

May 29, 2025

The Board of Bent County Commissioners met at the Bent County Community Center at 9:00 a.m. Those present were:

Chairman Alan Stump
Commissioner Phil Hemphill
Commissioner Jennifer Scofield
Administrator Doug Bankert
Clerk to the Board Lynda G Moss

CoreCivic: Assistant Warden Steven Salazar gave the monthly update.

- Inmate count 1384.
- Made donations to the swim team, fair, bird watchers.
- Corrections Week the first of May went well.
- Staffing is holding strong.
- Meeting with Corporate last Monday went well.
- Assisting the VFW Women's Auxiliary with the flag display on holidays.
- Still have not received the state contract from DOC.

Hemphill asked about issues with prairie dogs getting in to the fenced area of the prison. Salazar said they had the Wildlife person come out and check and they have to wait until October after the burrowing owls nesting period is over before they can remove the prairie dogs.

Stump asked if the commissioners could also tour the facility when the stakeholders do. Salazar said he would ask the warden.

Approved the minutes from May 15th with corrections on a motion from Hemphill and seconded by Scofield.

Approved bills and payroll on a motion from Scofield and seconded by Hemphill.

Approved a MOU between Social Services and Colorado Works Program on a motion from Scofield and seconded by Hemphill.

At 9:30 the hearing regarding changing names on certain property under the 1041 Permit from Ark River Farms to AV Farms was called to order. ARF/AV Farms was not there when the meeting started. There were about 12 members of the public in the audience for the hearing. The audience asked questions, but since ARF/AV Farms was not present, those questions could not be answered. County Attorney Nathan Shultz told the commissioners that they could make their decision even if ARF/AV Farms was not present. ARF/AV Farms representatives arrived at 9:40. Karl Nyquist, Administrator for both ARF and AV Farms, gave a hand-out to the commissioners. Nyquist told the commissioners that the only thing they were asking to have amended in the 1041 permit were the names. AV Farms would be liable for re-vegetation on the property and would have the letter of credit changed to their name.

Shultz told the commissioners they could ask questions. Stump told the audience if they wanted to ask their questions again now that ARF/AV Farms were present, they could do so. Several members of the audience asked questions. Several of the questions were about the progress of the re-vegetation.

Jesse Dillon, re-vegetation expert for ARF/AV Farms, gave a short presentation about the progress since the process had started. He explained what had and hadn't worked. After the presentation the audience asked more questions.

Stump read a letter that the commissioners had received that morning from Small Business Consulting, LLC of Lamar, who had been hired by some concerned citizens in Bent County. They were asking that the commissioners vote no on the changes because the original purpose of the 1041 permit was for a dairy, which never happened. The county's water attorney David Hayes gave an explanation as to what the commissioners were voting on.

Scofield said she had been doing some research on the farm in question and it is tied to more than just the re-vegetation in the 1041 permit. Scofield feels that it is a very complicated matter and with county residents coming to us with concerns, she felt that the commissioners needed to make sure they were doing everything legally, especially since the current commissioners were not in office when the 1041 permit was granted. We need to look at how it affects our water and our citizens. Scofield said she felt the county needed to get additional counsel before making a decision. AV Farm's attorney asked for a copy of the letter, so they could enter a response, since they did not know about it before the meeting began.

Scofield moved for a postponement of the decision until July 3rd at 9:00 a.m. to give the permit holder time to respond to the letter and for the county to get additional counsel. Hemphill seconded the motion, motion passed. Discussion: Shultz said the options were to approve, deny, or give a written response. Hayes concurred with that.

Zoning board member Regan Ensey, Regional Housing Authority Director Teale Hemphill, and Michael Yerman, former Regional Housing Authority Director, met with the commissioners asking them to adopt a resolution that would speed up the time line for getting zoning permits on new housing developments. If approved the county would receive a \$50,000.00 incentive for approving it. Yerman told the commissioners they were already working on plans for six new housing units with the money from the last project. Those houses will be built in the McClave area.

Adopted **Resolution 2025-18** – Expedited review policies in the Bent County zoning regulations for future development of affordable housing projects on a motion from Hemphill and seconded by Scofield.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Clerk to the Board

Chairman of the Board