

**Minutes of Special Joint Meeting
Lea County Board of Commissioners
City of Hobbs & City of Lovington
October 29, 2015**

Chairman Fulfer called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. in the Banquet Room at the Lea County Event Center.

ITEM 01: WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer issued welcome statements. He recognized and gave a special thanks to the members of the Lea County Improvement Corporation and Debra Hicks the Chairman. Also recognized was the Maddox Foundation, Bob Reid and Dennis Holmberg, for all the work they have done.

Mayor Cobb issued welcome statements. The Hobbs City Commission, the City Manager, the City Clerk and the City Attorney introduced themselves.

Mayor Pro Tem Benge issued welcome statements, and introduced the Lovington City Commission, the Lovington City Manager and the Executive Assistant.

The Lea County Commission the County Manager and the County Attorney introduced themselves. Manager Gallagher introduced himself and the County Staff present.

ITEM 02: OPENING REMARKS

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer issued opening remarks. He stated Lea County is looked at all over the state as one of the model counties for diversity and creating jobs. It is exciting to hear the positive comments concerning Lea County.

- **City of Hobbs – Mayor Sam Cobb**

Mayor Cobb issued opening remarks. He stated this organization provided census for us in 2006, we are glad to have them back. It gives us a good opportunity to look at the numbers and make good strategic decisions for our respective communities and the County.

- **City of Lovington – Mayor Pro Tem Ava Benge**

Pro Tem Mayor Benge issued opening remarks. She stated this is a great opportunity to look at the best resource Lea County has to offer and that is its people.

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ITEM 03: MEETING OF EACH BOARD CALLED TO ORDER

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer called the Lea County Commission to order. Lea County Recording Secretary Kelli Williams polled the Commission: Chairman Fulfer, present, Vice Chairman Black present, Commissioner Dunlap, present, Commissioner Britton, present, Commissioner Long, present.

- **City of Hobbs – Mayor Sam Cobb**

Mayor Cobb called the City of Hobbs Commission to order. Hobbs City Clerk Jan Fletcher polled the Commission: Mayor Cobb, present, Pro Tem Mayor, Calderon, present, Commissioner Sena, present, Commissioner Newman, present, Commissioner Taylor, present, Commissioner Buie, present, Commissioner Boyd, present.

- **City of Lovington – Ava Benge**

Mayor Pro Tem Benge called the City of Lovington Commission to order. Administrative Assistant, Anna Juarez polled the Commission: Pro Tem Mayor Benge, present, Commissioner Trujillo, present, Commissioner Campos, present, Commissioner Butcher, present.

ITEM 04: JOINT BOARD MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer called the meeting to order.

ITEM 05: PRESENTATION OF COUNTY CENSUS UPDATE

- **Bureau of Business & Economic Research (BBER) of the University of New Mexico (UNM) – Dr. Lee Reynis, Economics Research Professor and Robert Rhatigan, Research Scientist III**

Dr. Reynis Economics Research Professor, UNM presented a power point presentation concerning the Lea County Census Update, research on the economy and labor markets. She discussed Lea County Employment based on all jobs, in comparison to surrounding counties in New Mexico.

Robert Rhatigan, Research Scientist III presented a power point presentation concerning the population dynamics in Lea County. He gave a description of the past, present and future for the census calculations, and how those numbers were achieved.

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Commissioner Britton stated it is interesting that the price of crude oil is brought up but not natural gas. Dr. Reynis stated the results for natural gas will be present in the final report that will be made available. He stated I would like to see comparisons to west Texas, some counties that are in a comparable situation with Lea County.

ITEM 06: PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Fulfer opened the floor for public comment.

Kirk Chavez, made comments concerning the boom or bust economy. He expressed his concern about living in a Federal/State funded economy as opposed to ours. He stated we have more variables and diversity with a bi-level economy in case one of our levels gives way, we will be able to hold our strength. Not like Clovis or Alamogordo that is only based on a Federal/State funded economy. Debra Hicks Chairman, Lea County Improvement Corporation made comments concerning the report that was given by the Improvement Corporation and the valuable tools that were given to use for economic development. Commissioner Campos asked Dr. Reynis, you expressed a need for work force development; how would you suggest we proceed. She stated try to encourage school, and training so the skill set needed is available. The things being done to diversify the economy are a step in the right direction. Mayor Cobb stated I serve on an advisory board at the New Mexico Junior College for Workforce Development. The board is redeveloping the program and training available to best fit the diversification efforts. He stated with the tools we have at the Junior College for training our efforts for diversification of the economy should be successful. Commissioner Buie asked as far as housing goes do you see a trend of more people becoming renters as opposed to home owners, not only in Lea County but around the U.S. Mr. Rhatigan stated I am not sure exactly. I would base it more on the types of housing. Mayor Cobb stated I have received some reports recently from some of the banks that are involved in the banking mortgage institution. Millennial's appear not to have as much desire for single family residences. In our area if we can find the appropriate mix of affordable housing we will be doing good. Commissioner Buie stated we are a very independent county; we do not depend on the government to write us a check, that is what makes us special. Kirk Chavez made comments concerning the comparisons between the counties. He stated we should be compared to counties that are just like us.

ITEM 07: CLOSING REMARKS

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer issued closing remarks. He stated we have areas that we still need to work on. Housing is very important. Healthcare, wholesale trade, finance, arts

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and entertainment are some of our weak points. I think some of the bandwidth problems are another thing we should work on. New Mexico Junior College has a great program for workforce training. We have a lot of positives to be done.

- **City of Hobbs – Mayor Sam Cobb**

Mayor Cobb issued closing remarks. He expressed his thanks to Dr. Reynis, and Mr. Rhatigan. He stated we will take this information and digest it and continue to work on the short and long term strategies necessary to make our communities successful.

- **City of Lovington – Mayor Pro Tem Ava Bengé**

Pro Tem Mayor Bengé issued closing remarks. She stated that we are on the right path with our efforts concerning housing. I also support comparing us with other counties in Texas.

Robert Rhatigan stated I will be happy to include in our report some of the projections of the counties in west Texas. These projections would not be figured by me so I would not be able to say how the numbers were achieved.

ITEM 08: ADJOURNMENT OF JOINT MEETING

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

ITEM 09: ADJOURNMENT BY EACH BOARD

- **Lea County Board of County Commissioners – Chairman Gregory H. Fulfer**

Chairman Fulfer adjourned the Lea County Commission.

- **City of Hobbs – Mayor Sam Cobb**

Mayor Cobb asked for a motion to adjourn the City of Hobbs Commission. Commissioner Buie moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor and passed unanimously. The Hobbs City Commission is adjourned.

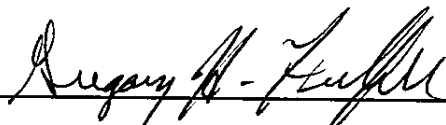
- **City of Lovington – Mayor Pro Tem Ava Bengé**

Pro Tem Mayor Bengé adjourned the Lovington City Commission


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The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**



Gregory H. Fulfer, Chairman



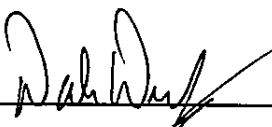
Ron Black, Vice Chairman



Rebecca Long, Member



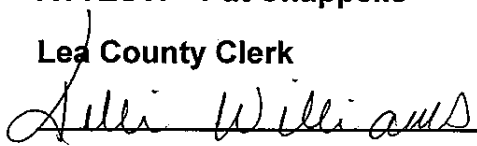
James H. Britton, Member



Dale Dunlap, Member

ATTEST: Pat Chappelle

Lea County Clerk



Kelli Williams

