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**JOINT MEETING**  
**Town of Taos Council**  
**&**  
**Taos County Board of Commissioners**  
**Taos Council Chambers**  
**120 Civic Plaza Drive**  
**Taos, New Mexico**  
**Wednesday, July 23, 2008**  
**9:00 a.m.**

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**MINUTES**

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1. **CALL TO ORDER: The Joint Meeting** of the Taos Town Council and Taos County Commission was called to order by the **Honorable Mayor Bobby Duran and Commissioner Gabriel Romero at 9:10 a.m.**
  2. **Roll Call: Ms. Renee Lucero, Town Clerk and Ms. Elaine Montano, County Clerk called roll and a quorum was present.**

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**Those present were:**

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**Mayor Bobby Duran**  
**Councilmember Darren Cordova**  
**Councilmember Rudy Abeyta**  
**Councilmember Eugene Sanchez**  
**Councilmember Amy J. Quintana**

**Chairman Gabriel Romero**  
**Commissioner Nicklos Jaramillo**  
**Commissioner Joe M. Duran**

**Also present were:**

**Daniel Miera, Town Manager**  
**Abigail Adame, Assistant Town Manager**  
**Renee Lucero, Town Clerk**  
**Julia Valerio, County Manager**  
**Sammy L. Pacheco, County Attorney**  
**Elaine Montano, County Clerk**  
**Valerie Rael, County Transcriber**

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2  
3 **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Romero** led the audience in the  
4 pledge of allegiance.

5  
6 **4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**  
7 **ADD Item 6.H. Regional Water Plan Committee Appreciation, by Commissioner**  
8 **Jaramillo.**

9  
10 **Councilmember Abeyta** made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended.  
11 **Councilmember Cordova** seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

12  
13 **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**  
14 **May 28, 2008 - Joint Meeting**

15  
16 There was a discussion on whether or not minutes should be approved at the Joint  
17 Meetings by both entities.

18  
19 It was decided that minutes will be approved at the next joint meeting and the hosting  
20 entity will be responsible for preparing the minutes.

21  
22 **Councilmember Cordova** made a motion to approve the May 28, 2008 minutes as  
23 presented. **Commissioner Jaramillo** seconded the motion. The motion carried  
24 unanimously.

25  
26 **6. CITIZENS FORUM:**  
27 **A. Rich Sanders, Children's Health Week Coordinator**

28  
29 Mr. Sanders explained Children's Health Week and stated that he has been  
30 working with a lot of advocacy groups and is trying to get the message to the  
31 public as to what services are available to children. They want the children to  
32 know and be assured that if they have any needs they can get assistance. The idea  
33 is to have a registry available to schools or parents in case there is a child with  
34 needs. There are about 50 foster care children in Taos County. At the age of 17  
35 those children can be placed out on the street if their foster parents don't want  
36 them. With grant funds we can help them. The registry will be broken down by  
37 children's health, children's services, children's activities, teens, and education.

38  
39 At this point Mr. Sanders just wants to make the Town and County aware of this  
40 program. In the future he may come back to ask for assistance and will give a  
41 "State of the Children in Taos County" report.

42  
43 **B. Sandra Richardson**

44 Ms. Richardson came forward to speak on recycling and alternative energy. She  
45 asked the Council and Commission what resources and references they are using  
46 regarding alternative resources and recycling issues. She asked Councilmember

1 Cordova what happened with the plastic bag issues and asked Mayor Duran what  
2 happened to the meeting that was suppose to be scheduled to discuss only  
3 recycling.

4  
5 Councilmember Cordova stated that he uses a variety of resources. He is actively  
6 involved in the New Mexico Municipal League as a member of the Board of  
7 Directors. New Mexico Municipal League keeps municipalities statewide  
8 informed. The Town just donated 5 acres of land specifically for recycling.  
9 Initially he supported the plastic bag ban, but now he feels that the community  
10 needs to be behind the Town as well. He explained how municipalities are  
11 promoting the use of municipal water instead of buying bottled water.

12  
13 Councilmember Abeyta asked Ms. Richardson to please provide resources to the  
14 Council. Regarding the plastic bag issue, he feels it needs to be placed back on an  
15 agenda for action.

16  
17 Councilmember Sanchez stated that he gets his information from various sources  
18 such as the internet and magazine articles. His sources are very general.  
19 Regarding the plastic bag issue, he printed out several studies and feels that the  
20 overall picture needs to be looked at. He agrees that the meeting on recycling  
21 does need to be scheduled.

22  
23 Commissioner Romero stated that he reads from various sources. He receives a  
24 lot of information as a member of the Sierra Club.

25  
26 Commissioner Jaramillo stated that he doesn't have specific resources but the  
27 Commission has had numerous people come in and present information on  
28 renewable energy.

29  
30 Commissioner Duran stays abreast through the New Mexico Association of  
31 Counties and also through the internet.

32  
33 Councilmember Quintana keeps informed through the internet, the newspaper and  
34 periodicals. She asked Ms. Richardson to please send her any information she  
35 has.

36  
37 Mayor Duran stated that he is an advocate of trying to get a bio-diesel plant built  
38 at the landfill in order to process bio-fuels from waste. The governor needs to get  
39 involved to accomplish this. He stated that he will bring back the plastic bag  
40 issue at a public hearing.

41  
42 Ms. Richardson stated that the plastic bag issue doesn't resolve the whole  
43 problem, but it is a start.

44  
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46

1 **7. Joint Matter for Discussion and Possible Action:**

2 **A. Joint Memorandum of Agreement regarding Old County Courthouse and Town**  
3 **Visitor’s Center –*Sammy L. Pacheco, Taos County Attorney***

- 4 1. Exhibit A, Proposed Lease Agreement No. TCC-2007/2008-124, from Taos  
5 County to Town of Taos for the Old Courthouse  
6 2. Exhibit B, Proposed Lease Agreement No. TCC-2007/2008-125, from Town  
7 of Taos to Taos County for the Town Visitor’s Center  
8

9 County Attorney Pacheco gave a history of how these items have been brought to  
10 the table before and have been acted on by both the Commission and the Council.  
11 Each time certain details have changed in the agreement. Councilmember  
12 Sanchez asked to have this item placed back on the table because he was absent at  
13 the last joint meeting and feels that the agreement needs to be discussed further.  
14

15 Town Manager Miera stated that he just received these documents and discussed  
16 the agreement with the Town’s legal counsel this morning. He would like to have  
17 each issue addressed individually.  
18

19 Commissioner Jaramillo stated that staff was instructed to go to the Visitors  
20 Center to see if the space was feasible for the County’s use. Staff found out that  
21 they would only be able to use 2 or 3 offices.  
22

23 Town Manager Miera stated that it is his understanding that the Town will allow  
24 the County to use the space but the Town has not heard back from the County  
25 Planning & Zoning Department.  
26

27 There was a lengthy discussion on events and meetings that have taken place  
28 since the last joint meeting between the Town and County staff regarding the  
29 County Planning & Zoning Department using the space at the Visitors Center.  
30

31 Commissioner Duran asked how much space can be used at the Visitors Center.  
32 If it’s only 3 offices they may need to move the Planning & Zoning Department to  
33 the Old Courthouse.  
34

35 Councilmember Abeyta fully supports leasing the Visitors Center in full and in  
36 return the County leases the Old Courthouse to the Town. He believes the Town  
37 can use the Old Courthouse for the Visitors Center, public restrooms, and a police  
38 substation.  
39

40 Councilmember Quintana stated that the discussion was that we need to keep our  
41 Visitors Center up and running even if we move to the Old Courthouse. We still  
42 need to have a Visitors Center at the current location.  
43

44 Councilmember Sanchez stated that the Old Courthouse doesn’t comply with  
45 code. We’ve talked in the past about returning it back to code and making a

1 cultural center. He remembers discussions about the County turning over the Old  
2 Courthouse and the Town turning over the Visitors Center.

3  
4 Councilmember Cordova stated that we've all decided that we were going to  
5 handle these issues one at a time. We also discussed going to the legislature  
6 together to get funding for improvements.

7  
8 Commissioner Romero agreed with Councilmember Cordova.

9  
10 Councilmember Cordova stated that the intent of the Council has not changed.  
11 We do want to move forward with this. We need to come up with a solid plan.

12  
13 Councilmember Abeyta stated that we do need to keep it simple. We need to  
14 evaluate this and make sure that we want to make this swap.

15  
16 Commissioner Jaramillo agreed. He stated that the County and Town should go  
17 back to the drawing board. All items should be tabled and brought back with final  
18 agreements after we've all decided what we want to do.

19  
20 Councilmember Sanchez stated that the way the building is it's not even historic.  
21 We need to turn it into a cultural center and make it a place to be proud of. We  
22 can get the funding. This is a win/win situation for the County and the Town.

23  
24 Town Manager Miera stated that the Town recognizes the emergency that the  
25 County has with their Planning & Zoning Department. He would like to have the  
26 opportunity to evaluate this. He doesn't want to move someone out to solve one  
27 emergency, only to create another one. He wants to know for certain that he can  
28 move the 5 Visitors Center employees without interrupting the services they  
29 provide to our visitors and the community.

30  
31 **Councilmember Cordova made a motion to table the items and bring back**  
32 **only the Old Courthouse Lease. Councilmember Sanchez seconded the**  
33 **motion.**

34  
35 Commissioner Duran concurs and stated that the only stipulation he'd like on the  
36 Courthouse is to do the renovation. We cannot delay this any longer. This should  
37 be an even trade with no strings attached.

38  
39 Councilmember Cordova amended his motion to include an alternative for  
40 consideration based on Commissioner Duran's comment.

41  
42 Commissioner Jaramillo stated that he wants to discuss both issues. We need to  
43 put our employees somewhere. We could just place their Planning & Zoning Staff  
44 at the Old Courthouse.

45

1 Councilmember Cordova stated that they could do that. That would give the  
2 Town some time to get their designs in place.

3  
4 Councilmember Abeyta doesn't agree with Councilmember Cordova. The issues  
5 should be presented together.

6  
7 **The motion was NOT approved by an affirmative vote. Those voting AYE**  
8 **were: Councilmembers Cordova and Sanchez. Voting NAY were:**  
9 **Councilmembers Abeyta and Quintana and Commissioners Romero,**  
10 **Jaramillo, and Duran.**

11  
12 **Commissioner Jaramillo made a motion to allow the staff to analyze both**  
13 **issues and decide on what to bring back as a solution as soon as possible.**  
14 **Councilmember Quintana seconded the motion. The motion carried**  
15 **unanimously.**

- 16  
17 **B.** Update on Emergency Command Center – *Luis Reyes, Kit Carson Electric*  
18 Mr. Reyes stated that they are hoping to go out for bid and break ground by  
19 October 1, 2008. The facility is projected to be 10,000 square feet.

20  
21 Councilmember Sanchez asked who Mr. Reyes has been working with at the  
22 Town to help with this project.

23  
24 Mr. Reyes named all the departments that he's dealt with including Central  
25 Communications, Fire Department, Public Works Department, IT, and the  
26 Planning & Zoning Department. He stated that they have allowed each entity to  
27 design their own space.

28  
29 Commissioner Duran asked how much this will cost and will the Town's Police  
30 Department be housed there.

31  
32 Mr. Reyes stated that Kit Carson Electric has acquired about \$3 million. When  
33 they receive the bids they'll know how much more money will be needed.

34  
35 Town Manager Miera stated that the Town's plan is to decide if they will house  
36 the Police Department over there once they see the plans.

37  
38 Councilmember Cordova asked if this is being done to accommodate all the law  
39 enforcement agencies in the region.

40  
41 Mr. Reyes stated that they would like to see the State Police headquarters in Taos.  
42 Right now they are headquartered in Espanola.

- 43  
44 **C.** Discussion and possible approval a Joint Resolution between the Town of Taos  
45 and the County of Taos in support of removal of nuclear waste at Los Alamos  
46 National Laboratory – *Daniel Miera, Town Manager*

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Town Manager Miera explained the purpose of the resolution.

Judy E. Basham, Butch Maki & Associates, asked the Town and County to send a resolution to the Governor to remove the waste because our communities are being affected by it. The resolution asks that if they are going to dig up the waste that it not be re-buried in Los Alamos.

County Attorney Pacheco asked what Los Alamos National Laboratory's position is. He asked if language should be expanded because he understands that Los Alamos is thinking of moving waste 1 mile away.

Ms. Basham stated that the entities can expand on the resolution if they desire. We have not had discussions with Los Alamos National Laboratory. We just know that they have the money to do it. We want to make sure that they know this is an effort by Northern New Mexico.

Councilmember Sanchez suggested changing the wording "Department of Energy commit to remove as much as possible, the waste buried at the facility" to "Department of Energy commit to remove **all** waste buried at the facility".

**Councilmember Abeyta made a motion to approve the Resolution with the amendment as recommended by Councilmember Sanchez and also change the word "requests" to "request" under the "NOW, THEREFORE" section of the Resolution. Councilmember Cordova seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

*Mayor Duran left at 12:00 p.m. due to a prior commitment.*

**D.** Updates on the following projects –*Francisco "French" Espinoza, Public Works Director:*

1. McCarthy restrooms
2. Upper Ranchitos Road

Commissioner Romero made a motion to table items 1 and 2 until another scheduled meeting. Councilmember Abeyta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion of Este Es Roadway improvements and infrastructure

Mr. Espinoza gave handouts and discussed 4 options for Este Es Road Improvements.

Option 1 is to do curb, gutter, sidewalk, paving and installation of sewer line, manholes, and service connection from NM 68 to Morgan Road. The project length is 1,770 feet.

1  
2 Option 2 is to do paving and installation of sewer infrastructures from NM 68  
3 to Maria Elena Lane. The project length is 2,555 feet.  
4

5 Option 3 is to do installation of water and sewer infrastructure at the  
6 Intersection of Este Es Place & Este Es Road to Maestas Road. The project  
7 length is 2,550 feet.  
8

9 Option 4 is to do paving from NM 68 to Maestas Road. The project length is  
10 6,330 feet.  
11

12 Mr. Espinoza wants to have a community involvement meeting with the  
13 neighborhood.  
14

15 Councilmember Abeyta stated that Option 4 sounds good because it's all  
16 paved, but later you'll have to come back and cut the paving to add the  
17 utilities.  
18

19 Councilmember Sanchez stated that the Weimer area will have to connect to  
20 this sewer line. Why don't we place the water and sewer lines before we pave  
21 the road? Residents are not all that fond of paving because people drive so  
22 fast through there now.  
23

24 Commissioner Romero asked if there are plans for street lights at the end of  
25 Este Es Road.  
26

27 Mr. Espinoza stated that there are plans for street lights in the future when the  
28 echo-park is complete.  
29

30 Mayor Pro Tem Cordova recommended that the first phase be the  
31 infrastructure.  
32

33 Councilmember Abeyta agreed. He stated that we should use the money for  
34 the sewer line then acquire funds for the pavement.  
35

36 Councilmember Sanchez also wants to see the infrastructure go in first. We  
37 have continuous development in that area.  
38

39 Councilmember Abeyta suggested using the money as far as it will take us.  
40

41 Mayor Pro Tem Cordova directed Mr. Espinoza to check with Finance to see  
42 if there are any Capital Projects that are not as pressing as this project so that  
43 we can allocate more funding.  
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45 Mr. Espinoza stated that he will follow-up with Finance and proceed to have a  
46 public meeting with the neighborhood.

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4. Construction of the Solid Waste Convenience Center

Mr. Espinoza stated that the Landfill Board will be approaching the Council to see if they could lease, sell or donate land to the Landfill Board at Canon West for a Solid Waste Convenience Center.

Commissioner Jaramillo asked if the Landfill Board will come up with the funding if needed.

Mr. Espinoza stated that the Board still needs to discuss the details. Their purpose today is just to inform the Council and Commission of their plans.

Councilmembers Abeyta and Sanchez both stated that they fully support this.

Mayor Pro Tem Cordova asked Mr. Espinoza to work out the details on a proposed lease.

Commissioner Romero asked what areas this would serve.

Mr. Espinoza stated that they will serve as many people as possible including the residents who live in the County.

Barb Wiard, Village of Taos Ski Valley Mayor Pro Tem, stated that at some point they will hold public hearings for this.

Uvaldo Olonia, Taos County Solid Waste Director, agrees with this initiative and thinks it will really benefit the residents in Talpa and Ranchos.

E. Discussion regarding Stray Hearts Animal Shelter – *Councilmember Eugene Sanchez*

Councilmember Sanchez stated that we have a really bad stray animal problem in Taos. This problem is serious and needs to be addressed.

David Noll, Executive Director of Stray Hearts Animal Shelter, explained to the Council and Commission that there are huge numbers of stray and unwanted animals in Taos.

In 2006 1,186 animals were impounded. In 2008 that number is projected to be 1,400. The national average is 15 animals per year for a population of 1,000. In Taos that number is 44.5.

The spay and neutering ordinances need to be enforced. Impounded animals that are reclaimed in the County are required to be spayed or neutered. In town there's not that requirement. Mr. Noll explained the difference between the Town's and County's ordinances. He said that the County's ordinance is very good. He would like to see the Town match the County's ordinance and enforce it. He

1 stated that the Town's Animal Control Officer is not issuing citations because  
2 they often get dismissed.

3  
4 Councilmember Abeyta asked if Assistant Town Manager Adame is currently  
5 working on an ordinance.

6  
7 Assistant Town Manager Adame stated that she is working on it and will bring it  
8 to the Town Manager for his review.

9  
10 Councilmember Abeyta directed the Town Manager to talk to the Animal Control  
11 Officer about issuing citations.

12  
13 Penny Herrera, 4 Corners Animal League, went over the initiatives of the 4  
14 Corners Animal League.

15  
16 Mayor Pro Tem Cordova stated that he would like the proposed ordinance to be  
17 presented to the Council in August.

18  
19 Town Manager Miera stated that he will bring a couple of different options for  
20 approval.

21  
22 **F. Homeless Shelter Relocation – *Julia Valerio, Taos County Manager***  
23 Taos County Manager Valerio stated that they are going to need to move the  
24 shelter building before they break ground on the new complex in a few months.

25  
26 Dr. Douglas Scott stated that since opening in November of 2007, they've  
27 provided for 2,000 homeless men. 28 people died in New Mexico last winter.  
28 None died in Taos thanks to the shelter that has been provided.

29  
30 Councilmember Abeyta asked Public Works Director Espinoza if there is any  
31 space at the town yard near the Community Against Violence to house the  
32 homeless shelter.

33  
34 Mr. Espinoza stated that there probably is room there.

35  
36 Town Manager Miera stated that staff will look at that area and other town owned  
37 property. He asked Dr. Scott what the status is of the hotel they were looking into  
38 buying.

39  
40 Dr. Scott stated that so far they have raised \$400,000 in cash and commitments.  
41 The cost of the hotel is \$800,000. The hotel is perfectly suited for their services.  
42 With the economy in its current stated, there are going to be worse problems with  
43 the homeless.

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45 Mayor Pro Tem Cordova told Dr. Scot that they have commitment from the Town  
46 and the County for assistance.

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**G.** Follow-up on Twenty-Five year lease agreement No. TCC 2007/2008-126 by Town of Taos to Taos County for five acres located adjacent to the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Propane Storage Yard on Landfill Road for Solid Waste Services – *Sammy Pacheco, Taos County Attorney*

County Attorney Pacheco stated that this item has already been approved. The next step is to have the Town’s Attorney review and approve the agreement so that he can move forward with obtaining signatures from both entities. We will have to take it to the Board of Finance for approval along with the minutes and a draft of the Quit Claim Deed (not signed, just a draft). He will prepare packets for the Board of Finance’s meeting in September or October.

Town Manager Miera stated that he wants the Town Attorney to review this and wants to make sure the land is used for the stated purpose only.

**H.** Regional Water Plan Committee Appreciation

Commissioner Jaramillo stated that he would like to give credit to the people who worked on the Regional Water Plan. He would like the Town and County to jointly present a plaque to those people. There’s still a lot of work to do with the implementation plan. He wants to see them acknowledged and also wants them to be asked to serve more time.

Town Manager Miera stated that he will work with County Manager Valerio. If she can prepare the wording he will have Town staff create the plaques.

Mayor Pro Tem Cordova commended everyone who worked on the plan. Now we just have to figure out how we will implement it.

County Attorney Pacheco commended Mayor Pro Tem Cordova for his leadership in getting the work done.

**8. Proposed Date of Next Meeting:** August 27, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. at Taos County Commission Chambers.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion was made by **Councilmember Sanchez** and seconded by **Councilmember Quintana** to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at **12:50 p.m.**