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Bob Nichols, Chairman Eddie Vigil, Member

Rick Baish, Vice Chairman James Evrage, Member

Jeff Rabon, Secretary/Treasurer Colt Howland, Member

Clifton Varbel, Member

**OTERO SWCD MINUTES**

# JUNE 4, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT MEMBERS ABSENT GUESTS**

Bob Nichols Jeff Rabon Katie Kruthaupt, NMDA

Rick Baish Sid Gordon, OCCEA

Colt Howland Lisa Phillips, BLM

Eddie Vigil **STAFF** Mark Cadwallader, NDNFFA

James Evrage Vicky Milne Trystan Harpold, EMNRD

Clifton Varbel Rick Ledbetter, Roosevelt SWCD

**NRCS STAFF**

**CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was reviewed. James Evrage motioned to approve the agenda, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the May meeting were reviewed, James Evrage motioned to approve the minutes, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

The monthly financial report was presented, James Evrage motioned to approve the report as presented, and pay the bills listed, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDEN****CE**

NM Health Care Authority has announced the new premiums. It is an increase of $129.32/month.

Southwest Quay SWCD has asked for sponsors for FFA and 4-H scholarships. James Evrage motioned to approve the $50 sponsorship, Clifton Varbel seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

NMACD has provided an update of the legislative session and dues notice. James Evrage motioned to pay dues in the amount of $1,776.00, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

NM Department of Finance and Administration has approved the interim budget. The final budget with supporting documentation must be submitted by the end of July.

The Region VI meeting will be held on June 11th in Artesia. Vicky has prepared a report of accomplishments. Colt and Eddie will be attending.

The SWCC meeting will be held on June 19th to approve appointed supervisors and determine how to distribute the legislative funding.

The Occupational Health and Safety Bureau within the NM Environment Department has submitted a petitioned for the adoption of a proposed new regulation 11.5.7 NMAC – Heat Illness and Injury Prevention. The NM Association of Conservation Districts has submitted comments opposing the new regulation as impractical, burdensome and difficult to enforce. Rick Baish motioned to submit similar comments opposing the new regulation, James Evrage seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS**

NM Department of Agriculture – Katie provided information on upcoming deadlines, meetings, and grant opportunities.

Otero County Cooperative Extension – Sid provided a report. Ranch Camp is next week. He has been getting calls about livestock issues due to drought.

South Central Mountain RC&D – Laura provided a report. The NM State Land Office project in Timberon will be starting soon. The NMAC grants for Timberon Phase II and Outreach project have been approved. The CWPP contract has been signed.

NM State Forestry – Trystan provided an update on the Two Goats project. Approximately half of the remaining funds have been obligated. They are also working on several projects with USFS.

Bureau of Land Management – Lisa Phillips provided an update. BLM is still working on adding funding to our master agreement. The task agreements for brush and weed management projects have been submitted.

SWCD – Vicky has distributed the sign-up forms for the musk thistle project. The 2026 Noxious Weed Calendar is being drafted. The spring newsletter has been uploaded to the website. The summer newsletter needs articles.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Drone mapping – The drone operator did not receive approval from Holloman to start mapping. Colt will see what the problem is.

The second phase of the Pinon Jay survey is ongoing.

The NMDA Noxious Weed Management Grant to continue the drone mapping was submitted.

The early warning system has been ordered and is being calibrated. Shipping is expected in the week of the 16th.

Otero County has notified us that we will receive full funding for next year. James Evrage motioned for Bob Nichols to sign the contract upon receipt, Rick Baish seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dam Safety Bureau Inspections – Bob, Jeff and Mark attended. The inspector was pleased with the work we completed last year. There was discussion about adding riprap to the spillway and the crack on the spillway channel. The report should be ready in July.

## NEW BUSINESS

North Ditch North Fork Fresnal Acequia Project – Mark Cadwallader provided an update on the progress. They have a contractor onsite doing the mastication and expect to complete the project by the end of June.

The Otero County Flood Risk Reduction Prioritization Meeting will be held on June 9th. Vicky has provided the briefing book to those planning to attend.

Rick Ledbetter with Roosevelt SWCD spoke about the RAIN project. The Rain Augmentation in NM project has been ongoing for a couple of years with capital outlay funding. That funding ends June 30th and they are looking to continue the project with individual district assessments. They believe the project has been beneficial and thanked us for our support. There was discussion on the need to continue the project in Otero County. Our neighboring SWCD’s Penasco and Carlsbad have backed out already. James Evrage motioned to remove our district from the project as well, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to discuss, James Evrage motioned to adjourn, Rick Baish seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am.

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Bob Nichols, Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/ Treasurer