

MINUTES OF THE INITIAL MEETING OF THE YET-TO-BE-NAMED COUNCIL OR ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS IN VALENCIA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO, HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2015 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE LOS LUNAS TRANSPORTATION CENTER, 101 COURTHOUSE ROAD SE, LOS LUNAS, NEW MEXICO, 87031.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Belen: Jerah Cordova, Mayor; Bosque Farms: Bill Kennedy, Councilor; Los Lunas: Charles Griego, Mayor, Amanda Perea, Councilor, Gino Romero, Councilor; Peralta: none; Rio Communities: Mark Gwinn, Mayor, Mary Lee Serna, Mayor Pro Tem, Frank Stasi, Councilor, Robert Chávez, Councilor; Valencia County: David Hyder, Commissioner, Alicia Aguilar, Commissioner, Helen Cole, Commissioner.

STAFF PRESENT:

Belen: Jay Ruybalid, City Manager; Bosque Farms: none; Los Lunas: Greg Martin, Village Administrator; Peralta: none; Rio Communities: Bob Skerry, City Manager; Valencia County: Danny Monette, County Manager

GUESTS PRESENT: Roll of guests was not taken.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Griego called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He said the purpose of the meeting was to get to know each other better, find commonalities, and work on disagreements through open dialogue.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Councilor Frank Stasi led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Introductions

Elected officials and staff present introduced themselves. New Mexico State Representative Alonzo Baldonado, who was in the audience, was recognized. New Mexico State Representative Kelly Fajardo, who joined the meeting later, was also recognized.

4. New Business

- a. Discuss interest in and process of creating some type of regional (Valencia County) elected officials organization/association
 - i. What are the benefits?
 - ii. What are the potential drawbacks/challenges?
 - iii. What would be the membership, organizational structure, name, by-laws, voting rights, etc.?
 - iv. What types of projects/issues might be discussed?

Mayor Griego initiated the discussion by going around the table and asking each person to express their opinion about the value of having a regional association. In general, the group expressed widespread support for the idea of forming regional association and continuing to meet on a regular basis. Some of the benefits expressed include better communication, increased cooperation and collaboration, working together to solve regional problems such as drugs, crime, economic development, transportation, animal control, law enforcement, trash disposal, loss of state funding such as hold harmless tax revenue, education, capital outlay process, and flood plain designation. Rio Communities Manager Bob Skerry gave the examples of the Manzano Expressway and the new Los Lunas I-25 Interchange and East-West Corridor as projects that we can work on together and all benefit from. Mayor Griego also gave the example of the proposed County Business Incubator as something positive we can all work together on and benefit from, and which will have a better chance of succeeding, especially on getting funding.

Some of the potential drawbacks expressed include letting politics get in the way of problem-solving, showing favoritism of one community over another, and the tendency and possibility of losing momentum and group participation over time.

With regard organizational structure, Mayor Griego asked Los Lunas Village Administrator Greg Martin to explain his background and experience with a similar organization in Northeast Arizona, the Apache and Navajo Counties Mayors and Councilmembers Association. Mr. Martin handed out a sample of their Articles of Association and offered to provide a sample of their Agenda and Minutes as well. After a quick review of the document and some discussion, the group consensus was that the group should be as inclusive and broad-based as possible, that it should serve as an “advisory group” to the respective governing bodies, and not as a policy-making or voting group. It was suggested that managers and appropriate staff be involved going forward as a resource for information, input and administrative assistance. Some expressed a need and desire to research and learn more about what similar organizations, if any, exist in New Mexico.

5. Next Steps

- a. Do we want to continue meeting?
- b. Is there interest in creating this type of organization/association?
- c. If yes, what is the next step in the process?
 - i. Membership
 - ii. Organizational Structure
 - iii. Name
 - iv. By-laws
 - v. Voting Rights
- d. If yes, when and where do we want to meet?

Mayor Griego asked the group where we want to go from here? There was general consensus for moving forward with creating of some type of regional elected officials organization or association, the simpler and less formal the better. The group felt regular quarterly meetings would be adequate, but that the group should meet again in about a month to discuss and decide on specifics like membership, organizational structure, name, by-laws, voting rights, and any other considerations. The managers were tasked with getting together in the meantime and coming up with recommendations for the group to consider at the next meeting. Some suggestions that were made include rotating the meeting place and the chair, and speaking louder so that everyone can hear. It was also suggested that information should flow through each entity's respective manager.

Mayor Griego concluded the meeting by thanking everyone once again for coming and participating in the meeting and being supportive of this new concept to improve communication, cooperation and inter-governmental relationships. He finished by asking Belen Mayor Jerah Cordova and Manager Jay Ruybalid to facilitate the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.