

**CONNECT NEW MEXICO COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Virtual via Zoom**  
**Thursday, January 15, 2026, 1:30 p.m.**

Chair Reyes requested that the meeting begin at 1:45 with an informal report from OBAE Deputy Director Trujillo while awaiting members for Quorum.

Mr. Trujillo reported the following OBAE activities:

1). The Community WiFi Grant has been closed out, which was probably the last grant to be completed. This was a small grant, for a total of \$7 million, for Community WiFi, primarily for anchor institutions. With 28 applications received this was the largest application pool and the total requested funding from 16 individual applications was \$13.7 million. He added that once all the vetting and curing is completed there will be an announcement regarding the final recipients.

2). There is a legislative bill in process focusing on affordability which is a proposal for a State Affordable Connectivity Fund. This will be in conjunction with the PRC and is being sponsored by Senator Padilla and Representative Herndon. This will create a low income telecommunication assistance program, the same as the current LITAP, and will be managed by the PRC just like the current LITAP. PRC will create all the rules for the program and the legislation is for defining this at a high level, funding source, primary intentions, etc. Eligible households for this program will include Martinez-Yazzie students and any household eligible for other assistance programs such as Medicaid and SNAP, or those eligible for the existing Lifeline program. This program will be funded by the State Rural Universal Service Fund, the same fund which currently funds LITAP. The total dollar amount for this fund will be \$10 million/year, which translates to approximately \$30/month per eligible subscriber. He noted that will open up legislation relative to the State Rural Universal Service Fund, so there will be a lot of updating with this legislation, and any specific questions about these updates can be directed to OBAE via email. He added that this will primarily involve expanding LITAP to include broadband, as it currently only applies to telephone service.

Mr. Trujillo and Chair Reyes asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Quorum was been reached at this point and the meeting proceeded per the Agenda.

**1. Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting of the Connect New Mexico Council was officially called to order by Renee Narvaiz, at 1:50 pm, on Thursday, January 15, 2026, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ms. Narvaiz introduced herself and reviewed general rules and procedures regarding the meeting.

**Members Present**

Luis Reyes, Chair  
Eli Guinnee  
Joseph Navarrete  
Isaac Bush

Steve Grey  
Jim Ruybal  
Godfrey Enjady

**Members Absent**

Leonard Manzanares  
Nora Sackett  
Jason Clack

Mona Martinez  
Launa Waller  
Katherine Crociata

## **Others Present**

Renee Narvaiz, IT, Public Information Manager  
Aquiles Trujillo, OBAE Deputy Director  
Natalie Runyan, OBAE, GIS & Data Mgr.  
Sandeep Taxali, Richard Govea, Mark Jacobs, Erica Mesker

## **2. Approval of Meeting Agenda & Minutes**

**MOTION** Ms. Narvaiz called for a motion to approve the Agenda for today's meeting. Mr. Guinnee so moved, seconded by Mr. Bush.

**VOTE** There being no opposition, the Agenda was approved.

**MOTION:** Ms. Narvaiz called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December meeting. Mr. Bush so moved, seconded by Mr. Grey.

**VOTE** There being no opposition these minutes were approved.

## **3. Chair Comments – Luis Reyes**

Chair Reyes welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed his hope that everyone's holidays went well. He stated he was encouraged by the report from Deputy Director Trujillo on the issue of affordability, as this seems to be a big issue across many sectors, and that OBAE is looking at this affordability through the PRC. He again asked that Deputy Director Trujillo let Director Lopez and the OBAE team know that this Council would like to know if there are ways its members can support these efforts during the legislative session. Chair Reyes also expressed his hope that there will be news about BEAD soon in order to continue the efforts to provide broadband connection all across rural New Mexico.

## **4. Working Group Updates – Luis Reyes**

### **Digital Readiness & Adoption – Eli Guinnee**

Mr. Guinnee stated that this group continues to meet monthly. He reported that Deputy Director Trujillo attended the last meeting to give updates from OBAE, and thanked him for this. This group continues to plan the topics and schedule for the upcoming Abierta Digital Readiness Summit in Las Cruces, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and he put a link into the Zoom Chat for this.

Chair Reyes asked if there were any questions for Mr. Guinnee and there were none. He thanked Mr. Guinnee for his report.

### **Mapping & Permitting – Natalie Runyan**

Ms. Runyan reported that she and Ms. Waller have met and discussed the information Ms. Runyan could transfer over from the previous Mapping Working Group. They are also working with Ms. Narvaiz and Ms. Nevarez to obtain the mailing list for the Permitting Group. She stated that Ms. Waller is planning to hold an initial meeting to determine the priorities for this group.

Chair Reyes thanked Ms. Runyan for this report and asked if there were any questions or comments for her. There were none.

### **Tribal Working Group – Godfrey Enjady**

Mr. Enjady reported that they are closely monitoring changes that could be happening at the FCC. He added that next week will begin the second phase of the NTIA comment period for those on the TBCP program side and part of what was the old Digital Equity Program, which will change as it seems no one like the term "digital equity" as a name now. He reported that

MATI is approximately 70% finished with their TBCP grants, with about 110 miles left to build to El Paso from Mescalero, which is a middle mile project, and the new data center will be finished in about one month. He added that, as a tribe, Mescalero is looking at utilizing AI for tribal needs; how to apply this in a closed environment so it does not go out on the Internet.

Chair Reyes called for any questions for Mr. Enjady or comments. He thanked Mr. Enjady for his report.

### **Legislative Working Group**

Ms. Narvaiz stated she had received a message from Ms. Crociata asking for guidance for this group, which Council members may want to join the group and how to get other public members into the group. Chair Reyes asked if interested parties should contact Ms. Narvaiz or Ms. Crociata. Ms. Narvaiz responded that messages via email could be sent to both of them. Chair Reyes encouraged anyone interested to reach out to them. Chair Reyes then queried whether individuals outside the Council could participate in the working group. Ms. Narvaiz replied that there cannot be seven Council members on a working group to avoid Council quorum, and referred to the resolution regarding working groups. Ms. Runyan added that there needs to be some discussion and ultimately approval by the working group Chair. Ms. Narvaiz read through the resolution section regarding working group members which states, "working group members who are not Council members shall be selected by the group leader and may include OBAE staff and members of the public".

Chair Reyes asked Deputy Director Trujillo to mention this to Director Lopez, asking if anyone from the OBAE team could be part of this group. Deputy Director Trujillo stated that he would do so.

Chair Reyes called for any other reports or updates. There were none.

## **5. Update from OBAE – Aquiles Trujillo**

Deputy Director Trujillo stated he would give a BEAD update and then Mr. Jacobs will report on the recently published Three-Year Strategic Plan.

BEAD Update: The regional director did approve the Plan, but approval still needs to be obtained from Lutnick, who is in charge of Commerce, so the hope is that this will happen quickly. These approvals have been coming out in groups, with a group of eight approvals coming out last Monday. He added that there was one minor curing piece that needed to be resolved last Monday, otherwise he believes the New Mexico approval would have come out with that group. He expressed his hope that the New Mexico approval will be received this coming Monday. He then asked Mr. Jacobs to go over the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Jacobs stated he would put a link to the Strategic Plan in the Zoom chat and it is in their report library. He thanked Mr. Taxali for his guidance, content and drive in formulating this plan. Mr. Jacobs screen-shared the Plan and reviewed it. Overall goals include; A). Connectivity throughout the state with BEAD, as well as the continuation of ARPA pilot programs, Connect New Mexico Fund programs, Community WiFi as mentioned, and finishing the Student Connect Program. B). Affordability, with the legislation and working with the PRC as mentioned by Deputy Director Trujillo. C). Strategic infrastructure, including public/private partnerships, middle mile projects, and also the possibility of expanding and formalizing a higher level EBOT program, similar to the one organized by Mr. Enjady during the Ruidoso/Mescalero fire emergency. D). Data policies and activities needed to build stronger relationships relative to permitting, pole attachments, etc. E). Digital opportunities, continuing device and activity programs. F). Network Operations, broadband for education activities.

He reviewed several charts within the presentation, which represent a number of initiatives, making sure that these tie back to the overall Plan. He encouraged Council members to review the document and hopefully reach out to the team directly with any thoughts or questions.

He particularly noted the milestone chart on page 10 which shows some of the major activities and goals over the course of the plan, especially in 2026 with completion of the ARPA projects as well as the Connect New Mexico Fund projects and Student Connect projects, and then getting the BEAD projects started with design set-ups, etc.

Mr. Jacobs asked Deputy Director Trujillo or Mr. Taxali if they had any comments or additions. He again encouraged the Council to reach out if they would like to discuss this further.

Chair Reyes asked Deputy Director Trujillo or Mr. Taxali if they had anything to add since they also worked on the Plan. Mr. Taxali commented that Mr. Jacobs did a great job presenting this. Deputy Director Trujillo stated that this is something that is very hard to summarize in less than 10 minutes, so Mr. Jacobs did a very good job. He added that the team all worked very hard on this, many of whom are on this call, and thanked them all. He encouraged Council members to take a look at this, commenting that it is a much easier read than the previous plan and the differences between these plans. He noted the influences the different working groups have had on this plan and how their voices mattered in forming this plan. He thanked the Council and the working groups for the time they have invested in this. He again encouraged reaching out to the OBAE team with questions or comments .

Chair Reyes also encouraged Council members as well as the public to contact OBAE with questions or comments on this Plan. He commended the team for a job well done.

Chair Reyes asked if Council members had any questions about the Plan at this time. There were none.

**6. Public Comment**

None.

**7. Adjournment:**

**MOTION:** There being no further business before the Council, Ms. Narvaiz called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bush so moved, seconded by Mr. Guinnee.

**VOTE:** There being no opposition, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.