

MONTEZUMA COUNTY BOCC 12/ 10 & 17

The following are some “highlights” of some of the subjects discussed at these two meetings, and may have some personal reaction comments by this member of the public, which will be in bracketed italics. The full video recordings are now available on the County website at “montezumacounty.org”, where you will see on the opening page a box with an arrow for accessing the YouTube video recording. Just click on the arrow and then click on the desired meeting video you want to watch. I have found that it does not start automatically, but when I move the “time” bar at the bottom to where the County Logo goes off it then starts. You can also move that time bar along skipping dialogue you are not interested in, this is a very good upgrade to the County’s work to be fully transparent to the public in all their actions. You can also watch the meeting “live” there also.

On the 10th meeting, the “Lamb House” in McElmo canyon on the CANM monument was approved to be added to the LOCAL County Historic Register. The BLM will be seeking grants for restoration and upkeep.

In PUBLIC ADDRESS time, two persons complained about the BOCC’s behavior and decisions in their discussions over the budget monies and decisions at the previous special budget discussion meeting. *(the budget meeting demonstrated some passionate differences in opinions on use of the monies for the next budget period. Possibly some statements were made that would have been better stated another way or not at all, HOWEVER it did reveal that all the commissioners had studied and were serious in doing what was the best for the County on the new budget. This was unarguably the most “transparent” BOCC budget deliberation ever!)* On other issues, several public expressed serious concerns over the impacts of the Proposed Cortez City Land Use Code. All felt, that if passed, the City Code will be VERY detrimental to the County, especially to the 3 mile economic impact zone OUTSIDE and BEYOND the City boundary. The speakers asked the BOCC to pass a resolution for the County to oppose the City Code. Concern was expressed that the City and County had been trying to work together better, so should not interfere in each other’s area of jurisdiction. Commissioner Suckla commented that the City recently violated that concept by PUBLICLY

opposing the County position on Rep. DeGette's Wilderness Bill involving the County Jurisdiction. *(Previously, the city did the same thing regarding the BLM Master Mineral Leasing Plan).* Commissioner Ertel suggested that the BOCC "take the high road" by looking at other means and to gather a better understanding of what the full and real impacts might be.

The Forks Subdivision up the Dolores river near Stoner was seeking resolution to disputes between property owners that would not speak to each other, all over legal subdivision codes some parties did not like. A real mess! After considerable time, the BOCC finally got them to understand it is NOT a County jurisdiction, it is a CIVIL matter within a legal subdivision. *(this was a perfect example of what the City of Cortez will face with its new proposed code. Neighbors will be calling on the City to Cite and fine their neighbors they don't like for non-compliance of code.)* It was pointed out that the parties had been calling out the Sheriff to complain about the other party, when there was nothing illegal going on, thus taking valuable Patrolmen away from possible real call needs.

Sheriff reported that the jail is being over stuffed. There is supposed to be a maximum of 104 beds, but have had as high as 133. Many of these are what is called "State Parole Holds". The State Dept. of Corrections do not want to pay what it costs the County to house their "holds". The BOCC asked the Atty to work up a letter to the State informing them the County cannot continue this. In the discussion it was pointed out that the bigger issue with the number of County detainees is that about 50% of them are there due to mental health issues, and there is no certified mental health facility to send them to.

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PUBLIC ADDRESS opened with some more public expressing concerns over the City of Cortez proposed Land Use Code. The biggest concern is regarding the section 31-23-212 on the "Extra Territory Powers", in the 3 mile economic zone outside the City. The wordage leaves it all open to "interpretation" by whoever is in power in the City at any given time. *(leaving ANY code or regulation open to interpretation by ANY politician or bureaucrat, at any level, in a seat of power, is a formula for disaster.)* It was also stated that the entire code is detrimental to

local business development, which affects the entire County very negatively. It is acknowledged that SOME level of governing control is necessary in a civil society, but “Dictatorial” control is NOT RIGHT, and that is what the new City Code does! It appears the City does not care about the County residents, as if we don’t exist. There is over 26 thousand or so residents in the entire County, with only 8,000 of those in Cortez. The City businesses are dependent upon the larger County residents. Another complaint was registered regarding the BOCC budget decision to increase the Roads budget, and specifically naming Commissioner Candelaria as bending to pressures and not standing up for his earlier position and considering the whole County needs not just the roads. *(The BOCC’s role IS to consider the whole County, not to please any one segment of interest. That is what the budget deliberations was all about. Later in today’s meeting, the Road dept. presented the road plan, in which it was pointed out the greater NEED for road improvements, fully justified the decision made in the budget discussion.)*

ROAD Dept. produced a proposed road maintenance and improvement plan and pointed out the Counties Statewide are recognizing the importance of identifying good roads that are starting to decline, and to put 80% of their monies and effort into “saving” those roads before they fall apart and require much more cost to restore them. Our County is about 30 years behind, so we will be wise to use our monies we have now to save our roads, while we still have the monies. It was noted that the new intersection of Road B and 491 is working well to replace the old Road 21 and 491 that was a traffic hazard. Old intersection of 21 into 491 is being closed off totally. Some discussions with the land owners on that one mile end of 21 will be in order.

PUBLIC LANDS, The BLM reported that they are now analyzing the comment on the proposed Travel Management Plan. They looking at comments on the use of E-Bikes, to decide where they should be allowed. Apparently the wilderness advocates don’t want E-bikes on any trail that is not currently specified for mountain bikes and “purist” mountain bikers don’t want E-bikers on mountain bike trails at all, apparently they think E-bikers are old and get in their way. *(This depicts the change in society that seem to believe the public lands is “theirs” only and their specific want is what should be provided and protected for them.)* The

BOCC all expressed that E-bikes should be treated as any other bike. It was reported that the Sand Canyon parking lot is being worked on at this time and should be ready by early spring. The Road to access the "Painted Hands" site is to be Re-Routed to be fully on BLM and to be all season access with an improved parking area. (*wondering what will be done with the old access road?*) The Grazing allotments EA should be out for review by early spring. They said it was delayed to allow plenty of time for the various environmental groups to review what is being proposed. (*That ensures there will be challenges submitted by the faux enviro's, when the EA is open for comment*). The FOREST SERVICE commented that the SanJuan forest has been designated to receive funding for the Rocky Mountain Forest Restoration Project. This is a real plus for our forest area. However there is a lot of Non-Commercial size trees, that need to be thinned and currently there is not market to utilize the size and volume . The BOCC asked about the FS seeking funding to restore the deteriorating recreation infrastructure it inherited from the BOR at McPhee, the campgrounds, access roads, boat access etc..

SOUTHWEST HEALTH SYSTEMS (hospital) reported that their financial condition is improving, even though their collections is 49 cents on the dollar. They still encourage people to use their Primary Care Doctor and Urgent Care as first contact for non-real EMERGENCIES. Regarding the "drug abuse" issue, they reported that locally, Alcohol is still their highest abused drug they encounter. Within the hospital they have instituted a policy of using alternatives to prescribing Opioids where possible

ADMINISTRATION , A contract to Digitize all old land records in the Clerks office, was approved. It was noted that the original paper copies from clear back in the 1800's will be kept in archive. Cost is \$238,537 and if I remember right that is mostly if not all funded by State funds. The Attorney presented a Resolution for the BOCC to notify the State Dept.of Corrections ,the County and Sheriff will no longer accept and house State Parole Holds. The County cannot afford to continue to subsidize the State. Resolution 13-2019 titled "Declination of Department of Corrections Inmates. The 2020 County Budget was approved by Resolution 12-2019 totaling for all county operations \$51,318,491.