Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District
1305 Enterprise Road, Socorro, NM 87801
July 14, 2026 12:00 PM

Present: Chris Lopez, Edward Harris, Vernon Leseberg, Chanda Vigil (arrived at 12:12 p.m., departed at 1:34 p.m.), Daniela Rivera, Will Kolbenschlag, Katie Mechenbier, Chris Jennings, Maggie Gnann

Board Members Not Present: Sefie Anaya.

The **meeting** was called to order at 12:11 pm by Chairman Lopez.

The **agenda** passed unanimously following a motion by Edward Harris and a second by Vernon Leseberg.

The **June 9, 2026** minutes were approved unanimously following a motion by Chanda Lopez and a second by Edward Harris.

The **June 25, 2026** Special Board Meeting minutes were approved unanimously following a motion by Edward Harris and a second by Chanda Vigil.

Public Comment Period: None

Items:

Treasurer's Report and Voucher Payments: See attachment. This was unanimously accepted as presented following a motion by Edward Harris and a second by Chanda Vigil.

Interim Budget Approval from DFA: See attachments. The interim budget was entered into the LGBMS app on May 13, 2026, and was approved on July 1, 2026.

FY2026 Final Budget Acceptance Resolution #2026-8: See attachments. Will reviewed the 4th quarter budget report and resolution. Edward Harris made a motion to approve the 4th quarter budget report and resolution, and Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes
Chanda Vigil: Yes

FY2027 Final Budget Approval Resolution #2027-1: See attachment. Will reviewed the FY2027 budget and resolution. Edward Harris made a motion to approve the FY2027 budget. Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion. Chanda Vigil had several questions about the budget. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes
Chanda Vigil: No

The motion carried on a 3-1 vote and the FY2027 budget and resolution #2027-1 were approved..

Skid Steer Rental Quote from Lanford Excavation/Base Course: See attachment. The rental skid steer is proposed to remove large rock piles that were left from the building construction. Will requested that the board simultaneously approve the purchase of base course material to improve the rocky landscape on the side and back of the office building to facilitate driving vehicles and equipment over it, which the rental skid steer would also be used for. Chanda Vigil questioned using base course and stated that asphalt millings would be more appropriate. Extensive discussion followed. Edward Harris made a motion to approve the skid steer rental and purchase of base course. Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes
Chanda Vigil: No

The motion carried and the skid steer rental will be scheduled.

NMACD Dues Invoice: See attachments. Chanda Vigil made a motion that we pay NMACD dues in the amount of $775. Edward Harris seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes
Chanda Vigil: Yes

The motion carried and the NMACD dues check will be presented at the August board meeting.

RFB for Steel Awning Structure: See attachment. Will mailed the draft RFB to the board members on June 11, 2026. Chanda Vigil indicated that she did not receive it and therefore was unable to review it. Chanda Vigil made a motion to table the RFB until the August 2026 board meeting. Edward Harris seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes
Chanda Vigil: Yes

The motion carried and the RFB will be tabled until the August 2026 board meeting.

Grants Update: Will reviewed the status of the grants:
WRRI – See attachment. Five applications were submitted totaling $743,910.30
Farm to Table Grant: See attachment. Will reviewed the parameters and due date.

Capacity Building: See attachment. This grant is active and continues through December 2027.
District Opportunities Grant: See attachment. This grant has been awarded and the signed MOA and purchase order have been sent to the district. Will will order the display booth prior to the next board meeting.
HSP Eligible Entities: See attachment. This grant was not awarded.
SWCC Grants: See attachments. Two applications were submitted, neither was approved.

Rudy Gonzales NMACD Region 3 Conservationist of the Year Award: See attachments. Will explained the process for the NMACD awards as they occurred this year. Four nomination forms were sent. The first was for NMACD Friend of Conservation, which had a due date in the header of "July 2026", and a due date in the footer of "August 31, 2023". The second was NMACD Outstanding Land Stewardship Award, which did not have a printed due date. The third was NMACD Outstanding Conservationist Award, which did not have a printed due date. The fourth was NMACD 2025 Outstanding Soil And Water Conservation District Award, which had a due date of "August 31, 2025".

Will emailed Jennifer Hopper and asked for clarification of the due dates on May 27. Jennifer Hopper replied on May 29th, and indicated that Rebecca Dow was handling this process this year, and cc'd her on the email. On May 30th, Rebecca Dow replied, stating "Hey! Sorry about that. Now would be great. We are trying to announce the winners are(sic) the regional meeting. Our regional meeting is next week."

Since the award nominations are part of the point system scoring, Will re-submitted the nomination forms from last year on June 1, as there was not time to create new nominations nor to put the nominations on the agenda for the board to review, given the revised due date of "now". Rudy Gonzales was awarded for Outstanding Land Stewardship, and will move on to the state awards, which are announced at the NMACD annual meeting in October.

These nominations are typically due at the end of August. Chanda Vigil questioned Will's authority to submit these nominations without board approval. Lengthy discussion followed. Chanda Vigil left the board meeting at 1:34 PM. Following her departure, a quorum of the board was still present, so the meeting continued.

Aldo Leopold Conservation Award Nomination: Chanda Vigil had indicated at the May 2026 board meeting that she would prepare a nomination form for Joe Lopez, Sr. It is unknown if she submitted a nomination.

Board Member Participation in Health Insurance: See attachment. Will explained that board members are eligible to participate in SWCD Health Insurance, but only following formal approval of this in a board meeting. For the purposes of admission into the health insurance program, board members are treated as new employees following this approval. They may enroll within 30 days following the approval, or during the subsequent open enrollment period. Edward Harris made a motion to approve this. Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes

The motion carried and board members may now purchase health insurance through SWCD Insurance.

Socorro SWCD Annual Report for FY2026: See attachment. Edward Harris made a motion to approve the annual report. Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes

The motion carried and the annual report will be submitted and posted on the website.

Cost Share:
Update: See attachment. Daniela updated the board on the status of the cost share program.

<u>Cost Share Applications</u>:
James Sanchez applied for agricultural cost share for WetStake reimbursement.
Wes Bruton applied for agricultural cost share assistance for Laser Leveling.

Vernon Leseberg made a motion to approve both applications. Edward Harris seconded the motion. A roll call vote followed:

Chris Lopez: Yes
Edward Harris: Yes
Vernon Leseberg: Yes

The motion carried and applications were approved.

Employee Reports: See attachments. In the interest of time, Will did not review his report. Daniela reviewed her report.

NRCS Report: See attachment. Maggie Gnann reviewed the report.

NMDA Report: See attachment. Katie Mechenbier reviewed the report.

Adjourn: Edward Harris made a motion to adjourn at 2:22pm. Vernon Leseberg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

______________________________ ____________________
Chairman Date