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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
November 14, 2025**

**Supervisors Present:** Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman  
David Cain  
Tom Carroll  
Gerald Chavez  
Roy Gibson

**Absentees:** Larry Gomez, Aubrey Dunn

**Others Present:** Dierdre Tarr, District Manager  
Katie Mechenbier, NMDA  
William Penner, Cedarvale Wind Project, Environmental Consultant  
Leon Porter, Cedarvale Wind Project, Real Property Team  
Victoria Sedillo, Claunch-Pinto  
Katheryn Taylor, volunteer

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District (CPSWCD) was called to order by Chairman Felipe Lovato, both in person and via Zoom at 8:05 a.m.

**Welcome Attendees:**

The chairman welcomed those present and thanked them for joining the meeting. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

**APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The board reviewed the agenda. **ACTION TAKEN:** Roy Gibson moved to approve the agenda. Tom Carroll seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**APPROVAL/ DISAPPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

The board reviewed the minutes of September 12, 2025. **ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved approval of the minutes of the September 12, 2025 meeting. Tom Carroll seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT and APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL OF VOUCHERS:**

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of September, 2025.

**ACTION TAKEN:** David Cain moved to approve the treasurer's report for September. Roy Gibson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The board reviewed the treasurer's report for the month of October, 2025.

**ACTION TAKEN:** Tom Carroll moved to approve the treasurer's report for October. Roy Gibson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

No report.

**PRESENTATION ON AGUA FRIA – CEDARVALE WIND PROJECT:**

William Penner and Leon Porter made a power point presentation to the board. They introduced themselves and explained their involvement with the Cedarvale Wind Project. Mr. Porter is the head of the real property team. He explained that their company NMR is headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He works under the Southwestern Power Group whose office is in Phoenix, AZ. He works out of Corona, NM.

He explained the amount of power to be carried in the line and where it will be located. The number and size of the wind generators hasn't been determined.

Mr. Penner continued with the presentation. He said that they have been working on the project for the past three years. He explained the planning process including the local entities that they were involved with and the environmental issues like the possible introduction or spread of invasive plant species and the possible threats to two endangered species, the Tri-colored Bat and the Monarch Butterfly plus birds that could be hurt by the wind towers. He described the steps that were taken to meet requirements by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Next, he talked about split estates and mineral deposits and what had to be done regarding them. Several thousand acres were surveyed for cultural resources. They are applying to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) for location control approval for the right away grant. As a part of the process, the company evaluated the conformance with both the Torrance County and Claunch-Pinto land use plans. Mr. Penner said that a lot of their goals and objectives are congruent with those in Claunch-Pinto's plan. He mentioned the district manager's emphasis on emergency preparedness such as fire prevention issues.

The company is working with the State Land Office for a renewable energy lease. He explained the process. The hope is to finish most of the permitting process by mid-2026. They hope to start construction in December 2026.

Mr. Cain asked where the Rio Sol line will go. Mr. Porter explained where that the line will go starting in Corona, NM and where it ties into lines in Arizona. He said that the line will have the same structures as the SunZia line. Mr. Gibson asked how much water will be needed for the construction project. Mr. Penner said that hasn't been determined yet. Mr. Porter said that they don't know yet where they are going to buy the water. Mr. Gibson also asked how much area will be needed to be reseeded, but Mr. Penner said that that hasn't been determined either but he talked about how estimations are being made and what plants may be seeded. The government shutdown and upcoming holidays are affecting needed approvals. Mr. Chavez how many private landowners and ranchers in the sixty thousand acres does the project affect? Mr. Porter said that perhaps 18 to 20 land owners are involved but not a lot of land will be taken out of production. Mr. Lovato raised the issue of damage to the roads and highways on which the turbines will be transported. He suggested that the wind companies should be involved in their repair. Mr. Porter said that road use agreements are entered into with the county and state. He suggested contacting Torrance County to ask the county to make the wind companies accountable in the agreements for damage to roads. The district manger recounted the damage that has been done to highways 41 and 42 and resulting accidents. She also spoke about the amount of water used from the Estancia Basin, a closed basin and the harmful effects on the water of other users of that water. She also asked for quarterly reports to the board. She suggested that the company meet with the Torrance County fire mitigation committee and that when the contractor has been chosen, he should meet with the committee. She explained what problems could arise with the Cedarvale project (fires or accidents) because of its remote location.

Mr. Penner said that he will provide a copy of their environmental report.

**REPORTS:****NMDA Report:**

The written report is in the board members' packets. Ms. Mechenbier pointed out the deadlines: November to December – Adopt Open Meetings Act Resolution and December first -- Agreed Upon Procedure Report or Certification forms.  
The Noxious Weed Management Grant has closed.

**FO Report:**  
No report.

**District Manager's Report:**  
No report.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

The district manager received a request from the owner of the local meat processing plant for a letter of support for a grant proposal. She described his plans for dealing with the by products from the plant, which can then be used for composting. She will write the letter today.

**UPDATE ON GRANTS:**

**Watershed Health Grant – Water Trust Board:**

The district manager will finish the requests for reimbursement for 2025 for the RCPP for both the Estancia Basin and the Rio Grande. She will close out both grants by the end of December. There are enough projects for the Estancia Basin grant for next year. She described a problem that she has faced in completing projects for the Pueblo of Acoma funded by the Rio Grande grant. She is working with the tribe to resolve the problem.

The district manager has applied for 2026 funding from the Water Trust Board. The proposal is on the legislative list to be considered for funding.

**New Mexico State Forestry Grant:**

A project is under way in the Deer Canyon Preserve in Goat Canyon, a project in the Manzano Retreat, projects and in the East Torrance area.

**NFL Grants -- HWY 337 Grant, the HWY 55 Grant and the 2023 NFL Grant:**

The district manager has received a one-year extension on the Hwy 337 and Hwy 55 grants. The DOT has enough funding for traffic control on the southern part of the Hwy 337 project. The project will begin on December first. There is no funding yet for traffic control on the project north of Chilili. She has requested a meeting with Senator Stefanics and other senators who represent areas that would be affected by the project to assure needed funding.

Mr. Gibson said that he has just attended the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Finance and offered to share the information that he received with the district manager.

The work plan for the 2023 grant is in the State Forestry's legal department.

**Collaborative Forest Restoration Program – WTB (12/29/2025):**

The project is complete. The district manager is working with Codi Stropki on the final report. There will also be a final monitoring report to the board.

The district manager described the awards garnered by Aurelia Chavez for the monitoring that she has been doing on the Bartolo project. She received a silver award at the national level. Such an award is almost unheard of for someone from a small town in the west.

**CFRP – Watershed Restoration and Fuel Reduction in Bartolo Canyon of the Manzano Mountains:**

The district manager has received approximately \$190,000 in invoices from SWCA which she will submit to NRCS for payment.

SWCA personnel is working on a cultural survey report for the state archaeologist concerning the 2023 funding.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program Grant (RCPP):**

The district manager said that the renewal for the 2015 grant is pending clarification on what will happen with one landowner, so the cultural resource survey hasn't been done on this property. All the rest of the surveys have been completed.

Regarding the 2023 RCPP funding, it is the 2017 RCPP Renewal. One project is ready for the cultural resource survey. The district manager received a letter from the state conservationist saying that she could apply for another renewal, so she has submitted that proposal.

**FEMA Project:**

Sixty-eight acres have been completed on the Aceves project. The contractor has to finish his project in Chilili before he works on the Aceves project.

The district manager has received an extension on the funding until 9/30/2026.

**Healthy Soils Grant:**

The district manager and Mr. Neeley, the district cooperater on the grant will submit a quarterly report that is due before the end of November. Mr. Lovato suggested that Mr. Neeley should have waited until winter to get rid of the cholla on his property because now the cholla will regenerate. The district manager said that she and John Ferguson had given him the same advice.

She explained a spread sheet showing the details of the NMDA capacity building grant including Victoria Sedillo's salary, the wages for a bookkeeper, a mechanic and a sawyer. She listed and supported other expenses that are in the budget. The total amount that covers two years and two months is \$159,997.28. Mr. Lovato asked for a summary of the basis for the funding from the NMDA. The funds (\$160,000) were part of a nine-million-dollar allocation to the Department of Agriculture. Some of the money will increase money for the point system for soil and water conservation districts. All forty-seven soil and water districts were given the opportunity to apply for the funds. Ms. Mechenbier said that not all districts will apply for the money, so some of it will be left over that Claunch-Pinto could apply for on a first come first served basis.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Report on Meeting with Mountainair Fire Department Regarding its Substation:**

Mr. Lovato asked for a report at a future board meeting on progress on establishing the substation.

**Capital Outlay:**

The district manager reported that she received the reimbursement for the stump grinder. She also said that she is almost ready to begin looking for an additional vehicle.

**SunZia Transmission Line:**

The district manager has been told that the power line should be on line by next September.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Resolution No. 05 – 2026 – Open Meetings Resolution:**

**ACTION TAKEN:**

Gerald Chavez moved to approve Resolution 05 - 2026. Tom Carroll seconded the motion. The motion carried. Motion carried by voice vote: Felipe Lovato, aye; David Cain, aye; Tom Carroll, aye; Gerald Chavez, aye; Roy Gibson, aye.

**REPORTS:**

**South Central Mountain RC&D:**

No report.

**EBWPC:**

The EBWPC committee will meet in December.

**ASSOCIATE SUPERVISOR INPUT:**

**OTHER:**

Tentative meeting dates for future board meetings are listed at the bottom of the agenda.

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:**

Regular meeting: Friday, 8:00 a.m. on December 5, 2025 at the Natural Resource Conservation Center, located at 1206 South Highway 5, Mountainair, NM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Lovato reported a conversation with the office of the DOT in which he complained about the condition of and needed maintenance of driveways entering Hwy 60.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Gerald Chavez moved the Board of Claunch-Pinto SWCD meeting be closed. The authority for closure of the meeting is NMSA Section 10-15-1(H)(2) for limited personnel matters pertaining to the Executive Director position. Tom Carroll seconded the motion. The Chairman announced the motion was made and seconded and asked for a roll call vote of the Board. Roll Call Vote: David Cain – AYE; Gerald Chavez – AYE; Tom Carroll – AYE; Roy Gibson – AYE; Felipe Lovato – AYE. Motion carried. The Board of Claunch-Pinto soil and water conservation district was now in closed session. The time is now: 9:30 a.m.

The chairman announced the Board of the Claunch-Pinto soil and Water Conservation district was now in open session. The time was: 10:00 a.m. The chairman asked for a statement regarding the closed meeting.

Gerald Chavez stated the Board of Claunch-Pinto SWCD only discussed in closed session those matters specified in the motion to close.

The Chairman asked Gerald Chavez to work with the District Manager and Victoria Sedillo to update the employee policy manuel.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the board, the regular meeting of the Claunch-Pinto Board, moved to adjourn. Tom Carroll moved to adjourn. Mr. Cain seconded the motion.

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FELIPE LOVATO, CHAIRMAN

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GERALD CHAVEZ, SECRETARY