

**Minutes of the  
Independent Salary Commission  
Special Meeting  
November 7, 2025  
Santa Fe, New Mexico**

This meeting of the Independent Salary Commission was called to order at approximately 1:01 p.m. by Valerie Aghaei Park, Santa Fe County Human Resources and Risk Management Division Director, on the above-cited date in the Commission Chambers, 102 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico

This meeting was conducted as hybrid with people attending in person and on line.

A quorum was achieved with the following members present:

**Members Present:**

Anna Hamilton  
Chris Graeser  
Cliff Rees  
Laura Liswood (virtually)  
Gus Martinez

**Staff Present:**

Valerie Aghaei Park  
Walker Boyd  
Sara Smith

**1. Introductions.**

Valerie Aghaei Park – HR and primary support

Cliff Rees

Gus Martinez

Chris Graeser

Anna Hamilton

Laura Liswood

**2. Adoption of Meeting Agenda. (Action Item)**

Commissioner Rees moved to adopt the proposed agenda. Commissioner Martinez seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

### **3. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair. (Action Item)**

Cliff Rees nominated himself as chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graeser. After discussion, the Commission voted to unanimously approve the motion.

Commissioner Martinez nominated Commissioner Graeser, Commissioner Hamilton seconded. Motion carries unanimously.

### **4. Adoption of Rules of Order. (Action Item)**

Commissioner Hamilton moved the adoption of Resolution 2009-02 as the Commission's rules of order. Chris Graeser seconded the motion. After discussion, the Commission unanimously approved the motion.

### **5. Presentation by Valerie Aghaei Park, County Human Resources Director.**

Valerie Aghaei Park gave presentation.

Resolution No. 2025-054 gives the Commission a 3-week timeline to prepare a set of recommendations.

Commissioner Liswood asked about who would be the sources for comparable pay—other counties, presumably. In-state only?

Commissioner Rees said that it would be best to look at two groups of elected officials, one group consisting of Commissioners, the other group consisting of the other county elected officials (Sheriff, Assessor, etc.).

Commissioner Martinez said that there are many differences between Sheriff and other elected, so it doesn't necessarily make sense to group the sheriff with the clerk and the treasurer.

Chair Rees said that he would like to see a grid of the five Class A counties showing salaries for each of the elected positions: the current salaries of each position by county.

Commissioner Hamilton would like county budget, population size, and physical size of the county in addition to the above information. She would also like to see the salaries of department heads for Santa Fe County; elected official office structure (number of personnel, and salary of management); budget of the office. Do the elected officials earn leave? Should the comparison include other counties besides class A or outside New Mexico?

Further discussion of how to identify comparable elected officials for purposes of determining the appropriate compensation.

Commissioner Graeser asked for the following information:

- salaries of chief deputies and other highly paid employees in departments; county department heads as well.
- salaries of lowest paid full-time employees in those offices
- what other counties are paying their elected officials, including Class H counties.
- what the current elected officials see as time commitment directly related to the offices.
- salaries of peers in comparable regional counties and cities; what do other counties of similar demographics and situations pay their officials?
- fiscal impact of any recommendation made.

Commissioner Martinez discussed unique issues that might face assessor's offices and introduced the idea of considering performance standards and financial incentives. Commissioner Martinez suggested that there should be some study of what financial incentive is required to improve the operations of the office.

Commissioner Graeser said that the Commissioners should spend the next two years identifying what key performance indicators are for each office.

Commissioner Hamilton noted that there appears to be a discrepancy between the salaries of certain elected officials currently.

Commissioner Graeser asked the County Attorney to study NMSA 1978, Section 4-39-4 and other statutory provisions, and opine on whether the Commission can recommend a performance component to the salary. Graeser notes that there's an NMAG opinion on this.

#### **6. Adoption of Work Plan and Meeting Schedule for Remainder of 2025. (Action Item)**

Discussion of work plan.

Sara Smith mentions that the final BCC meeting will be on December 15, 2025.

Next meeting will be on Friday, November 14, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Third meeting will be on Friday, November 21, 2025, at 1 p.m.

If necessary, the Commission will meet again on Monday, November 26, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

#### **7. Consideration of Appointing Members to Open Positions. (Potential Action Item)**

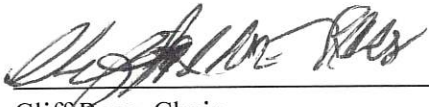
The Commission decided not to pursue appointment of members to open positions.

#### **8. Adjournment. (Action Item).**

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Hamilton. Commissioner Graeser seconded. Motion carries unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.**

**Approved by:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Rees", is written over a horizontal line.

Cliff Rees, Chair

Respectfully submitted by:

Sara Smith, CMO Operations Manager