NMWWA Executive Board Meeting
January 25, 2026
Hotel Encanto, Las Cruces

The meeting of NM Water and Wastewater Association was called to order on January 25, 2026 at 6:44 pm, by President Craig Byers.

Roll was called and attending the meeting were: Craig Byers, Victor Gonzales, Alyssa Chavez, Andres Montoya, Virgil Taylor, Gen Salazar, Terry Mount, Alejandro Salas, Andrew Valadez, Mike Lopez and Rose Martinez.

A motion was made by Gene Salazar to accept the minutes of the last Executive Board meeting. Motion seconded by Virgil Taylor; motion carried.

President's Report: Craig Byers discussed the update on mileage and per Diem and changes needed to be made to align to the States's amount as follows: lodging is now at $180, mileage at .70 cents and meals at $70. Terry Mount shared the website for future reference.

The transfer to the new President, Javier Gutierrez was postponed due to a loss in his family. New officers; Alyssa Chavez as Vice-President and Andres Montoya as Director, were introduced and welcomed to the 2026 NMWWA Executive Board.

Budget Summary and Financial Report: (see attached). The financial report was given by Gene Salazar. A motion was made by Victor Gonzalez to accept the financial report as presented. Motion seconded by Virgil Taylor; motion carried.

Executive Manager's Report: Rose Martinez elaborated on the 2026 Annual school, with around 200 registered, but around ten to fifteen canceled due to the weather. There will be no refunds; instead, transfers will be made. The Association has seen increased participation compared to the last few years, with exceeding Exhibitior attendance of thirty this year.

On another note, Rose shared her unexpected medical issue which kept her out sick for a while. During her recovery, she found it challenging to finalize the annual school workload as she had to come to work very early and stay late. As a result, she requested a pay raise, expressing that she believed her efficiency justified the increase. Additionally, she requested approval to hire a part-time employee to assist in the office.

Finance Committee Report: Terry Mount addressed matters regarding the by-laws in relation to the goals. If changes are necessary, they must be implemented. Special committees were formed for this purpose. All committees must meet their standards, or integration may be necessary.

Terry suggested that as specialized committees were formed, the Board should follow up on previous discussions to enhance their functions. It's vital to address the challenges and she is committed to providing the necessary information for future decisions regarding the by-laws goals.

Terry also discussed revising business operations policies and bylaws related to dues and school costs. An incoming president should organize committees to develop these policies, which must be approved before changes to the bylaws are made. The goal is to establish policies first and then address discrepancies between bylaws and policies. There's a suggestion to raise dues by 3%, in line with common practices for nonprofits. The finance committee has approved some rates, but further discussion is needed regarding discretionary funds and additional board approvals. Lastly, there is a mention of reviewing existing policies, noting that several have yet to be finalized.

More discussion from the finance committee revolved around approved job descriptions, hiring policies, and compensation benefits for employees, specifically focusing on professional development plans and tuition reimbursement. The committee has approved a professional development plan for full-time employees, emphasizing that any educational institution must be accredited for reimbursement eligibility. Additional details include the requirement for employees to submit proper documentation for reimbursement requests, including course details and grades. There is also a need for Board members to complete conflict of interest forms, with two options presented: a detailed form that outlines potential financial disclosures and a simpler version that requires basic acknowledgment of the policy. The conflict-of-interest policy has been approved, and the committee is ensuring that all documents are correctly numbered and organized. Overall, the meeting aims to clarify procedures and gather feedback on the proposed changes.

A motion was made by Craig Byers to send all previously discussed items from the financial committee to the board for approval, with outstanding matters remaining for future review. The motion to approve the reviewed policies was seconded by Lyman Waller; motion carried and it was confirmed that additional questions would be addressed, with further details communicated via email.

As part of the financial committee meeting, there was a discussion about business operations and policy approvals. It was agreed that a new policy to prevent conflicts was needed, but the current items could still be approved such as the “discretionary Funds” to be set at a maximum of $600, but not to exceed $200 for immediate family. Terry will work on the documents detailing the information. As part of this particular approval, Craig made a motion to send flowers to Ruben Moreno and Javier Gutierrez’s funeral services, motion was seconded by Andres Montoya; motion carried.

2026 Annual School and Awards Schedule: Lyman Waller stated SMA was wanting to provide the recipient of the “Arthur Torrez Outstanding Facility Manager” Award a check in the amount of $500 in memory of Art Torrez, Gene suggested to donate the check directly to NMWWA to avoid creating a advertising. The Board agreed and decided it would be best to sponsor coffee break in memory of Art Torrez to keep the banquet professional.

Rose went over the Awards banquet schedule and assigned a designee presenter for each Award.

Section Presidents Report:

SW: Mike Lopez reported checking: $14,075.86, savings: $1,187.75. Money was spent on a catered barbecue for the Christmas party, and they regularly provides meals for in-person training. An audit was presented. An unauthorized $1,500 withdrawal occurred due to a bank software transition error involving a name similarity at Citizens Bank. Mike and Shawn went to the bank and successfully reversed the charge, noting it was fortunate the auditor caught the mistake.

CT: Craig Byers reported checking: $1,445.52, savings: $6,367.30, totaling $7,812.82. An end-of-year catered event was held in December featuring ham, turkey, and side dishes. The check received for dues refund has been cashed. Deb is now the section president, while he remains the treasurer. Other officers include Amy Northam as vice president, Cynthia as secretary, Victor as past president, Zeke Esquibel and Cherie Barker as a director.

Gene inquired about the WC section and what is going on there. Criag stated the central section proposed to take over the WC section two years ago, but was told it wasn't possible. They express willingness to share training online statewide despite potential conflicts with bylaws stating there should be six sections. There is concern about travel distance, particularly from Gallup. The annual dues and the WC section money are in the states savings account. McKinley County offered a venue for training, but attempts to organize an event last year faced challenges. There is a need to revitalize interest among operators in the region by reaching out and generating engagement. Terry suggested to hold a section meeting to discuss revitalization efforts. Robert Hayes and Steven La Bolt are individuals who could contribute to the effort, they will be present at an upcoming awards event and should be approached for discussion. The President will ask for volunteers at the General Business meeting.

SE: Andrew Valadez reported a total of $13,458.60 in funds, with $11,470.27 in checking and $1,988.30 in savings. Andrew stated he’s been very busy and took over as utilities director. The convention center flooded but is expected to be rebuilt by November. The college has been contacted for assistance with related issues.

NE: No Report

NW: No Report

NMED: No Report

DACC Water Technology Program: Alejandro Salas focused on recruitment for a program related to water technology, facing challenges due to low enrollment and competition for students. They are collaborating with local universities and seeking creative solutions to attract students who may not fit traditional bachelor pathways. Currently, there are 19 students enrolled, and one senior class had to be canceled due to insufficient numbers. Alejandro emphasized the importance of maintaining the program’s original intent to train operators rather than becoming a junior college for engineering, while also acknowledging the need to reach out to students from other programs who have transferable skills. An MOU was signed with the county to support four students at a competitive wage, and there are discussions about improving salary scales within the county. He mentions efforts to establish ties with internship programs, but his main concern is the need for innovative recruitment strategies and collaboration to strengthen the program.

Other Business: Add creation of the policies and procedures committee, finance vote, and employee training to the agenda, discuss hiring a part-time employee as requested by the executive manager; confirm if a board vote is needed. Consider calling a special board meeting for the part-time position and Rose's raise; February 20th. Plan a financial committee meeting on February 27th. Rose suggests a part-time employee for three days a week (about 24 hours) to assist with data entry. Address the laptop issue that requires re-registration. Establish real email addresses for association roles to allow easy transfer when roles change. Back up all financial documents and policies to an external hard drive. Acknowledge the need for individual role-based email addresses to avoid issues with ownership transfer. Plan for the executive meeting in March. Schedule officers training and the board meeting separately since they can be held online. Schedule the new officers meeting for February 12th; confirm Rosie will lead the. Ensure the handbooks are distributed ahead of time. Clarify that the special meeting on February 20th will not replace the regular board meeting.

A motion to adjourn the NM Water and Wastewater Association Executive Board meeting was made by Lyman Waller, motion seconded by Gene Salazar; motion carried. The NMWWA Executive Board meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.