we put in work orders, super responsive team. So thank you so much. Really, Public Works is a demanding job, and you've got a great team.

MR. SNYDER: Thank you, Chair. I would echo that. Team, we have a great team. It doesn't fall on my shoulders. A lot of it falls on my shoulders from the standpoint of responsibility, but the team sitting behind me as well as, the 180 other staff that we have, that it's a lot of work, but at the same time, it's a lot of problem solvers that go and get things done. So I'm truly appreciative of all the work that they do.

CHAIR GREENE: And then lastly, we did talk offline about the concept of an ombudsman for the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. I'm okay with whatever ways we can do that without that, but I appreciate having support. That is the biggest project that Santa Fe County is going to do for certainly our lifetimes, and it's pretty important to get it right. And really, part of that is communicating to the community the values of it. People are started from a pretty skeptical position, and we've got to overcome that to make people value it. And I would say the next recommendation, especially as we were talking, trading texts, is try to bring the Fire Department in this meeting if we're going to do it on June 10th, to talk about the values of the fire system because so many people don't care about the water to drink, but they do care about the fire suppression. Thank you, Commissioner Bustamante.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I'm sorry to interrupt, and I hope I'm not putting anyone on the spot, but there's someone with you from Public Works or from your operation who I don't recognize, and neither did Cacari Stone, so I thought maybe it's worth the ask.

MR. SNYDER: Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante, thank you for the question. I don't think you're referring to PJ Montano or Travis Soderquist, are you?

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Neither of those guys.

MR. SNYDER: Okay. All right. Yeah, thanks. Just to introduce my team as a whole, PJ, as you all know PJ. I'm going to take a step back. Public Works is, I think Commissioner Greene said is a diverse group of different touchpoints. So a lot of the alignment of functions within –under the management doesn't necessarily make sense. But PJ oversees Open Space and Trails, facilities custodians and real property, as well as capital projects. Travis Soderquist oversees Utilities, Water, and Wastewater.

And the other gentleman with me is Isaiah Martinez. He is our ASD director. So he assists with – I remind him frequently that we go as ASD goes, because everything from the standpoint of purchase requisitions and purchasing things is routed through our ASD team. Invoices is routed through our ASD team. And just to give you a order of magnitude, and Yvonne can correct me, if I'm wrong, but it's in the order of magnitude, but we have about 800 purchase orders open throughout the year, and we process anywhere between 400 and 500 invoices a month on the operating and the capital side. So all those go through Isaiah's team and go to Yvonne's team. And so it's, it's a lot of work on the ASD team to pull that together, as well as when you come to Public Works complex you meet the ASD team.

They're the ones that staff the front office, front window to provide customer service, generally speaking from the phone standpoint, but also for anybody that currently comes to get solid waste bag tags, gets bulk water permit, pay their utility bill and then you name it. People come to Public Works for whatever reason, and they're there to support.

So it's a wide-ranging group. And not to neglect the other function of their group, they also do utility billing. So they support Travis' team from the standpoint of the utility billing system function, as well as dealing with the 4,000 or so water customers and 1,600 or so wastewater customers from billing, as well as customer service standpoint. So that's Isaiah's team.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. Thank you and we know Travis. The good news is these folks don't – they have a full name and an operation, and how often do I tell people that PW from TJ is going to be at the meeting? It's always a hit-and-miss with me, so thank you. Appreciate it.

MANAGER SHAFFER: And I wanted to just highlight that and also thank Isaiah. He and Brian, they're both going to be critical as we move forward with the implementation of the ERP system. They are super-users of all things finance. And to, kind of underscore that just looking on the capital projects front, I think Yvonne estimates that they will expend $116 million this fiscal year. So there's a tremendous amount of volume both in terms of the actual number of payments, purchase orders, what have you, but it translates into a very high dollar volume as well, just to put that work in perspective.

CHAIR GREENE: Fabulous. Thank you. Commissioners? No. I see tired nods and things like that, so we're all grateful. This gets better and better every year. Yvonne, Greg, Brian, everybody who's a part of this. They're, easier to understand. Maybe that's just getting through to my brain, but and I think all of us, it's a better communication process and I appreciate it. I don't know if anybody has closing remarks.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Chair Greene and County Manager, I just have a question. We have a block still for budget. Should we release that? Or maybe I just blocked it when we said initial. Yeah. So should we release it?

MANAGER SHAFFER: Thank you for that question Commissioner Cacari Stone, Chair Greene. I would respectfully ask that you keep it for now. We are going to try and turn around the interim budget and add it to next Tuesday's amended agenda so that we can get it wrapped up to give Yvonne and her team as much time as possible to enter it and upload it into the DFA system. If for some reason that doesn't materialize, it would be great if we had that block on the 28th so that we could bring the interim budget to you for approval.

So the short answer is, if we could indulge – if you could indulge us to keep it, we would appreciate it. But we will know by the end of this week whether we'll be able to, again, bring forward the interim budget, but I think we will be able to do so at next Tuesday's meeting.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Okay. And to confirm, that's 9:00 am until 11:00 am.

MANAGER SHAFFER: You certainly can scale that back, I think, from 9:00 am to, 9:30 am, if you want to have some time, because this would be to get the approval of the interim budget.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Oh, okay.

MANAGER SHAFFER: Which you've already received.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Oh, okay. Great. Yeah. So it could be online.

MANAGER SHAFFER: Most definitely.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Or something like that. Thank you so much, County Manager. Thank you, Chair Greene.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you. And then if I can ask for a summary of all of our notes and how they were addressed in this, sort of an executive summary for each department to say, this came from Commissioner Bustamante, this from Cacari Stone, this from Greene, this from Johnson, this from Hughes. And actually, you don't have to care about who it comes from, but –

MANAGER SHAFFER: Most definitely. What will accompany the interim budget would be, those notes how they were addressed, either in the budget or how we plan to address them going forward. A few items, not that I have them memorized, that may be something we tackle in the final budget or, come up with a plan to actually come up with the numbers to address the concerns that were stated. But we will itemize all of those things as part of what we give you to consider next Tuesday or yes, most likely next Tuesday or Thursday.

CHAIR GREENE: That's fabulous. Thank you. Anything else, folks?

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: One last question, Chair.

CHAIR GREENE: Of course.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you. What page is the general fund uncommitted number?

MANAGER SHAFFER: So there, there are two snapshots. The one that's probably the one I would, focus on in terms of money in the bank is in the appendix, and Yvonne will probably find it more quickly than I do. Yes.

MS. HERRERA: Chair Greene, Commissioner Bustamante, that would be on page 746 at the top.

CHAIR GREENE: 746?

MS. HERRERA: Yes. 746.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Thank you.

MS. HERRERA: And the amount of available funding as of today is $14.9 million of uncommitted, unassigned.

CHAIR GREENE: Thank you for clarifying that. Thank you for pulling that up. Commissioner Bustamante. All right. Great job. Thank you.

MANAGER SHAFFER: And I appreciate the, the feedback. Again we try to continuously improve in all things that we do and appreciate all the feedback you give us as to how we can get even better next year. Again, I do want to acknowledge the exceptional hard work of Yvonne and of all the budget staff. I don't know that you can truly appreciate how hard Yvonne personally works and how instrumental she is in ensuring that we meet all statutory deadlines, that our audits are completed on time. And like I said I can't emphasize that enough. I probably don't do a good enough job of doing it. But she is instrumental to the success of the County. And so I just want to acknowledge her efforts and the efforts of Erica, Amanda, and everybody else who's part of her team. So thank you.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CACARI STONE: Let's give them applause. Speech.

CHAIR GREENE: Yes. Get some rest. Thank you so much. This has been a pleasure, actually. Thank you.

3. Concluding Business

A. Announcements

B. Adjournment

Upon motion by Commissioner Johnson, second by Commissioner Bustamante, and unanimous voice vote, Chair Greene declared this meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Approved by:

Justin Greene, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST TO:

KATHARINE E. CLARK
SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK

SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/02/2026

COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

BCC MINUTES
PAGES: 47

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for Record On The 2ND Day Of July, 2026 at 11:33:40 AM And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 2086879 Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark
Deputy ____________________ County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

COUNTY CLERK
SANTA FE COUNTY NEW MEXICO
KATHARINE E. CLARK
CRESCIT EUNDO