

Board of County Commissioners of Lincoln County
Agenda for November 19, 2025

- 9:00 Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance
- 9:00 Kelly Meier, Public Health Director, to discuss the 2026 Public Health preliminary budget
- 9:30 Tom Nestor, Lincoln County Sheriff, to discuss courthouse closures
- 11:00 Ty Stogsdill, Land Use Administrator, to discuss Land Use matters

-To be completed as time permits-

1. Approve the minutes from the November 7, 2025, meeting
2. Review October 2025 reports from the County Assessor, County Clerk & Recorder, County Sheriff and County Treasurer
3. Review October 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
4. Review the October 2025 reports from the Colorado Counties Casualty and Property Pool and Workers' Compensation Pool
5. Review the preliminary 2026 Lincoln County Budget
6. Review board appointments for 2026
7. County Commissioner reports
8. County Attorney's report
9. County Administrator's report
10. Old Business
11. New Business

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. on November 19, 2025. Chairman Wayne Ewing, commissioners Robert Safranek and Terry Jaques, county administrator Jacob Piper, and clerk of the Board Corinne M. Lengel attended.

Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order, asked Mrs. Lengel to lead the Pledge of Allegiance, and said a prayer.

Mr. Safranek moved to approve the amended minutes from the November 7, 2025, meeting. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

At 9:04 a.m., Mr. Ewing recessed the Board of County Commissioners meeting and opened the Lincoln County Board of Public Health meeting to meet with Public Health Director Kelly Meier. Mrs. Meier said she had adjusted several expenses in her 2026 budget request because those line items would exceed this year's budget, primarily due to an active TB case. Having had no experience with such situations, Mrs. Meier said that following the state TB team's rules had proven costly and complex. For example, the team instructed her that she was required to travel to the patient's home twice daily, seven days a week, to observe the patient physically taking their medications. The department spent quite a bit on an interpreter since the patient only speaks Spanish. As a result, Mrs. Meier said she would over-expend her contract labor and travel line items this year, which was why she increased them for 2026.

Lastly, Mrs. Meier said she increased the medical supplies by \$1,000 due to the TB case. Mr. Jaques asked whether the department supplied the medication for free; Mrs. Meier told him it does, along with pill dispensers, test tubes, and coolers for transporting specimens. She added that she had many unanswered questions, but according to her peers in the Northeast Region, the state TB team is hard to work with and lacks sufficient communication. When she began involving Rebecca Herman, the regional epidemiologist, things improved considerably.

Mrs. Meier increased the repairs and maintenance line item by \$500, but said if the Board wanted to reduce it back, that was fine. She had raised it because of this year's overage. She also increased the telephone line item because the department uses cell phones and iPads for tobacco work, which ELC reimburses. However, since it is COVID-19 funding, they continue to hear that the funding will end. While she had increased those line items, Mrs. Meier said that the cost for renting office space in Limon would drop significantly if the commissioners approved the contract with Peak Vista.

Mr. Jaques asked if she had the contract with her and said the Board had already worked through the details. He noted that Peak Vista would likely appreciate having the Public Health presence in the building. Mrs. Meier agreed, stating that it should maximize their WIC services.

County Assessor Jeremiah Higgins arrived at 9:20 a.m.

Mrs. Meier told the Board that County Attorney Kelly Lowery reviewed the lease agreement and suggested several changes, which Peak Vista agreed with. While reviewing the document, Mr.

Jaques noticed that if Peak Vista didn't receive the monthly payment by the third of the month, they would charge a \$10-per-day penalty. Mrs. Meier said that they had paid Tracy Grimes for six months at a time to avoid that issue and suggested doing the same with Peak Vista.

Court Clerk Kim Graham arrived at 9:25 a.m., followed by IT Director James Martin.

The last thing Mrs. Meier wanted to discuss was that she was working on an EPR budget amendment; the grant won't reimburse for the time that EPR Coordinator Ken Stroud has been out on medical leave. She is trying to amend the grant to allow reimbursement of the hours she spends working on EPR. Mr. Piper said they needed to schedule a virtual meeting for mid-December to discuss EPR.

Land Use Administrator Ty Stogsdill, Treasurer Ashley Erwin, and Deputy Treasurer LaRay Patton, arrived at 9:28 a.m.

Mr. Jaques moved to sign the lease agreement between Lincoln County Public Health and Peak Vista for office space rental in Limon. Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

At 9:32 a.m., as Extension Office Assistant Tiffany Stewart arrived and Mrs. Meier left, Mr. Ewing adjourned the Board of Public Health meeting and reconvened the Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Mr. Piper informed the group that the sheriff wouldn't be able to keep his 9:30 a.m. appointment and asked the commissioners whether they wanted him to lead the discussion on weather-related courthouse closings and delays. They did, and Mr. Piper provided a draft policy authorizing the sheriff and the administrator to work together to determine and schedule delays and closures during inclement weather. The department heads had agreed that closures should always start with a two-hour delay if assessed the night before. County and court employees would receive notice via the sheriff's new emergency alert system by 5:30 a.m., with a full closure notice no later than 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Jaques asked if the policy needed to include the Emergency Manager's involvement. Mr. Piper said that the sheriff typically consulted with Mr. Stroud, who served as the middleman between the National Weather Service and the sheriff's office. Mr. Piper said they didn't want to rely solely on NWS, but would continue to participate in their briefings.

The commissioners agreed it was a good idea, since sheriff's deputies were the ones patrolling the county and could report on the conditions. Mr. Piper asked if they wanted to adopt the policy as part of the personnel manual or make it a stand-alone policy. The Board agreed to the latter on a trial basis for the season.

Mrs. Graham asked when county personnel cleared the parking lot; Mr. Ewing said it was typically a little after 7:00 a.m. She commented that they were sometimes still clearing the lot

when employees arrived. Mr. Jaques said there was no guarantee of when the crew would arrive at the courthouse to plow and suggested that, if the storm was severe enough, the county could consider a 4-hour delay instead of 2 hours.

The group thanked the commissioners and left.

The Board reviewed the October 2025 reports from the Assessor, Clerk & Recorder, Sheriff, Treasurer, and Public Trustee.

The commissioners also reviewed the October 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 October 2025 Colorado Counties Casualty and Property Pool and Workers' Compensation Pool reports.

Mr. Piper hadn't changed much on the 2026 preliminary budget, stating that Sheriff Nestor had decreased the overinflated repairs and maintenance line item. He also reduced the metal detector staff salaries, as they had inadvertently doubled them. The General Fund balance would drop from \$5.8 million to \$4.6 million if the county spent all the requested amounts, resulting in a \$1.2 million hit. Mr. Piper said that the amount included the 6-mill property tax credit.

Mr. Jaques said he didn't feel good about it, and the county couldn't continue on that path, but he saw no other option for the coming year than to accept the impact on the fund balance.

Mr. Piper noted that the county typically budgets a deficit, but it's usually under \$1 million. If the commissioners took back 2.5 of the 6-mill credit, the deficit would be \$800,000 instead of \$1.2 million. Mr. Piper's reason for the recommendation was that the county would likely see lower tax revenue from 2025 property taxes, due to the lower assessment rate. He said that the assessor or his deputy could better explain it and suggested scheduling a meeting with them.

All other funds looked good, according to Mr. Piper. Major Road and Bridge projects would dictate the Road & Bridge fund balance, and the Human Services Fund would base its budget on allocations. He had moved a quarter of a mill from the Human Services Fund to the Public Health Agency Fund. Mr. Piper had figured the three-step increase for the Library Fund personnel, even though they were part-time, as he felt it would maintain consistency. There were no changes to the Conservation Trust Fund, and the only adjustment Mr. Piper made to the E911 Fund was the three-step COLA for the one sheriff's employee whose salary the fund covers; the E911 surcharge covers the rest.

Mr. Piper had adjusted the Capital Projects Fund in accordance with the commissioners' recommendations. They agreed to reduce it even farther by cutting the \$25,000 in the parking lot line item to \$5,000 in case the county needed to provide a match for a new ECCOG bus or

van. The Capital Projects fund balance would drop from \$1.7 million to \$800,000 if the county completed all the projects listed. Mr. Jaques asked how they could rebuild it; Mr. Piper said the county used to allocate two mills to Capital Projects. Mr. Jaques wondered if they could deposit the 2% impact fees from renewable energy projects into the fund. Mr. Piper said the commissioners could do whatever was necessary, but a portion of those fees typically went into the retirement fund.

Mr. Jaques asked about applying for FEMA funds for the courthouse generator and whether they should budget for the 20% match. Mr. Safranek said he'd like to see what happened with the Mitigation Planning grant first and wanted further information from Captain Yowell. He clarified that the county received Disaster Relief FEMA funds for the bridge project, while mitigation funds were for planning, such as the generator.

Mr. Piper said there were no changes to the Landfill and Lodging Tax/Tourism funds, and then the group discussed the modifications that Mrs. Meier had requested. Mr. Piper worried that Public Health was heavily grant-funded, which was his reasoning for moving the quarter mill from Human Services. The commissioners agreed that Mrs. Meier didn't need to overinflate line items for 2026 because she overspent them this year, and dropped the travel line item back to \$2,500. Mr. Piper said he would move the \$500 increase in the repairs and maintenance line item back to the estimated current year and suggested that the commissioners keep an eye on mileage reimbursements. If the van were to stay at the annex, employees should use it instead of their personal vehicles.

Land Use Administrator Ty Stogsdill returned at 10:55 a.m.

The last budget to review was for Lincoln Health; Mr. Piper explained that the county must provide the hospital with the voter-approved four mills, but the commissioners control the three voluntary mills the county contributes. Mr. Ewing recommended leaving them for now, with the understanding that the county might need them later. Mr. Piper noted that although the General Fund Budget Summary reflects thirty-one mills required, four of those were the hospital's, and six were the property tax credit. He said the commissioners didn't need to decide right away, but should do so soon. He asked if they were okay with the three-step COLA and retirement contribution increases, which they were.

The group took a quick break while County Attorney Kelly Lowery joined the call via Teams. She said that they needed to finalize some things regarding the consultant fee, including adding the language to all county regulations. While the costs would be the county's at first, they would later be the developers' responsibility. Miss Lowery noted that having a consultant bolstered the county's review process and that it was much better to address issues proactively rather than deal with them in litigation afterward.

Mr. Stogsdill said he'd been very transparent during the pre-permit meetings he'd held over the past couple of weeks; a couple of the companies he met with had nothing but good things to say about SWCA Environmental Consultants. He hadn't yet sent the regulations to the firm

because he wanted clear instructions on what to send. Mr. Jaques said SWCA couldn't provide a cost estimate until they saw the regs, but Mr. Stogsdill said they never agreed on specifically what he should send them. Since his current dealings were with wind and solar energy developers, he wondered if that was where he should start. Mr. Ewing mentioned transmission line regs, and Mr. Piper said they often coincided in the permit application. The Board agreed that Mr. Stogsdill should send the county's Special Use Review, wind, solar, and transmission line regulations to SWCA Environmental Consultants for a cost estimate.

Mr. Jaques asked whether the county could afford to pay the fee this year; Mr. Piper said they could use the remaining \$71,000 from the Capital Projects Fund's not specifically identified line item. Miss Lowery suggested authorizing a "not to exceed" amount to would keep the project moving while allowing continued communication between the county and the consultant.

Mr. Jaques moved to hire SWCA Environmental Consultants to review the county's Special Use Review, wind, solar, and transmission line regulations, up to \$25,000, before requesting additional funds and providing a prioritization schedule. Mr. Safranek seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Stogsdill said he would like to schedule another work session with the Land Use Board, and Miss Lowery agreed that the last one had been beneficial. She felt additional work sessions would help those board members focus on and remain updated on current issues.

Mr. Piper asked if some of the developers would want to start their projects before SWCA finished reviewing the regulations. Miss Lowery felt it wouldn't be unreasonable to expect the review process to take at least 60 days; she recommended implementing a moratorium during the consultant's review process. Mr. Jaques asked Mr. Stogsdill if he might receive permit applications in the interim; Mr. Stogsdill said he has had four pre-permit meetings recently. The moratorium could discourage development as some companies wanted to receive tax credits by December 2026. Miss Lowery suggested sending the regs right away. Once they received the estimate, the commissioners could determine how to proceed with the moratorium, if necessary. Mr. Jaques told Mr. Stogsdill that the commissioners will meet again on November 25, but Mr. Stogsdill will be on vacation next week. He said he would forward what he received as soon as he got it.

Mr. Jaques asked if Columbia Sanitary had complied with the septage regulations. Mr. Stogsdill said he'd requested a report in September but never received anything. The regulations require soil samples and testing before every application; so far, he hadn't seen one. Mr. Jaques and Mr. Ewing had received complaints from residents and believed the county should issue a Cease-and-Desist Order. Miss Lowery asked whether there were written complaints, but Mr. Jaques said there were none. He promised to send her an email outlining the details, and Miss Lowery said she would take care of it. Mr. Stogsdill commented that the county needed to review those regulations again, as it didn't make sense to require a year-long permit when the regs didn't allow wintertime applications.

Miss Lowery had nothing else to report, but Mr. Piper said that the town of Hugo wanted a title commitment on the park property the county donated. Miss Lowery said section 3 of the agreement stated that it was not the donor's responsibility to cover that cost.

Mr. Stogsdill left, and Miss Lowery disconnected from the call at 11:30 a.m. The commissioners reviewed the 2026 Appointments, and then Mr. Ewing called for the commissioners' reports.

On November 10, Mr. Jaques met with Mark McHone of the Genoa Fire Protection District regarding the use of the old Road & Bridge shop. They decided to reorganize the building and create additional space for the fire district; the district agreed to pay half of a new furnace, which will cost \$4,942. Mr. Jaques and Tony Johnson discussed adding insulation to the old skylights; the task was completed on November 11. Mr. Jaques also met with District 2 staff, discussed other projects with Mr. Johnson, and attended the hospital board meeting that night. At the November 11 Fair Board meeting, they discussed changes to the Round-Robin competition, auctioning additional 4-H items, bylaws, board member duties and responsibilities, schedule adjustments, concerts, and improvement opportunities. Mr. Jaques felt the Fair Board was a passionate group dedicated to making positive improvements to the county fair.

On November 12, Mr. Jaques met with NextEra representatives at the courthouse to review the proposed Road Use Agreement for repowering the Limon III wind farm. He suggested they avoid a secondary route up County Highway 109 from Highway 40/287 to I-70 and instead use the I-70 to Bovina route. If NextEra must use the first route, Mr. Jaques warned them that the county would be highly critical of any road damage the company causes, possibly resulting in significant repair costs.

Mr. Jaques attended the November 14 work session to approve additional county expenses and met with District 2 staff on November 17. He and Mr. Johnson discussed the following day's delivery of the leased excavator they would use to install rock at the FEMA project site. He checked several roads and the progress of the rock installation on County Road 38 and north of County Road 3C on November 16. Mr. Jaques spoke with a NextEra representative, who told him the proposed County Road 3N route for the repowering of Limon III was an error that they would remove from their proposal. Mr. Jaques recommended taking I-70 to the Genoa exit, which would reduce the miles they would have to travel on County Highway 109.

Lastly, Mr. Jaques reported that he attended the November 18 Tourism Board meeting, where they proposed marketing via local TV stations. They also discussed the Cowbelles' "Beef for Schools" news story, the Hugo Parade of Lights, the failed ballot issue to increase the lodging tax, and growth in social media.

Mr. Ewing reported taking pictures of the FEMA project on County Road 3C and bringing them to Mr. Piper on November 7. On November 8, he checked on a dust complaint from a constituent and neighbor, even though it was in District 2. He followed up on a different complaint about odor emanating from where Columbia Sanitary deposits waste, but detected

none. On November 10, Mr. Ewing attended the Lincoln Health long-range planning meeting. Although they plan monthly estimated cuts of \$161,350 (\$1,936,200 annually), the main course of action will be, "How can we grow our way out?" rather than "What to cut?" Mr. Ewing said they hope to "grow and serve," not "shrink to survive."

Mr. Ewing also attended the November 11 Fair Board meeting. He reported that, in addition to what Mr. Jaques mentioned, members discussed Fair Book changes, upgraded premiums, sheep pens, dances, a horse pull and strays gathering, grand marshals, Sale Committee issues, and Saturday events such as interview judging, fashion review, and a general projects sale.

On November 18, Mr. Ewing attended an MMOF scoring committee Zoom meeting, where they recommended a grant of \$105,419 to the town of Akron, but denied a \$250,000 request from Yuma, due to an incomplete application. Mr. Ewing also attended the Tourism Board meeting; no one requested funds. They discussed Ballot Issue 1A, which failed, and ways to bring it back to voters. They also discussed the Genoa Tower, tours of Don Bailey's saddle museum, Thieman's Bison Ranch, and the Plover Festival. Mr. Ewing later attended the Genoa town board meeting; they reviewed the 2026 budget and discussed a \$3,150,000 grant for a water treatment plan, the Bovina well, and a new waterline from Bovina.

Mr. Safranek reported attending the November 10 Lincoln Health meeting and the November 12 Upper Big Sandy Groundwater Management District meeting. There will be quite a bit of turnover on that board soon. He helped at the landfill on November 13 and 14 and delivered the deposit to the Treasurer the afternoon of the Fourteenth. He and Mr. Jaques approved additional expenses. On November 16, Mr. Safranek checked the roads in District 3 and said they all looked good. The crews have almost finished the mowing for the season.

Mr. Piper reported that the department heads agreed on Wednesday, December 17, for the county Christmas and employee appreciation party. The commissioners said that offices could close for the day at noon, as was customary. Mr. Piper asked if the commissioners wanted to give each employee a ham again this year; they agreed.

The Board reviewed two quotes from CALACT for options to replace the ECCOG bus: a bus for \$132,912.26, and a van for \$111,057.21; both were ADA-accessible. The county's match would be 20%. The commissioners wanted more information regarding the van's interior layout and tabled further discussion until they had it.

There was no old or new business to discuss, so Mr. Ewing adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m. The next meeting will be at 9:00 a.m. on November 25, 2025.

Corinne M. Lengel, Clerk of the Board

Wayne E. Ewing, Chairman