Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
Agenda for September 18, 2025

9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

9:00 Kelly Lowery, Lincoln County Attorney, to provide an update

9:30 Ronny Farmer with rfarmer, llc. to present the Lincoln County 2024 Audited Financial Statements

10:00 Kenny Wheeler with Arriba Wind to discuss potential bridge repairs

10:30 Kevin Stansbury, Lincoln Community Hospital CEO, to provide an LCH report

11:00 Michael Swartz, Fleet Consultant with United Fleet Services, to present on a leasing program for Sheriff Office vehicles

1:00 Rob Fager and Randy Hareld to discuss the Lincoln County Landfill policies

-To be completed as time permits-

---

1. Approve the minutes from the September 9, 2025, meeting
2. Approve the minutes from the September 15, 2025, meeting
3. Review August 2025 reports from the County Assessor, County Clerk & Recorder, County Sheriff and County Treasurer
4. Review August 2025 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for County General, Public Health, Capital Projects, Conservation Trust, E911, Landfill, Library, Lodging/Tourism, Human Services, Road & Bridge and Individual Road Districts
5. Review the August 2025 reports from the Colorado Counties Casualty and Property Pool and Workers' Compensation Pool
6. Review and act upon a renewal option with the County Health Pool
7. Review and act upon a notice of sale regarding the gravel pit formally known as the Brent Pit
8. Discuss the appointment of the official county newspaper
9. County Commissioner reports
10. County Administrator's report
11. Old Business
12. New Business

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on September 18, 2025. Chairman Wayne Ewing, commissioners Robert Safranek and Terry Jaques, county administrator Jacob Piper, and clerk of the Board Corinne M. Lengel attended. Land Use Administrator Ty Stogsdill was there when the meeting started.

Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Jaques said a prayer.

County Attorney Kelly Lowery joined the meeting via Teams to update the group on her recent activities. She promised to have the EBBA Road Use Agreement to them by the end of the day. Miss Lowery reviewed the Tri-State application again, but wanted to give it a more thorough look before the October hearings. She hadn't had time to complete the work on the Hugo Park donation, but would when she returned from her vacation. Miss Lowery had, however, reviewed the RockSol contracts and noted that since they involved a multi-fiscal appropriation, she needed to ensure nothing in them would harm the county. She, Mr. Piper, and Mrs. Lengel had worked on the TABOR notice information for the ballot issue; Mr. Piper would accept pro/con statements until Friday. He said he hadn't received any yet, but Mr. Jaques told him one should be coming from Tim Andersen and the Tourism Board. Miss Lowery told Mr. Piper that he wouldn't need to summarize comments if he only received one; Mrs. Lengel reminded him that it had to be five hundred words or less. Lastly, Miss Lowery said she wanted to work on a spreadsheet for land use projects to ensure better organization and prevent something from falling through the cracks. Miss Lowery disconnected from the meeting at 9:07 a.m.

Mr. Stogsdill felt the county needed a more substantial road use agreement or a regulation that addressed projects when they reached the maintenance stage. While he didn't expect to track every pickup or company truck that used Lincoln County roads, maintenance sometimes involved heavy cranes and equipment that created more than typical road usage. The more development the county experienced, the more road usage would be expected.

Mr. Ewing asked if there was anything in the septic regs that addressed hauling waste on county roads, but Mr. Stogsdill said there wasn't. He hoped to create a generic regulation that would cover all companies using the roads.

Mr. Jaques noted that developers constantly tear the roads up when they're wet; at least farmers will stop working when roads are muddy. Mr. Stogsdill said he would talk to Miss Lowery about it when she returned; Mr. Ewing suggested contacting Kit Carson County. Mr. Stogsdill left.

Mr. Jaques had found an error in the September 9 minutes, which Mrs. Lengel had corrected. Mr. Safranek moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 9, 2025, as corrected. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Jaques moved to approve the meeting minutes for September 15, 2025. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

The Board reviewed the August 2025 reports from the Assessor, Clerk & Recorder, and a partial Treasurer's report. The commissioners also reviewed the August 2025 statements of revenues and expenditures for the General, Public Health, Capital Projects, Conservation Trust, E911, Landfill, Library, Lodging/Tourism, Human Services, Road & Bridge funds, individual road district reports, and the August 2025 Colorado Counties Casualty and Property Pool and Workers' Compensation Pool reports.

Deputy Treasurer LaRay Patton arrived at 9:25 a.m., and Mr. Piper connected county auditor Ronny Farmer to the meeting via Teams so he could present the Lincoln County 2024 Audited Financial Statements. Once again, Mr. Farmer informed the group of his concerns regarding the county's pension plan, which was $3.7 million short at the end of 2024. He noted that the actuary's 2025 assumptions were $659,203, continuing the deficiency increase. Mr. Farmer said the county needed better investments, to make higher contributions to the plan, or to freeze it altogether and move to a defined contribution plan.

Mr. Piper said it would help to increase the employer and employee contributions by 1.5% and continue budgeting the annual $150,000 contribution to the plan. Mr. Jaques said they could always put in a large lump sum if the county received use tax on a project; Mr. Ewing noted it was just a band-aid and wouldn't fix the problem. Mr. Farmer agreed, recommending that the county consider applying all three of his suggestions. It was a long-term problem that they couldn't fix overnight, even if they dumped the entire $3.7 million into the plan; it would also require keeping up with the actuarial assumptions.

Mr. Farmer explained the balance sheet, noting that it reflected the county's cash position. He commended the county on ending the year with a $5 million fund balance in the General Fund. The income statements reflected revenues and expenditures, and while the four principal governmental funds (General, Road & Bridge, Human Services, and Capital Projects) showed deficiencies, the overall fund balances remained healthy. Mr. Farmer noted that they shouldn't ever be less than thirty percent of the expenditures, but if the spending trend continued, the county would be down to a million-dollar fund balance in three years. The General Fund balance should be no lower than $3 million, and the county couldn't sustain spending $1.5 million on equipment from the Road & Bridge fund. Mr. Farmer expressed his concern with the $20,000 Human Services payroll tax liability and said the new accountant needed to fix it by the end of the year; the accounts must balance with the state. He stated that overall, the county was in good financial shape, but it spent $1.6 million more than it took in last year.

Mr. Piper explained that the commissioners reduced the twelve-mill tax credit to six mills in 2025 to help with General Fund revenue. While it was a good idea, Mr. Farmer said that one year wouldn't fix it, and the county could never have too much cash; he recommended enough to operate the county for five years.

Mr. Farmer said that the statement of changes in custodial funds reflected a net position of $17.5 million; however, that didn't mean it was all county money. While the county would have to cover it if it ever experienced embezzlement, it was the amount due to all taxing entities as of

December 31. The sheriff's inmate account was also money that didn't belong to the county; it belonged to the inmates. Even though it wasn't an allowed expenditure, it remained a custodial fiduciary responsibility.

Mr. Farmer pointed out that there was significant information in the footnotes section of the audit, and he again mentioned the pension plan. Mr. Piper asked if freezing the plan meant turning it off for all employees; Mr. Farmer said it depended on how the plan was written. He didn't believe it would affect current employees; the county would continue to make contributions. However, all newly hired employees would fall under a defined contribution plan rather than a defined benefit plan. Mr. Farmer didn't recommend investing more aggressively since the market fluctuates; Mr. Piper said they had changed several of the investments around the beginning of the year, which had helped.

Mr. Farmer said the county always did a good job with budgeting, and while budgets should remain as accurate as possible, the commissioners should build in a contingency. He noted that there is no longer a requirement to spend Conservation Trust funds, so if the county had a specific project in mind that would fit the criteria, it could save up for it.

The Public Health Fund would see the effects of the state's budget deficit and laws filtering down from the White House, mainly because of Medicare and Medicaid. Mr. Farmer recommended keeping Public Health minimally funded since the county couldn't spend that money on anything other than Public Health; it couldn't transfer money from it to another fund, as in some other cases.

While Mr. Farmer said the Landfill Fund balance was in good shape, closure and post-closure costs created a $350,000 liability. He noted that many counties have closed their landfills, and while it costs their residents more, the counties don't have to worry about the EPA and continuous, stringent state requirements.

Mr. Farmer briefly mentioned the local highway finance report, the expenditures of federal awards (grants), and single-audit requirements.

Kenny Wheeler, with Allium Renewable Energy, arrived at 9:50 a.m.

Mr. Farmer noted that there were no compliance or internal control issues and repeated that the county was in a good position overall. He commended Finance Director Andrea Hendricks for continuing to do an exemplary job with the county's accounting, impressed that she and LaRay Patton had balanced the Cash with the County Treasurer for only the second or third time in decades. He and Deputy Clerk Ryan Davis had discussed reconciling the two departments more cleanly; Mr. Farmer noted that while it wasn't and hadn't been wrong, there were better ways to account for disbursements properly.

Mr. Piper informed Mr. Farmer that the commissioners agreed to place a lodging tax increase ballot issue on the November ballot; Mr. Farmer hoped the taxpayers approved it, noting that it didn't affect county residents, but travelers. Mr. Jaques mentioned that the sheriff was looking at leasing patrol vehicles, which they hoped would also save quite a bit of money.

Mr. Farmer disconnected from the meeting, and Mrs. Patton left at 10:10 a.m.

Mr. Jaques asked Mr. Piper to compile the information regarding the pension plan for the following week's budget meeting.

The commissioners and Mr. Wheeler briefly discussed increased energy costs and closed water systems before bringing up the topic of funding the Arikaree bridge project. Mr. Wheeler explained that he was on a fact-finding mission and would have to write a proposal for Lotus, the project owners, as neither he nor Taylor Henderson could make the decision. He asked for the county's timelines, stating that the Arriba Wind project would owe a lot of money for the building permit when they got to that point. Mr. Piper noted that he would have to submit the grant application by November 7, and Mr. Jaques said the county committed to hiring RockSol Consulting to engineer the project, which would cost roughly $286,000. RockSol wouldn't complete the engineering before the county applied, but it hoped to have the plans close to fifty percent finished. Mr. Jaques noted that the bridge's condition, traffic flow (the bridge spans a critical Lincoln County road that connects to a state highway), and the project's proximity to being shovel-ready were contributing factors they hoped would help with the grant approval.

Mr. Ewing informed Mr. Wheeler that, since the Arriba Wind project would utilize the bridge extensively, the commissioners hoped Lotus would cover the design and engineering costs. He said the county needed the company's help and didn't intend to reduce the building permit cost. Mr. Jaques added that the Board agreed to move forward with the grant application now so that the bridge would be ready when Lotus wanted to start the project. Construction should take seven to twelve months; the county hoped to begin next year and anticipated finishing by mid-2027.

Mr. Wheeler said that their biggest question was about the fees they would have to pay, stating that projects were always a gamble until construction started. Allowing them to deduct the $286,000 from the future building permit cost would be an easy sell to Lotus. Mr. Ewing told him there was no benefit to the county in deducting that much from the building permit fee, and Mr. Safranek stated that the county was pushing for the bridge solely for the benefit of the Arriba Wind project.

Mr. Wheeler said it wasn't 100% clear that they would have to use the Arikaree bridge to haul the components to the site; however, if they determined it would cost more to use an alternate route, they would likely use the bridge. He felt that the county would benefit by receiving the $286,000 if the FAA didn't approve the permit; even though the project was seventy percent Safe-Harbored, the FAA still had to approve it, and they had to sell the power at a reasonable rate.

Mr. Jaques asked Mr. Wheeler to take the proposition to his board. If they wouldn't commit to paying the full $286,000, he asked what they could pay. Mr. Ewing agreed with the suggestion based on the Arriba Wind project starting construction; if something happened to stop the project, the county wouldn't expect Lotus to pay the $286,000.

Mr. Wheeler had misunderstood and thought the county was asking for the money up front, but Mr. Jaques clarified that the commissioners were only asking for a written commitment for the restoration of funds; the county would pay RockSol's bill when it received it. Mr. Piper added that with an agreement that Arriba Wind would contribute to the project, the county wouldn't have to include the design cost in the grant application, which would significantly improve its chances. Mr. Wheeler felt confident he could pitch the idea to Lotus with the clarification provided. Lincoln County residents having a new bridge that the Arriba Wind project used for eighteen months created a victory for both parties.

Mr. Ewing told Mr. Wheeler about the county's issues with companies using heavy equipment on county roads when maintaining their existing towers; the commissioners were considering adding a road use agreement or regulation that covered maintenance. Mr. Wheeler said other counties did the same; it made sense to have a standing contract with for-profit companies that covered road damage, no matter what stage a project was in.

Mr. Wheeler promised to contact Tony Johnson in District 2 and close out the current Road Use Agreement. Before he left, he said that Tri-State was easy to work with, and they hoped to tie up their power purchase agreement by year's end. He noted that if anything could stop the project, it was the FAA, but they remained hopeful and continued to work with the thirty-plus landowners.

Administrative Assistant Casey Love brought the August 2025 Sheriff's report to Mr. Piper, which the Board reviewed while waiting for Lincoln Health CEO Kevin Stansbury, who arrived at 10:45 a.m.

Mr. Stansbury explained why the financial reports didn't appear in the Board's packets and provided paper copies of a PowerPoint regarding rural healthcare solutions and statistics from the national level. He also promised to give the rationale for closing the Hugo assisted living center, Heritage Living. The document explained financial instability, rural hospital closures, and short and long-term solutions. Mr. Jaques commented that Lincoln Health offered some services at an extreme loss to the facility; Mr. Stansbury agreed and said the ER was one of the worst, but they couldn't close it.

Michael Swartz with Unified Fleet Services arrived at 10:50 a.m. Sheriff Tom Nestor, Undersheriff Gordon Nall, and Captain Michael Yowell arrived at 10:55 a.m.

Mr. Stansbury said the hospital needed to offer fixed services that would support it in the future, but it was hard to bring services back once they had cut them. As for cutting costs, Mr. Stansbury said they'd made significant changes that resulted in a $140,000 monthly savings.

Mr. Jaques asked how they accomplished it; Mr. Stansbury told him they restructured staffing of several programs, making them more effective. They are also renegotiating the contract with their CT provider and reviewing everything to meet their cost reduction goals. Mr. Stansbury noted that the hospital must maintain core services such as inpatient and primary care, and emergency services, while balancing independence with collaboration. They had discussed forming a hospital district but had heard rumors from others regarding board turmoil, inconsistencies, and CEO turnover.

Mr. Stansbury provided the reasoning for closing Heritage Living, noting that they could no longer justify keeping it open, as they had lost approximately $370,000 over the last ten years. There were other local assisted living options available for the seven residents, four of whom moved into Aspen Leaf. Three of the six staff members returned to work at the hospital; they eliminated the other three positions, but allowed the employees to apply for alternate positions. Mr. Stansbury said they would save around $20,000 a month by closing the facility.

Mr. Stansbury said that Colorado should receive $100 million a year for five years to support rural hospitals; the Colorado Rural Health Center would apply for the funds. Mr. Stansbury said that rural hospitals must benefit, and the money should go to true rural communities with fewer than 50,000 residents. He noted that communities should be able to decide how to spend those funds; they would need the support of the commissioners, as well as that of other stakeholders. Mr. Jaques asked if there was a deadline; Mr. Stansbury told him the grant application was due on November 5, and they should hear by the end of the year.

Mr. Stansbury said other hospitals had issues with Anthem, so they hoped to band together at a meeting next week. Mr. Jaques told him he'd attended the County Health Pool meeting; they were confident about a resolution with Anthem. Anthem also planned to continue offering single and personal healthcare plans to individual county residents.

Mr. Stansbury left, and the Board listened to a presentation from Michael Swartz concerning Unified Fleet Services' lease program for law enforcement vehicles. Sheriff Nestor said he had talked with several other departments at his conference; most that switched to the program liked it so far.

Mr. Swartz explained that the program wasn't like dealership leasing; there were no penalties, fees, or mileage restrictions. The company could lease vehicles at a quarter of the cost of purchasing because of their procurement process; buying in bulk provided tremendous discounts.

Mr. Ewing asked if they bought from local dealerships. Mr. Swartz said they would do whatever the county wanted them to, but if buying locally wasn't a priority, they would use their contacts and buy vehicles wherever they found the lowest bid. Doing so would also provide a quicker turnaround as far as upfitting. In-state upfitters took about a year per vehicle; Unified could have cars to departments within three or four months, six at the most. Mr. Swartz said they also work with several financial lenders that give them excellent interest rates; the more vehicles leased, the cheaper the interest rates. Not only did the company offer leases on law enforcement vehicles, but the county could also lease cars for any department, including heavy equipment and road graders.

As far as liquidating the county's old vehicles, Mr. Swartz said they do it for free; the county would receive the money for anything Unified sold. Sheriff Nestor asked if it could be a credit toward future leases; Mr. Swartz said they could issue a check or treat it as a credit on account.

The leased vehicles are all new units; Mr. Swartz didn't recommend used because the new ones carried warranties, and the resale value was higher. Banks were also more willing to lower the interest rate on new vehicles. When Mr. Jaques asked if maintenance was the county's responsibility, Mr. Swartz said that if the county constantly rotated the units in its fleet, they would always be under warranty. A three-year turnaround yielded the most benefits in terms of resale and maintenance. The sheriff said they had to replace a motor in one vehicle and a transmission in another this year; those costs would not occur with the lease program.

If the county wasn't happy with the program at any time, Mr. Swartz said it could pay off the remaining balances with no additional fees. He expressed that nothing would change as far as routine maintenance, such as service jobs, and if the department wrecked a vehicle or the weather damaged one, the county would submit an insurance claim as if they owned it.

Sheriff Nestor wanted Mr. Swartz to provide the cost if the county leased five vehicles and gave the company five of its old units to sell. Mr. Swartz said he would take pictures after the meeting and provide an official estimate.

Bodie Taylor, who had joined the meeting online, suggested a five-year lease when the sheriff said he wanted to replace the K-9 unit. The cost and time involved to upfit a K-9 unit were more than those of a patrol unit. However, when the sheriff told him the K-9 person is also a patrol deputy who can put 20,000 to 30,000 miles on a vehicle in a year, Mr. Taylor changed his mind.

Captain Yowell asked if the county would get money back at the end of each year, at least for the first few years, when they traded in some of the old units. Mr. Taylor said the county would save money on decommissioning fees; when agencies return vehicles at the end of their lease term, Unified resells them with the equipment. He said it wasn't cost-effective to decommission them when equipment becomes obsolete as often as it does.

Sheriff Nestor asked if a four-year lease would mean losing the warranty; Mr. Taylor said the residual value dropped significantly, and Mr. Swartz added that while a three-year lease meant a higher payment, the return at the end of that period would be much higher. The resale value of a Chevy Tahoe was excellent because it was a vehicle everyone wanted, even used.

Mr. Ewing said the Extension office wanted a twelve to sixteen-passenger van and asked if a longer lease would make more sense. Mr. Taylor responded that the county would still be better off rotating the vehicle sooner, given the residual value; they could sell it for more if it had lower mileage. Mr. Jaques said the county might look into it for other departments later on. Mr. Taylor said the county should consider leasing heavy equipment; the option provided substantial discounts. Undersheriff Nall suggested that the program might also be an option for the road supervisor pickups.

Sheriff Nestor said Captain Yowell had suggested the program last year, but he hadn't done enough research to feel comfortable with the idea. Since then, he has contacted numerous agencies about it. When putting together his 2026 budget, the sheriff said he priced three Tahoes, with the state bid of $58,000 and upfitting of approximately $25,000 to $30,000, his request was $265,000. If he figured it correctly, they could lease five units for $25,000 each ($125,000) and sell five for approximately $20,000 each in the first year, paying roughly $25,000 for five vehicles. They could do the same in years two and three because they would still have that many units in the current fleet to replace with leased ones.

Undersheriff Nall said they needed to let Vince's Chevrolet know today if they weren't ordering three new Tahoes. Mr. Taylor said they could ask Vince's to match the bid, which is what they did for Kit Carson County, since the dealership is in-county.

The sheriff said they would need to discuss it with the commissioners; Mr. Taylor disconnected, and Mr. Swartz left the room to allow a private discussion.

After rehashing some of the highlights, Mr. Piper asked the officers to compare their vehicle maintenance expenses with the quote when they received it; it should help determine if the program would pay off in the long run. He expressed his concern with being locked into budgeting $380,000 or more in later years, noting that they had removed a car from the Capital Projects budget this year to cut costs; they wouldn't be able to do that with the lease program.

Mr. Jaques said he was in favor of trying the program, at least for the sheriff's department to start with, and the sheriff also felt it was the right time to do it. Mr. Ewing agreed to try it; Mr. Safranek thought it could be painful when the county is fully invested in the program, but the savings in maintenance and decommissioning costs would help. Mr. Piper noted that if they could lease and sell in the same year, the budget would look better. He added that they could budget the expense in the Capital Projects Fund but deposit the reimbursements in the General Fund. The county could also start repurchasing the vehicles if it came to that.

Mr. Piper said they would need to find out when to file insurance claims; Mr. Safranek asked if CTSI covered leases, and Mr. Piper said it did.

The sheriff said they needed to contact Vince's and stop their order, and the officers left.

The Board reviewed a renewal option with the County Health Pool; Mr. Piper said it was better than last year, but the county still went up another two percent to 8.65%. The whole pool went to 6.65%. Mr. Jaques didn't know the industry average but felt sticking with the pool was the best option. He said at least four counties had left the pool and now wanted to rejoin because the rates of the companies they'd switched to had skyrocketed.

Mr. Safranek moved to renew the county's membership with the County Health Pool for 2026. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Jaques noted that leaving the pool exposed the county to an extreme risk and that the other counties' actions proved it.

The Board reviewed a notice of sale regarding the gravel pit formally known as the Brent Pit. The commissioners agreed not to require a minimum bid since the county had the right to refuse any or all bids. Mr. Jaques moved to approve the notice for publication, Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Piper had received price quotes from the Ranchland News and the Mile Saver Shopper; the former was slightly higher.

Rob Fager, with Rob's Septic Service, arrived at 1:00 p.m., and Lincoln County Sheriff's Sergeant Cole Britten attended the meeting from 1:00 p.m. until 1:45 p.m.

Mr. Ewing asked if either paper seemed to have a more straightforward submittal process; Mr. Piper said he spoke with someone at the Ranchland News, and they have basically the exact requirements the Limon Leader did. Departments can email their submissions, which Ranchland News will format and print. The Mile Saver Shopper was a bit different. Mr. Ewing said the fair board agreed to have the Ranchland News print the fair books.

Mr. Jaques moved to designate the Ranchland News as the official Lincoln County newspaper, effective November 1, 2025. Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Jaques said he'd invited Mr. Fager and Randy Hareld to the meeting to discuss landfill policies and determine if there was something the county could do to benefit all parties. Mr. Fager said the changes had already helped, but he wanted to know why the landfill rounded up to the nearest quarter when he brought in a load weighing 4.01 tons. Mr. Safranek believed it was to help pay for the scales.

Mr. Jaques asked what Mr. Fager brought to the landfill that created problems; he said the containers he collected at Limon Correctional Facility held one wet and one dry load. While the landfill accepted the dry load, it refused the wet load, which he didn't understand because it was still food grade, the same as what trash trucks brought in. He also noted that the roll-off was completely sealed.

Mr. Jaques asked how much Mr. Fager estimated he took to other landfills; Mr. Fager guessed he took ninety-nine percent of his loads out of the county, which was an approximate $90,000 loss of county revenue annually. He said he spends $8,000 to $14,000 in Bennett every month.

Mr. Jaques asked if specific regulations required the county not to accept mixed loads; Mr. Ewing said the landfill compactor couldn't handle it. Mr. Fager argued that Lincoln County's compactor was the same size and design as the one in Bennett. Mr. Safranek felt it was because Lincoln County didn't have the capacity in the current cell.

Mr. Fager said he could be one of the county's biggest customers, but that the staff was difficult to work with. He noted that he hadn't had the same problems when Mick Jaques ran the landfill. Mr. Jaques said the county needed to maintain good working relationships with residents and customers. Mr. Fager said his business had grown so much that he'd added employees and felt he could bring a lot of revenue to the county. He suggested building a pad from compacted trash instead of making customers back into the dumping area and potentially flattening tires with the nails on the ground.

Mr. Ewing promised to address Mr. Fager's concerns, and Mr. Fager said he appreciated the opportunity to provide input. While he understood the landfill staff had jobs to do, he didn't understand why everything automatically received a negative response.

When Mr. Fager asked if he could have his charge account back, Mr. Safranek said he'd already spoken with the landfill staff about it, and they should have said something to him.

Mr. Fager appreciated the fact that the county didn't want to fill up the landfill with tons of out-of-county trash, but it didn't make sense for him to separate everything based on his routes.

When Mr. Ewing asked how many full dumpsters he could fit in his truck, Mr. Fager said he could get 45-50 in his smaller truck, and 60 in the big one because it compacts the trash each time. He said it was expensive to take everything to Bennett, so he sometimes used a landfill in Colorado Springs.

Mr. Safranek asked how the Karval route was going; Mr. Fager said it was going well and people were happy. He commended Mr. Safranek and thanked him for what he had done to help those residents.

Mr. Fager left at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Ewing called for the commissioners' reports. Mr. Jaques met with Bruce Walters at the Genoa shop after the September 9 meeting. He delivered a check for the purchase of a plow truck, and they discussed the status of repairing storm-damaged roads. Mr. Jaques attended the fair board meeting, where they listed all the positives and negatives of this year's fair, with a significant contribution from the public. They voted to allow stud horses to participate in future events, subject to strict safety monitoring. They scheduled an additional meeting in October to address public input, following the lengthy meeting. The fair board discussed a proposal and selected a committee to review options to add another building/arena at the fairgrounds, with possible horse stable options.

On September 11, Mr. Jaques attended the County Health Pool board meeting, where they covered and approved 2026 rate increases. Rates increased 6.65% overall, with the most significant percentage of 8.5% being dental coverage. They filled the three open board seats with existing members and selected officers for 2026. Anthem representatives gave a presentation and stated they were confident about an agreement with Lincoln Health. Mr. Jaques asked if the insurance company would stop offering individual health plans; representatives said Anthem had decided to continue offering individual health plan coverage in Colorado. Also at the CHP meeting, Mr. Jaques learned that they hope to find a buyer for the 800 Grant Street building via a public auction on September 24. They set a bid minimum, so if the auction is unsuccessful, they will continue to market the building. They are currently reviewing proposals to add four counties to the pool, some of which had previously left. Mr. Jaques and Mr. Ewing attended the CCI meeting in Akron on September 12; they listened to several presentations and participated in a health roundtable.

On September 15, Mr. Jaques discussed roads and projects with Tony Johnson. He later attended the commissioner meeting in Hugo. At the September 16 Tourism Board meeting, they approved a request from the Pirate Alumni Association for $1,500 for a band. They also approved $5,000 for the 12 Days of Christmas lighting display for the Town's Railroad Park. Additional information covered advertisements and social media posts to promote county events. They talked about the 150/250 celebration, recognition for Centennial Farms at the county fair, and marketing the Arriba Haunted House.

On September 17, Mr. Jaques attended the Economic Development meeting, where Troy McCue presented the following updates: the Hugo Main Street program disbanded; Mainstreet Mama's in Hugo sold to new owners that want to open a retail boutique store; Lincoln Health announced it would close the Heritage Care Center; Stockmen's Bank is purchasing a commercial property in Hugo; Limon Auto Solutions is under contract by a new company in equipment sales; Monks Law Office in downtown Limon is under contract for a new business; three companies have expressed interest in the former Denver Cutlery, including the town of Limon; Lica's Mexican Diner is set to open this week; Southside has opened with strong reviews; Brown Funeral Services is signing a contract on a downtown location; The Limon Leader moved up its closing date; Big Ben's RV Park in Arriba is doing well with 30 camper spaces rented, as well as other local RV lots due to renewable projects and transmission lines in neighboring counties; the Super 8 Motel is under new ownership; and the Baymont Hotel is struggling. The Health Department shut down the K&S motel on the east side of Limon, the owner of the Version business purchased the building from Hawthorne's, Limon received $113,000 to support the Limon Rec department, and additional funds to support the library. The town also received an FAA grant and will repair concrete on the Limon Airport runway and taxiway. The town of Genoa is working with GMS Consulting Engineers on lowering nitrate levels in the drinking water.

Mr. Jaques also reported that District 2 finished hauling sixty-five loads of fill dirt from a Limon location to the Genoa shop for future road repairs. Tony Johnson and Ty Stogsdill met with the state inspector and approved the closure of the C&D and Saffer gravel pits.

Mr. Ewing reported attending the September 9 fair board meeting; superintendents and other meeting attendees discussed the good things that happened at the fair and things that needed improvement. Stacy Loutzenhiser presented a proposal for a new show building; the group created a committee of seven people to look into possibilities. Raejean Palko reported on the Colorado Anniversary (150) and USA (250) ideas, Linda James suggested a 4-H General Project Sale idea, and Corrin Perry was supposed to provide a report on a building, but was not present. They discussed veterinary check-in and the news of the Limon Leader going out of business. The fair board voted to use the Ranchland News to print the fair books. They planned to meet again on October 21 to discuss the items discussed and brought up at the September meeting.

On September 11, Mr. Ewing and Chris Monks discussed flooded roads and a cattle guard on County Road 2P that needed cleaning out.

Mr. Ewing attended the Eastern CCI meeting in Akron on September 12. They discussed some 2026 legislative proposals and which ones should be priority bills; they had an excellent roundtable discussion. CSU Extension gave a nice report and provided the noon meal. Every county attending expressed concerns with landfill regulations. He and Mr. Jaques commented on MMOF projects, Landfill regs, a possible new show barn, the hospital, tourism, road equipment, Anthem insurance, vehicle purchases vs. renting, bridges and funding, the county newspaper, wind farms and solar panel projects, economic development and economics, fire districts, childcare, housing, and the courthouse parking lot. Mr. Ewing also reported that Structures worked on grinding the Big Sandy Bridge expansion joints that day.

Mr. Ewing checked some District 1 roads on September 13 and found a lot of flood damage. He also inspected the cattle guard that needed cleaning out and the Big Sandy Bridge, which still required additional cleanup.

On September 15, Mr. Ewing and Mr. Monks decided that fixing County Highway 63 was a priority before moving to other flooded areas and mowing; District 3 agreed to bring a couple of trucks to help. District 1 ran one mower while everyone else concentrated on fixing Highway 63. Mr. Ewing attended an EMS update luncheon and the brief commissioner meeting. He and the other commissioners went out to the fairgrounds afterward to look at where they could expand the show barn.

Mr. Ewing attended the September 16 Tourism Board meeting. They approved a $1,500 request from the Pirate Alumni Association for a back alley concert and a $5,000 request from the Hugo business group for a 12 Days of Christmas park lighting project. They discussed putting together a TABOR positive blue book report. Mr. Ewing attended the Genoa town board meeting, where they discussed working on the bus barn to make it more usable for equipment storage. The water is still high in nitrates, but it is safe for adults, not infants. They were doing a lot of mowing and blading by the town pumps. Mr. Ewing noted that they are dealing with a deficit that concerns him.

On September 17, Mr. Ewing checked some roads and stopped at the county shop. He took produce to the crew and the employee recovering from the accident; he was doing exceptionally well. District 1 received the new mower. Mr. Ewing attended a Bookmobile meeting and reported that their audiobook check-out was doing quite well; the content is very age-appropriate. They continue the search for a new bookmobile and plan to reach out to the urban libraries and bookmobiles for a used one; he suggested they also look into DOLA funding. Mr. Ewing contacted Sheriff Nestor about outside outlets at the Limon substation, as the county needs a place to plug in the bookmobile. They approved the budget and scheduled the next meeting for January 21, 2026.

Mr. Safranek reported speaking to Candace Payne with Prairie Development Corporation on September 10. Contacting her about the slow progress of DOLA funding apparently helped move the Karval housing project along more quickly, for which Karval School Superintendent Sarah Nuss was extremely grateful. Mr. Safranek checked several District 3 roads on September 13. He spoke with Judd Kravig about the trade-in on the road grader they hope to replace. Mr. Safranek noted that, in the future, they needed to take better care when installing 800 MHz radios; whoever installed them in two of their four road graders drilled into the rollover protection structure, which will reduce the trade-in by $12,000.

Mr. Piper reported that County Coroner Andrew Lorensen requested an increase in the credit limit of his coroner credit card from $3,500 to $5,000. Mr. Jaques moved to approve the increase, and Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Piper had received concerns from employees about the potential leave policy changes, specifically regarding the ability to carry over unused time. They would like the commissioners to consider increasing the cap and wanted to meet with them at the next meeting.

The only other business concerned the culverts for District 2; Mr. Jaques said he would wait until next year, when they had the money. Mr. Safranek suggested that if they weren't using the bridge money this year, there was no reason why Mr. Jaques shouldn't go ahead and order them now. Mr. Jaques said he would accept the low bid and move forward.

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Ewing adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m. The next meeting will be the annual budget meeting at 9:00 a.m. on September 23, 2025.

________________________________ ________________________________

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk of the Board — Wayne E. Ewing, Chairman