

MINUTES OF THE
SANTA FE COUNTY
ETHICS BOARD

November 12, 2025

Santa Fe, New Mexico

1. **Call to Order:** This special meeting of the Santa Fe County Ethics Board was convened by Gabriel Bustos, Staff Liaison, at approximately 4:00 p.m. on the above-cited date at the County Administration Complex, Grant Conference Room, 100 Catron Street, Santa Fe.

2. **Roll Call:** Following introductions, roll call indicated a quorum with the presence of the following members:

Members Present:

Tom Quaid [virtually]
Jesse Guillen
Daniel Coyne
Elinor Hoover
Marcia Mikulak

Member(s) Absent:

None

County Staff Present:

Gabe Bustos, Staff Liaison
Peter Valencia, Assistant County Attorney

Others Present:

Chris Mechels

3. **Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Guillen moved to approve the agenda as published, and Mr. Quaid seconded. The motion carried without opposition [5-0].

4. **Approval of the Minutes: July 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Mechels said the minutes contained substantive errors. Mr. Valencia noted that accepting corrections from the public was at the chair's prerogative. Recognizing that election of officers was item #5 on the agenda, the agenda was revised with Board consensus.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Valencia said that, according to County ordinance, the Board shall elect its own chair and vice chair.

Mr. Quaid and Mr. Guillen were identified as the longest-serving Board members.

Chair: Mr. Guillen nominated Tom Quaid to serve as chair, and Ms. Mikulak seconded. Mr. Quaid said that he was willing to serve. There were no other nominations and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Vice Chair: Ms. Mikulak nominated Jesse Guillen. Mr. Quaid seconded. Mr. Guillen confirmed that he was willing to serve as vice chair. There were no other nominations, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

4. Approval of the Minutes: July 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes (cont.)

Chair Quaid asked whether there were any changes or corrections to the July minutes from the Board. None were offered.

Noting that he was not in attendance at the July meeting, and that there were three new members, Mr. Guillen asked if they were permitted to vote. Mr. Valencia said that there is an audio recording if there are concerns.

Mr. Mechels said that he had corrections. Chair Quaid asked whether there were any corrections or changes from the Board.

Ms. Mikulak moved to approve the July 25, 2025 minutes as provided. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Guillen. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

6. Other Business

Chair Quaid said that he and Mr. Bustos discussed the Board reviewing the annual ethics training conducted by County HR, and perhaps attending some HR trainings. He noted that the Board had done so in the past, and it was valuable education for the Board.

Mr. Bustos said that an HR representative can attend a Board meeting and provide details of the employees ethics training. The Board can offer revisions or changes.

Ms. Mikulak said that she reviewed the previous minutes, and requested additional information on the following: how the Board interacts with the County Attorney's Office; how does the Board assist/function in regards to a complaint with HR; and, is there a new complaint form which the Board can review.

Mr. Bustos said that the previous Board did work on a revised complaint form. However,

because of term expirations, the form was not presented to the BCC. He suggested adding review of the complaint form to the next agenda, as well as review of the rules of order.

Ms. Mikulak's request for information was noted for the next meeting agenda, and Mr. Valencia offered that requesting future agenda items does not require a motion.

The Chair suggested meeting monthly to get the Board up to speed. Following discussion, December 16th at 4 p.m. was tentatively chosen for the next meeting date.

Ms. Mikulak said that she had reviewed previous meeting minutes, and recalled something about abolishing this Board. Mr. Bustos responded that the previous Board was interested in expanding its reach regarding ethics; however, County HR handles all employee complaints, and the Board's scope was seen as limited. Mr. Guillen said that the Board's task is to fulfill an adjudicatory process when a complaint is received, and there have been no complaints in a long while.

Mr. Bustos added that nothing was presented to the BCC to either narrow or expand the Board's scope.

Regarding the mention of a joint meeting with the State's Ethic Commission in the previous minutes, Mr. Bustos said that the terms of the then members expired before that Commission met in December. The Chair noted that there are statewide ethics trainings that this Board could attend.

7. Public Comments

Chair Quaid offered the public five minutes to present comments.

Chris Mechels welcomed the new members. He suggested that the first thing new members do is review the minutes that are online. He said that the previous Board was a disaster, and the one before that was active and ran into a lot of problems. The reasons they ran into problems, according to Mr. Mechels was that they were "trying to actually do their job." The last two years nothing happened

Continuing, Mr. Mechels said that this Board needs to be briefed on the County Rules of Order. Further, today's agenda does not comply with the Rules of Order because the public comment came at the end of the meeting rather than upfront.

Chair Quaid identified this agenda item solely as public comment and not as an exchanged discussion.

Mr. Mechels said that the Board could have public discussion if the Chair allowed it. He theorized that not allowing public discussion is why no public shows. Further, he was not permitted to correct the minutes, so known-flawed minutes were passed. "This is the problem we've had with this Board, they basically abuse the public." He told the Board that they have an important job and he suggested that if they don't do it, then this Board should be abolished: "It's

just troublesome, and they never have done their job. Your biggest job is that the BCC, this Board of County Commissioners, many times, including this last ordinance they just passed on Monday, they violated the Open Meetings Act. They violated their own resolutions... They violate all the laws and their own resolutions... The only possible way to get after them without suing them is for this Ethics Board to actually concern themselves with all the numerous ongoing violations of the BCC themselves. If you would do that you would perform a real service.”

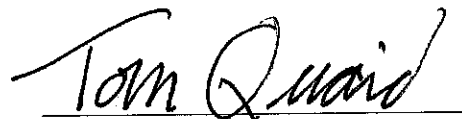
The Chair thanked Mr. Mechels for his comments.

There were no other public comments.

8. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Coyne and second by Mr. Guillen, and upon unanimous voice vote, the meeting was declared adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Quaid". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Tom Quaid, Chair
Ethics Board

Respectfully submitted by:
Karen Farrell, Wordswork