SANTA FE COUNTY
WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026
240 GRANT AVENUE, PLAZA CONFERENCE ROOM, 4:00 PM
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

1. OPENING BUSINESS

A. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Water Policy Advisory Committee was called to order by Peter Gowen, Chair, at 4:08 PM, on Thursday, March 12, 2026, in the Plaza Conference Room, 240 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, NM.

B. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT
Peter Gowen, Chair
Shann Stringer
Stephen Schmelling, Vice Chair
Amy Jordan
James Mike Henry
John Kadlecek
Laird Graeser
Emily Wolf
Darrin Muenzberg
Commissioner Camilla Bustamante, ex-officio member

MEMBERS ABSENT
Jeff Montoya

OTHERS PRESENT
Andrew Harnden, Sante Fe County, Senior Water Planner and Committee Liaison
Alexandra Ladd, Director, Growth Management
Leandro Cordova, Deputy County Manager
Brandt Giest, Santa Fe County Public Works Water Resources Manager and Committee Liaison
Travis Soderquist, Santa Fe County Utilities Director, and Committee Liaison
Jacqueline Beam, Santa Fe County Sustainability Department Manager, and Committee Liaison
Peter Valencia, County Attorney's Office

Michael Carr, Santa Fe County Public Works Department, and Committee Liaison
Mori Hensley, Santa Fe Watershed Association Executive Director
Carl Dickens, community member
Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Graeser, seconded by Mr. Schmelling, to approve the agenda as presented.

VOTE The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Schmelling, yes; Ms. Jordan, yes; Mr. Stringer, yes; Mr. Kadlecek, yes; Mr. Graeser, yes; Ms. Wolfe, yes; Mr. Muenzberg, yes; Chair Gowen, yes.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mori Hensley. Ms. Hensley said the Santa Fe Watershed Association has concerns about the river trail project construction regarding the rock size of the structures on the site. They do not match up with other sections of the trail. We wanted to highlight our concerns to staff, the Committee and the County Commission.

Mr. Henry arrived at the meeting.

Chris Mechels. Mr. Mechels said the three minute time limit for public speaking is arbitrary or is made up by the City Manager. This meeting is in violation of the Open Meetings Act. The agenda is supposed to be posted outside the building. The panel where it is posted is not working. You are required to publish the agenda on the County website. It does not work. That does not comply with the rules of order. The Board of County Commissioners does not follow the rules of order in allowing the public to speak on agenda items.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2026 WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Graeser, seconded by Mr. Kadlecek, to approve the minutes of February 12, 2026.

VOTE The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Schmelling, yes; Ms. Jordan, yes; Mr. Stringer, yes; Mr. Kadlecek, yes; Mr.

Graeser, yes; Ms. Wolfe, yes; Mr. Muenzberg, yes; Mr. Henry, yes; Chair Gowen, yes.

B. REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 12, 2026 WATER POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Graeser, seconded by Mr. Schmelling, to approve the minutes of March 12, 2026.

VOTE The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Schmelling, yes; Ms. Jordan, yes; Mr. Stringer, yes; Mr. Kadlecek, yes; Mr. Graeser, yes; Ms. Wolfe, yes; Mr. Muenzberg, yes; Mr. Henry, yes; Chair Gowen, yes.

C. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made.

4. MATTERS FROM STAFF

A. UTILITIES

Mr. Geist said we continue to work on data issues with the City and are working on plans, water rights applications, documentation and asset management.

B. SUSTAINABILITY

Ms. Beam said the GSI Guide Book was released and is on line. We continue to work on the Next Generation Water Summit. We are working with the City and the State on two workshops that will be open to the community the day after the Summit. They will be about rain capture, native plants and soil health in the community. There will also be a free resources fair on Saturday the 13th.

There was discussion regarding having panelists from New Mexico.

C. PLANNING

Mr. Harnden reported that he did receive comments on the La Cienega Integrated Water Plan and shared them with Mr. Schmelling. We will be finalizing this soon.

D. PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Carr reported on the domestic well metering program, issues and discussions. We are going to have a public outreach program. Anyone who applies for a permit will be put into a database. The next phase will be to get people to voluntarily comply. The MS4 permit that has been proposed is not a good permit. There are a lot of holes in it. We tried our best to share that information and are waiting to see what that final permit looks like.

There was discussion around La Cienega and the PFAS issues in the County.

Mr. Soderquist stated that he attended the meeting in La Cienega yesterday for the PFAS Study. They are in the beginning stages of community meetings and looking at the issues regarding clean drinking water for the community.

5. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF WPAC DRAFT 1ST QUARTERLY REPORT FOR BCC MAY 26, 2026 AS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM/REPORT

Chair Gowen said this was first posted in the March meeting, then the April meeting and now, at this meeting.

Chair Gowen gave the background of the process and said there is one typo in the first paragraph of the summary. The date of April 9 will be changed to May 14.

MOTION A motion was made by Mr. Graeser, seconded by Mr. Kadlecek, to approve the WPAC draft 1st Quarterly Report as amended.

VOTE The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows:

Mr. Schmelling, yes; Ms. Jordan, yes; Mr. Stringer, yes; Mr. Kadlecek, yes; Mr. Graeser, yes; Ms. Wolfe, yes; Mr. Muenzberg, yes; Mr. Henry, yes; Chair Gowen, yes.

A copy of the Report is attached to the minutes.

Chris Mechels. Mr. Mechels made continued comments about the meeting procedures and left the meeting.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. REVIEW BCC COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK ON PRESENTATION OF WPAC FEB 12 2026 LETTER OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PURSUIT OF A UNIFIED WATER AUTHORITY

Commissioner Bustamante stated that by tomorrow a contract will be finalized for the County contracted attorneys to work on to produce a draft MOU with the City. She said she would like this to be an item on the agenda for future meetings.

Commissioner Bustamante said we will follow the 2023 Legislation (SB-0001 2023) sponsored by Senators Stephanics and Wirth for a stand alone water authority. She encouraged the Committee members to familiarize themselves with the Legislation. We do have partnership and support from the Mayor and two Councilors.

B. REVIEW DRAFT FRAMEWORK AND PROTOCOLS DOCUMENT FOR WPAC STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION

Chair Gowen and Mr. Harnden gave the background regarding the development of this document and reviewed the document, including working groups, agenda preparation, timing, communications, authorization of the working groups to continue to communicate with outside government agencies after staff has opened the door to that for them, and confirmation of attendance of Committee members.

There was discussion around quorums and member notification as to attendance, deadlines for working group reporting and the Chair's intent to have working group reports uploaded with the agendas.

There was consensus that language should be struck around policy bullet 2 under working groups. The language stricken reads as follows," Staff will rely on Working Group members to assist with research, data collection and analysis, field visits, review of best-management practices (BMPs) and suitable technologies, public engagement, etc. that goes beyond staff's regular work duties."

There was consensus that reminders of meetings would continue to go out to Committee members and that Committee members will continue to be required to respond as to their attendance for the meeting.

C. DRINKING AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP'S REVIEW OF CONSULTANT DRAFT REPORTS ON : A) LCLC PER/WATER PLANNING STUDY AND RAPID WATERSHED ASSESSMENT, B) COUNTY PFAS STUDY, C) AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY AT THE QUILL PLANT, AND D) SANTA FE COUNTY WATER UTILITY MASTER PLAN.

This was discussed previously.

D. WORKING GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

The membership of each Working Group was discussed.

Chair Gowen asked for a volunteer to serve as the Stormwater lead.

Ms. Wolfe volunteered to fill that position.

The Committee members volunteered to serve on the following Working Groups. The maximum number of Committee members who can serve on a Working Group without forming a quorum is 5. There are six members who wished to volunteer for the Outreach Working Group.

Chair Gowen: DWWMWG and Outreach
Mr. Stringer: Stormwater and Outreach
Mr. Graeser: Stormwater and Outreach
Mr. Henry: Outreach
Ms. Wolfe: Stormwater and Outreach
Ms. Jordan: DWWMWG
Mr. Schmelling: DWWMWG
Mr. Kadlecek: Outreach
Mr. Muenzberg: DWWMWG

Working Group Leaders are: Chair Gowen, DWWMWG; Mr. Kadlecek, Outreach; Ms. Wolfe, Stormwater with community member Mr. Dickens to support.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

There was no report.

B. DRINKING AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

Chair Gowen said we have a few more days to respond to the report on La Cienega and La Cienigita. Public Works indicated there has been no action on other reports.

C. OUTREACH WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

It was reported that the GSI book has been released and advertised and they are working on a study with BLM.

Mr. Harnden said stakeholder agencies have suggested there should be a goal to establish a shared public vision for restoration of the entire length of the lower Santa Fe River. We are just talking about ideas at this time.

Mr. Dickens discussed his application for a grant and the City/County efforts with the BLM. He also commented that there was good conversation at the Water Leadership Institute meeting.

Mr. Harnden said he talked with some of the acequia members about their ideas around changes in the Ordinance. They will get back to him.

8. MATTERS FROM THE COMMITTEE

There was discussion around the concerns about the rock size on the river trail project.

Chair Gowen asked the Stormwater Working Group to look at those issues. He would be happy to participate as well. It could be an agenda item for the next meeting to get details.

Mr. Cordova said our project management group, in Public Works, is aware of the issues. They have organized a site visit. We can get that information to WPAC. It is on his radar. The rocks are too small and it is on the contractor to fix that. If any of you wish to join us on the site visit, you are welcome.

Information on the snow pack was shared, as swell as an update on the San Juan Diversion Colorado Compact and the PFAS settlement.

Ms. Wolfe spoke about water RFP releases and grants.

Mr. Kadlecek asked for clarification on the rule for multiple absences and additional members.

Chair Gowen said we will put that on the next agenda.

Mr. Stringer stated that New Mexico is not part of the PFAS settlement that was previously mentioned.

There was discussion regarding changing the date of the next meeting to coincide with the first day of the Water Summit. It was decided that the WPAC meeting for June 11th would be cancelled to allow participation in the Water Summit.

It was decided that there will be a brief social event for WPAC during the reception of the Water Summit. There will be a "Notice of Quorum" posted for the social event.

9. NEXT REGULAR MEETING: JULY 9, 2026

10. CONCLUDING BUSINESS

A. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 pm.

Peter Gowen, Chair

Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/29/2026