

Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO)

Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting

November 21, 2019 – 10:00 am

Bondurant Room, Roswell Public Library
Roswell, New Mexico

POLICY MEMBERS PRESENT:

Policy Member (or Alternate) listed in Alphabetical Order

Brito, Candy	City of Eunice
Bunch, Clint	City of Clovis
DeSha, John	City of Portales
Gurule, Angelo	Chaves County
Honeycutt, Jeff	Lincoln County
Lovato, Ricky	Roosevelt County
Marinovich, Nick	Lea County
McCroskey, Steve	Eddy County
Morgan, Joseph	Mescalero Apache Tribe
Najar, Louis	City of Roswell
Patterson, Jeff	City of Carlsbad
Randall, Todd	City of Hobbs
Summers, Kim	Town of Elida
Williams, Gary (Mayor)	City of Ruidoso Downs

POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Aldridge, Stephen (Mayor)	City of Jal
Bradford, Sherrill (Mayor Pro Tem)	Village of Corona
Bradley, Jerry (Mayor)	City of Texico
Burkett, Mickey (Mayor)	Village of Dora
Burns, Marilyn	Town of Tatum
Castillo, Antonio	Town of Vaughn
Estrada, Pete (Mayor)	Village of Loving
Green, Barry (Mayor)	Village of Melrose
Hall, Jubal	Village of Cloudcroft
Hobson, Aubrey	City of Artesia
Ingram, Justin	Village of Fort Sumner
King, Kris (Mayor)	Village of Causey
Lovas, Mark	Town of Hagerman
Lucero, Amanda	De Baca County
McInnes, Laura	Village of Capitan
Porter, Tom	Otero County
Powell, Justin	Town of Dexter
Powell, Leona	Village of Grady
Rael, Stella	City of Alamogordo
Sainz, Robert (Trustee)	Village of Tularosa
Salazar, Ysidro (Mayor)	Town of Lake Arthur
Sales, Rudy	Village of Hope
Sena, Ron	Village of Ruidoso
Thornton, Robert	Curry County
Ventura, Chris (Mayor)	Town of Carrizozo
Whitecotton, Toni	Village of Floyd
Williams, James	City of Lovington

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COG/NMDOT STAFF PRESENT:

Briley, Alan	NMDOT - Roswell
Burr, Mary Ann	Southeastern NM Economic Development District (SNMEDD)/Council of Governments (COG)
Chancey, Sandy	Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG)
Chavez, Gabrielle	NMDOT Transit & Rail (Santa Fe)
Hudson, Debbie	NMDOT - Deming
Matta, Louis	NMDOT – Roswell
Park, Jason	NMDOT Transit & Rail (Santa Fe)
Ummadi, Vijay	NMDOT Transit & Rail (Santa Fe)
Webb, Sigrid	NMDOT - Roswell

GUESTS PRESENT:

Allen, Glenda	Lincoln County
Aragon, Anna	Pecos Trails Transit (Roswell)
Baysinger, Susan	City of Portales
Brito, Maria	Carlsbad Transit
Contreras, Jennifer	City of Portales Transit
Fletcher, Jan	Hobbs Express
Fuentes, Juan	City of Roswell
Hall, Katherine	City of Portales Transit
Hardin, Joe	ZTrans
Hobbs, Billy (Mayor)	City of Eunice
Jarvis, Joe	City of Ruidoso Downs
Johnson, Garry	City of Clovis CATS
Kemp, Mary Lou	City of Clovis CATS
Moore, Josh	Carlsbad Transit
Porter, Ryan	City of Roswell
Saenz, Juan	Pecos Trails Transit (Roswell)
Yutzy, Jordan	City of Eunice

CALL TO ORDER / QUORUM (8)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INTRODUCTIONS

Technical Vice Chair Todd Randall (Hobbs) presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was established. Members participated with the Pledge of Allegiance, and introductions were held.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Louis Najar (Roswell) made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded by Jeff Patterson (Carlsbad), and motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John DeSha (Portales) made a motion to approve the September 12, 2019 minutes. Clint Bunch (Clovis) seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

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PRESENTATION: Southeast RTPO Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan
Gabrielle N. Chavez, Service Coordination Manager
NMDOT Transit & Rail Division

Ms. Chavez thanked members for allowing her to present on the final Southeast RTPO Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. Ms. Chavez explained that she had visited SERTPO earlier in the year to present on the process and now she is presenting the final plan. The Plan is a requirement for the §5310/§5311 grants. NMDOT has been working from February through September to finalize the Plan. Information was used from multiple sources, and sources were named. Ms. Chavez gave an overview of the Plan Update schedule, to include the timeline for working with the RTPOs/MPOs; publishing the Draft for thirty days; receiving comments from transit agencies in the area; incorporating changes as a result of comments; and distributing the final version of the Plan to RTPOs. The Coordination Manager described the Plan structure, naming its four sections. An overview of the Needs Assessment was given, explaining data used, how data was analyzed and displaying data analysis through mapping. Three other Plans were referred to during the process, including the Southeast Transportation Plan. Ms. Chavez addressed those transit-related items from the Southeast Plan. Ms. Chavez also addressed content used from the NM 2040 Plan, including strategies and priorities. Copies of the Plan were provided in meeting packets and as handouts. Ms. Chavez welcomed additional comment or questions after the meeting, by email or phone.

ACTION ITEMS

A. Public Transit Presentations (and Scoring)

Opening Remarks: Vijay Ummadi, Program Manager - NMDOT Transit & Rail

Mr. Ummadi explained that RTPOs serve as forums of rural, local governments and the public on transportation matters in rural New Mexico. The communities' involvement is crucial in the development and execution of the programs and policies set forth by NMDOT. Mr. Ummadi thanked the RTPO for conducting the meeting. The RTPO annual regional prioritization of transit applications received informs the NMDOT process from a regional needs' perspective and, for the §5311 program, is used as a criterion in the funding distribution. In addition to the benefits of the RTPO scoring being included in NMDOT processes, there is also additional opportunity for the transit agencies. It allows all to see what transit agencies are doing in the region which may lead to coordinated opportunities.

The Federal Transit Grant Awards for FY2020 were announced during the Annual Statewide Transit Budget Award meetings which were held on May 15th of this year. The award package is available on the NMDOT Transit & Rail website for the subgrantees that submitted applications for funding in September 2018. \$15 million+ was awarded in federal transit grant funds, supporting capital, administration and operations from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. Mr. Ummadi listed the total amounts awarded to 13 applicants for §5310; 21 applicants for §5311; and 17 applicants for §5339.

The Chair inquired on the how the amounts awarded this year compared to last year and what's expected for the following year. Transit and Rail responded that funding levels are expected to remain the same unless there is expansion or additional service is provided. Further, it depends on what FTA appropriates for FY21 which will not be known until early next year.

Prioritization - §5311 – Formula Grants for Rural Areas

Scoring sheets were handed out to members and clarification on scoring was provided.

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City of Carlsbad – Carlsbad Municipal System. Joshua Moore, Transit Manager, presented with a PowerPoint and discussed their Transit Plan, short-term. He explained their transit agency shares much of the same goals as the other agencies. Carlsbad has been working on expanded hours of operation, with the east/west route running fewer hours than the north/south route; is awaiting new buses; added new staff, three drivers and an in-house mechanic, and introduced their new clerk, Maria Brito; completed shop conversion; has been installing a new lift; outsourcing minor maintenance with major maintenance completed internally; and planned for 8 new stops on fixed routes, serving new communities and businesses. When discussing long term planning, Mr. Moore commented that they are funded for smart-transit technology project this year and will be updating their buses with hardware and offices with software to help with auto reporting, manifest, etc. He further spoke to public outreach, marketing and the importance of public feedback. Coordination with other public facilities/agencies and transportation providers is important to transit and multiple facilities/agencies/transportation providers were mentioned. Carlsbad Transit serves as backup to the Meals-on-Wheels program and is involved with emergency planning throughout the City, ensuring that evacuation is conducted properly with the sinkhole. Carlsbad Transit is involved with the age-friendly movement, with the City of Carlsbad being the only or one of few municipalities within the State with age-friendly status.

Funding amounts for the components of §5311 were provided. The Transit Manager explained they are receiving new surveillance systems and have applied for numerous new bus shelters/benches along their fixed routes and GPS trackers for their buses (and software). Mr. Moore spoke further on local match funding; the various methods of public input, to include successful input from libraries and museums; long range planning goals; a 4.3% increase in ridership; demand response being maxed out on; rebranding of buses, logos, signs (example of signage displayed); and mapping. Samples of marketing materials were passed out to members. A member inquired on what is attributed to 4% increase in ridership when workforce is larger and who is being served. Mr. Moore explained that same demographic is being served, and there is not much impact from the oil and gas sector. The elderly population may be increasing.

City of Clovis – Clovis Area Transit System (CATS). Mary Lou Kemp, Director of the CATS, introduced new staff, Garry Johnson. Ms. Kemp provided a short overview of their program and ridership statistical information. The CATS program continues to be a 100% demand response service--there is not a fixed route in the City of Clovis. 2019 ridership stats show a strong need to continue service, and the ever-increasing demand shows the need for expansion. Just under 70,000 trips were provided with 30% of those trips being work-related; 16% education-based; 16% medical appointments; and the balance for personal reasons/shopping. Buses traveled just under 200,000 miles over the past year and collected \$40,000 in fares. Ridership in 2019 was increased by 6% and by 3% the previous year. The City of Clovis continues to be the sole provider for the match requirement for the grant. The application request amounts for FY21 were provided. In comparison to the FY20 application, there was an 8% increase in administration and 2% increase in operating, with most of the increases being for salary, fringe and insurance. The City is currently conducting a wage compensation study, and salary increases are anticipated. Capital requests for the current application is for the replacement of two vehicles. CATS has experienced an increase in ridership while implementing new scheduling software, new fleet maintenance software and new fiscal software—all with understaffing. Question from the group dealt with reason for the increase in ridership. Ms. Kemp explained the increase has been due to the need, with earlier years seeing an increase when CAFB changed their base of operation, and need is currently steady with a flow of people coming in and out. They have seen an increase in the transient population which has added to their numbers.

Garry Johnson explained that the Clovis Transit Department is part of the City's 5-year Strategic Plan and the most recently updated Comprehensive Plan. The Plan establishes an overall vision for

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the City and includes transportation goals, objectives, and implementation strategies, all of which was organized and based on community priorities as determined through the public input process. Mr. Johnson named numerous private transportation providers with whom they coordinate, stating they refer passengers daily to providers such as shuttle providers who transport passengers to local, Lubbock, Amarillo, and Albuquerque airports. CATS continues to look for funding opportunities to expand their service and has applied for a public program to meet the needs of individuals on Medicare accessing health appointments between the communities of Portales and Clovis. Mr. Johnson spoke to their methods for acquiring public input, to include an update to the City website which will provide easier access to CATS. Mr. Johnson spoke to their new scheduling software, an online self-service portal and a mobile app for smartphones. The Transit Program receives requests daily for service outside their service area. The means for gathering on information to support local and regional need was described. Marketing tools and strategies were discussed, to include the promotion of their new scheduling software, City/CATS rebranding and updated brochures. To meet the ever-increasing demand for service, Mr. Johnson stressed it was important they remain flexible in their approach and be able to change and mold their service to do so.

City of Hobbs – Hobbs Express. Jan Fletcher, City Clerk/Transit Manager, commented on Hobbs Express' recent 30th anniversary and continued to speak on hours of operation, numbers/types of service and service area. Current application funding request for administration, operating and capital were discussed, with the capital request being for one bus replacement. The City is prepared and has committed to the local match. Administration and operating costs remain at the same level. Hobbs Express is included in the City's overall Master Plan, and an update is planned for a new, strategic 5-year plan. As part of the Hobbs Express' goals, routes are reviewed to improve passenger service, to ensure the service delivered is what the public wants. Service is delivered to multi-family housing units and recreational areas. Hobbs Express continually works to increase ridership and coordinates with multiple agencies (named) to meet the various transportation needs of passengers. Free rides are offered to all veterans with a proper ID. Ms. Fletcher explained that their demand response service requires advance notice, and same day service requests are referred to a local taxi service. The City also coordinates with Hobbs Schools to help provide transportation for their federal 21st Century Learning Grant.

FY18-19 ridership numbers are maintained at same levels (58 passengers more than last year). Total ridership equaled 57,661 passengers, with 7,153 for the elderly; 2,323 non-ambulatory; 3,396 disabled and the remaining 44,789 for regular student/adult trips. Miles traveled during past fiscal year equaled 149,512 miles, approximately 12,500 miles per month. Fares were collected in the amount of \$36k. Regarding regional need and justification, the basis of the need for the service is about the ridership. Grant funds are fully expended and utilized each grant year. Ms. Fletcher spoke to the good working conditions in Lea County. According to NM Workforce Solutions, the unemployment rate in NM for October was 4.5%, and, for Lea County, 3.8%. Some riders may now be working and not riding as frequently. The Transit Manager spoke to their staffing structure, noting that supervisors serve as drivers when needed; the City offers a CDL incentive for drivers; starting pay for drivers; continued competition with the oil and gas industry's CDL pay; and a compensation study underway within the City. Ms. Fletcher discussed marketing methods, to include working with Google maps. She concluded with their mission and the City's excitement regarding the Census and its hopes to reach a 50,000 population.

City of Portales – Portales Area Transit (PAT). Katherine Hall, Transit Coordinator, explained PAT provides demand response, ADA accessible service with the service area covering the City of Portales and a five-mile radius within Roosevelt County. Population numbers for Portales and Roosevelt County were given. For the 2019 fiscal year, PAT provided 14,053 rides, 2,000 rides over than those provided in 2018. Ms. Hall spoke to their operating hours, staffing structure and the

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application funding request amounts. Their capital request is for the replacement of a bus with high mileage and frequent repairs. Short- and long-term plans are covered with the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the City of Portales, where public hearings for public input was received. The annual ICIP for vehicle replacement is presented at public hearing for the public input process. PAT provides an open-door policy for public input at the Program office and City Hall. The Transit Coordinator informed members of short-term and long-term objectives as well as agencies with whom services are coordinated, such as Roosevelt General Hospital, Eastern New Mexico University and Workforce Solutions. Target ridership for 2020-2021 is 16,000 rides. Passengers request, daily, for service expansion to Clovis and Roswell for medical appointments—a service demand PAT takes into consideration. The need for public transportation is vast and impacts many groups in their population. Quality of life would be greatly affected without the PAT program. Several families cannot afford dependable transportation. Examples of why some riders require service to go to work were given. Based on the ongoing need, increased ridership and understaffing, some ride requests have had to be turned down. Marketing efforts were described. Funding requests consider the increased need for public transportation and future need. PAT will continue quality, safe and effective transportation services to the citizens of Portales and the surrounding area.

Louis Najar (Roswell) directed a comment to NMDOT Transit whereby it seems like Portales may qualify for some type of hardship (funding or consideration), being a smaller community and turning down clients. Ms. Chavez (NMDOT) responded that the funding is available, but the issue may be local match. Mr. Najar added that typically under a hardship, match is waived. Light discussion continued.

City of Roswell – Pecos Trails Transit. Juan Fuentes, Administrative Services Director, acknowledged that all Transit staff, office personnel and drivers, are really the boots on the ground, providing the critical service that is needed in the community. With PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Fuentes shared their mission statement and organizational chart. The Department has a short- and long-term transportation plan, adopted by the City Council. One of the short-term goals of implementing a new route, which in part is due to growth, has been completed. Transit coordinates with other modes of transportation and named those organizations. Public input processes were described, including monthly forums. The transit system is a vital part of the community, serving young and old, disabled, workforce, consumers, homebound citizens and students. Pecos Trails is the only fixed route and paratransit service in the area. The levels of marketing were discussed, including branding to coincide with citywide branding (displayed).

Ridership numbers were displayed, showing Adults - 63,881; Seniors -34,762; Disabled & Wheelchair - 19,818; Students -32,733; Children - 3,609; and Other, 1932. Total ridership for 2018 was 156,735, with there being growth from the previous year. There are five routes with 650 bus stops. Long range plans include providing bus shelters. A map of the routes was displayed. Pecos Trails continues to re-evaluate the routes and adjust, as needed.

Louis Najar (Roswell) made comment on figures on the application for ridership. Todd Randall (Hobbs) inquired on the *Other* category. Anna Aragon, Transit Director, explained the *Other* category represented the New Mexico Military Institute. The number must be tracked due to the stipend. There are several additional schools with which Pecos Trails coordinates (i.e., Job Corp, Eastern New Mexico University, etc.).

Zia Therapy Center, Inc. - ZTrans. Joe Hardin, Transit Director, congratulated all the transit providers for their increased ridership, as increased ridership is not common throughout the state or nationwide. Zia Therapy is a nonprofit agency, founded in 1960 by nine mothers of disabled children. Zia Therapy has several programs, and in 1980, started in-house transportation. Public

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transportation began in 2001 with one route. Additional routes have been added (by year): 2002 - Holloman Air Force Base; 2005 -Mescalero; 2012 - Las Cruces; and 2018 - Lincoln County. With PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Hardin displayed a map of their service area. They are considered a rural, micropolitan and small urban service area because their service area includes Las Cruces. Zia does have a one-year, five-year and ten-year plan for transportation, adopted by the City and the Zia Board. Zia coordinates with other transportation providers, such as Roadrunner Transit (Las Cruces), Mescalero Apache Tribe, South Central Regional Transit District, Holloman AFB, local cab companies and Ride Share Programs. Being a nonprofit, Zia acquires its match from their numerous funding partners (listed). Zia is working with the Department of Defense for acquiring match because their route goes onto Holloman Air Force Base. Mr. Hardin explained a similar coordination with SporTrans (Shreveport, Louisiana) and Barksdale Air Force Base where \$1.2 million is received annually as local funding. Other funding includes Mescalero, who uses Indian Roads and Reservations monies to help with local match. The Director commented on plans for application for §5311(C) funding, which is for Tribes. He spoke to the requirements that must be met in order to apply, which include National Transit Database reporting and two years of data.

Public input processes were described and includes coordination with two transportation committees (Alamogordo and Ruidoso) and a Disabled Community committee. Zia is part of the NMDOT and SERTPO plans. Transportation needs is driven by socio-economic conditions and the desire to remain a part of society. Examples were given. Through charting, ridership for their routes was displayed. All ridership is increasing. Methods of marketing were provided/listed. Service hours have been increased, to eliminate gaps in three routes. While Zia does not look to increase ridership in paratransit, they have added a Senior Dial-A-Ride in Lincoln County.

Zia's current fleet consists of 21 vehicles (photos of vehicles displayed). Maintenance is farmed out locally. Being a nonprofit, Zia deals with NMDOT regulations and Public Regulatory Commission Federal Carrier Motor Safety Standards. The Manager discussed vehicle mileage; ADA compliance; tracking systems; maintenance program; driver training; CDL licensing pay incentives; dispatcher training; and staffing structure. Their funding request has increased, factoring in minimum wage increases and the expansion into Lincoln County.

Louis Najar (Roswell) congratulated Zia for their largest ridership increase of all applications.

B. Resolution No. 19-010 Approving EPCOG Regional Work Program (RWP)
Amendment No. 2

Sandy Chancey, EPCOG Executive Director, explained to members that they have restructured the budget for the grant to mirror the line items in EPCOG's budget, which makes quarterly reporting and invoicing much easier. The second part of the change includes carry-over from the previous fiscal year (\$9,000) that has been re-budgeted. Louis Najar (Roswell) made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-010, as presented. Motion was seconded by Billy Hobbs (Eunice) and was approved unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Local Government Transportation Project Fund (LGTPF) – Proposed Rulemaking

Mary Ann Burr reminded members of the recent application cycle for LGTPF (state funding) where SERTPO had a large number of applications. NMDOT is proposing a new rule for LGTPF, and the new rule has been circulated and a list of public hearing dates, by email to all members. The public hearing for District 2 was held earlier in the week. There were commenters. The notice states they will accept comments until the final hearing is scheduled, which appears to be

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November 25, 2019. There is still an opportunity for additional comment. Louis Matta will speak to the proposed rulemaking under NMDOT Updates.

SERTPO Program Managers Update

Mary Ann Burr explained that the Roadway application cycle is ongoing. Five PFFs were forwarded to NMDOT for the City of Jal, City of Carlsbad, Curry County, City of Clovis and the City of Portales. Feasibility reviews have been scheduled for December 18, 2019 (SNMEDD) and December 19, 2019 (EPCOG). Final applications are due February 19, 2019.

The 2020 Paving and Transportation Conference is being held on January 8-10, 2020 (Albuquerque, New Mexico). Handouts were made available on the sign-in table. The Conference program should be available soon. The Legislature starts January 21, 2020.

Regarding the Regional Transportation Plan, Ms. Burr commented that she hopes to share pertinent data to share with members as we revisit the RTP's goals and objectives. Currently, awaiting the information from Freight and Technical Planning on datasets. Ms. Burr mentioned recent attendance to the NM Data Users Conference where she learned that the American FactFinder subsets in March of next year. Additional information is forthcoming on RTP coordination. Ms. Burr will be attending the SWREDA conference in Santa Fe on December 4-6th.

Ms. Burr reminded members that functional classification requests may be submitted at any time in the year and provided a description of the process. Recent discussions on the Roadway Program eligibility brought up road classes and possible requests for reclassification. In the past, there was a statewide review of functional classification, following the decennial census.

Sandy Chancey submitted its quarterly report to NMDOT, and it is available on their website. EPCOG has also submitted its Annual Performance and Expenditure Report, awaiting final approval from FHWA before being able to post online. Ms. Chancey brought up the short window of time to comment on the LGTPF rulemaking and mentioned that the Planner has submitted emails on free or low cost training as provided by UNM LTAP Program (posted at www.rtponm.org). She urged members to review the Regional Transportation Plan and offer comments. Ms. Chancey is also attending the SWREDA Conference, with staff. The SWREDA is a five-state association of Economic Planning Districts, which are all under the governance of the Austin EDA Office.

Ms. Chancey commented that may have a key staff member retire in the spring and will be doing a re-organization of EPCOG, to include staff changes.

Local Project Updates / NMDOT Update

Louis Matta, NMDOT, commented that D2 had a heavy letting schedule in October, with projects thinned out and spread out to February. They have a bridge replacement project in Texico, resurfacing east of Clovis, a big project south of Carlsbad (should be let in February) and projects going on in Carrizozo. Regarding LGTPF, there is still time to submit comments. The notice previously submitted has a link to the proposed Rule. Regarding the LGTPF recent cycle, each NMDOT District received \$8 million, and District 2 received \$10 million.

Sigrid Webb, NMDOT, explained that local governments have sent in their LGTPF contracts, six have been received back, and two (Lovington) have already requested disbursement. Clearances are not required for these agreements so the process will be easier. Applications for the road fund are due mid-March. Ms. Webb encouraged members to get started on applications in January or February, so applications will not be late. She reminded members of the funding ratios for LGTPF and LGRF. Todd Randall inquired on the total requests of the \$10 million awarded on LGTPF.

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Mr. Matta responded that it was \$34 million for the District. Mr. Najar inquired on the comments submitted for the rulemaking. Mr. Matta responded that some were looking for design funds and consistency throughout the state for the scoring process. Light discussion followed.

Local Government Comments/Issues (None)

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

MEETING DATE/ADJOURNMENT

March 26, 2020 was a tentative date selected for the next meeting, pending Library confirmation. John DeSha (Portales) made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Louis Najar (Roswell). Motion passed unanimously, and meeting adjourned at 11:52 a.m.

APPROVED BY:

Policy Committee Chair

Date

ATTESTED BY:

SERTPO Program Manager

Date