

APRIL 23, 2020

The Board of Chaves County Commissioners held a Special Commission meeting in the Commission Chamber of the Joe Skeen Building, #1 St. Mary's Place in Roswell, New Mexico. Chairman Cavin called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Corn led the pledge and Commissioner Bilberry led in prayer. Those present were Commissioners Bilberry, Dana, Ezzell, Corn and Cavin. Also present were County Manager Stan Riggs, Public Services Director Bill Williams, County Clerk Dave Kunko, news media, staff and guests.

AGENDA

Chairman Cavin stated prior to the resolution he wanted to here from Mike Espiritu from the EDC and Candace Purcell from the Chamber of Commerce in reference to the business climate currently in Chaves County.

PRESENTATION

Mike Espiritu stated it has been difficult the last few weeks and we will continue to face more challenges. He stated they have been very busy contacting businesses and gauging their needs. The EDC website has an abundance of information and links to assist businesses during this challenging time. They are assisting businesses in accessing federal funds and determining what their needs are. The EDC continues to receive calls for potential businesses in our county. He realizes some businesses may fail to come back and the EDC continues to help in any way they possibly can. They have partnered with the Saddle Barn and Church on the Move. They have started to make masks. Currently the masks are being provided for free. A company working on the Oso Grande Windfarm has donated \$5,000 to the EDC to help pay for the masks. Many of these are being provided to first responders. This virus situation has been very hard on people and it has created Behavior Health Opportunities. Commissioner Dana thanked Mike Espiritu and the EDC and Church on the Move for working together. People want to work, and this was a creative way of making that happen. She enjoyed her tour of the facility. Things like this give people hope. Commissioner Corn thanked Mike on behalf of all the Commissioners. This has been tough on businesses and employees. This virus will have an affect on the County finances as well. Commissioner Cavin stated Loveless Hospital was very quiet since elective procedures have been put on hold. He is not sure the hospital will survive. He said of the 21 Covid-19 cases in Chaves County only 3 of them have been hospitalized.

Candace Purcell thanked the Commission for inviting her to the meeting. She stated it has been a little depressing and unruly lately. We have been in contact with businesses and it is alarming to hear that some will not come back from closure due to Covid-19. The Chamber of Commerce is working hard to keep these businesses going and provide them with resources to assist them. She believes all of our businesses are essential and hopefully all of them will be able to open on May 15th. The Chamber is surveying businesses to see how they have been affected and will provide those number to the County. She has enjoyed the opportunity to work with the EDC and Mike Espiritu. There is a taskforce in place to assist with recovery. There have been several challenges and she appreciates the leadership and partnership with the County. We need to stay positive and get everyone back to work. Commissioner Bilberry thanked her for the hard work and asked if she had any numbers on how many businesses will stay shut down. Candace Purcell stated they are working on getting accurate numbers. Commissioner Dana stated the survey is a great idea. Commissioner Bilberry stated the taskforce needs to ramp up and let us know what we are up against. Chairman Cavin just asked that the Chamber keep the County in the loop.

Sheriff Herrington was asked to report on the affects of the virus on law enforcement. He thanked the Commission for taking action today. Sheriff Herrington mentioned numerous phone calls on why they are shut down when similar business are being allowed to operate. We understand social distancing and keeping our hands and surfaces clean. We are susceptible just like any other country. Many businesses that are closed can operate just as safe as those that are allowed to be open. Law enforcement is out there working and nothing has changed except the way we contact people. Crime does not stop and many people are taking advantage of this situation. Many deputies have been exposed to the virus and we have been fortunate to not have any deputies infected. This is a scary time