Minutes of the

Santa Fe County

Independent Salary Commission

Special Meeting

June 3, 2026

Santa Fe, New Mexico

This meeting of the Santa Fe County Independent Salary Commission was called to order at approximately 1:33 p.m. MST by Chair Clifford M. Rees on the above-cited date at the Santa Fe County Administration Building, Old Santa Fe Trail conference room, 240 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, NM.

This meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with attendees participating in person and virtually.

A quorum was achieved with the following members present:

Members Present:
Anna Hamilton
Chris Graeser (virtually)
Cliff Rees
Laura Liswood

Staff Present:
Valerie Aghaei Park
Walker Boyd
Sara Smith
Sophiana Read

Members Excused:
Gus Martinez

C. Approval of Agenda.

The proposed agenda was adopted following a motion by Commissioner Hamilton, seconded by Commissioner Liswood. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Approval of March 4, 2026, Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hamilton moved to approve the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Liswood seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Miscellaneous Action Items

A. Discussion and Potential Adoption of a 2026 Independent Salary Commission Work Plan.

The Commission reviewed the draft 2026 Work Plan and discussed the scope of its authority under Resolution No. 2025-054. Members considered whether proposed topics related to elected official qualifications, accountability, evaluations, and compensation were within the Commission's charge to recommend salaries for elected officials. The Commission discussed the distinction between salary-related recommendations and matters that may fall within the authority of the Legislature, Board of County Commissioners, or County administration.

The Commission discussed the absence of publicly available descriptions outlining the roles and responsibilities of elected County offices and the value of such information for both voters and prospective candidates. Members suggested that general descriptions of the duties and responsibilities associated with each elected office could improve public understanding of the positions and assist future officeholders. Staff indicated that development of such materials would be feasible and could be considered for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for future action.

The Commission also discussed statutory processes related to the accountability and removal of elected officials under New Mexico law. Chair Rees requested additional information regarding the applicable legal framework, and County Attorney Boyd provided a general overview of the statutory provisions governing recall and judicial removal proceedings.

The Commission expressed interest in further exploring topics identified during the 2025 salary recommendation process. Members agreed that several topics required additional review and discussion before inclusion in the formal work plan.

Commissioner Hamilton moved to adopt as the Commission's 2026 Work Plan: (1) consideration of whether the Commission Chair should receive additional compensation while serving as Chair; and (2) consideration of mechanisms for future salary increases, including cost-of-living adjustments, consistent with New Mexico law. The remaining draft work plan items were retained for future discussion and potential consideration as recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Motion passed by a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hamilton: Yea
Commissioner Graeser: Yea
Commissioner Liswood: Yea
Chair Rees: Yea
Commissioner Martinez: Excused

B. Discussion and Potential Appointment of Two Additional Members Pursuant to County Resolution No. 2025-054. (Potential Action Item)

The Commission received an update regarding recruitment efforts for the two vacant positions authorized under Resolution No. 2025-054. Staff reported that no applications or expressions of interest were received following republication of the recruitment notice.

The Commission discussed the resolution's provisions regarding membership and vacancy appointments. County Attorney Boyd clarified that the Commission has the authority, but not the obligation, to fill the two vacant positions and that the current five-member Commission may continue to operate with a quorum. Members agreed that a good-faith effort had been made to recruit additional members and discussed maintaining an ongoing recruitment notice on the County website. The Commission also discussed providing the Board of County Commissioners with a future update regarding Commission activities and membership status. No action was taken.

C. Schedule the Next Independent Salary Commission Special Meeting. (Action Item)

Chair Rees moved to schedule the next special meeting of the Independent Salary Commission for Wednesday, September 2, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Graeser seconded.

Motion passed 4-0.

3. Matters from the Public *(Subject to Five (5) Minutes or Other Time Limit Imposed by the Chair)*

Chris Mechels addressed the Commission during Matters from the Public. No action was taken.

4. Closing Business

A. Adjournment. (Action Item)

Commissioner Hamilton moved to adjourn. Chair Rees seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:57 p.m.

Approved by:

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Clifford M. Rees, Chair
Santa Fe County Independent Salary Commission

Date:____________________

Respectfully submitted by:
Sara Smith, CMO Executive Manager