



**NOTICE OF CITY OF ELEPHANT BUTTE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

103 Water Avenue, Elephant Butte, NM 87935

Wednesday, March 11, 2026 – 2:00PM

Minutes*

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner called the meeting to order and Councilor Harmon led the pledge of allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Richard Holcomb – Present by Zoom
Mayor Pro Tem Kim Skinner – Present
Councilor Cathy Harmon – Present
Councilor Michael Williams – Present
Councilor Skylar Arnold – Present

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call and declared a quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Council Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of items 11 & 12. Councilor Harmon seconded the motion. 4-0.

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call vote.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner – Yes
Councilor Harmon – Yes
Councilor Williams – Yes
Councilor Arnold – Yes
Motion Carried.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

STATEMENT OF OPEN MEETINGS RESOLUTION & 3 MINUTE LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ALL ISSUES

Public comments can be made in person, by phone or given to the City Clerk by email (l.cobleigh@cityofebnm.gov) before the meeting.

None Submitted.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Special Meeting Minutes February 11, 2026
- b. Regular Meeting Minutes February 11, 2026
- c. Special Meeting Minutes February 20, 2026
- d. Workshop Meeting Minutes February 23, 2026
- e. Workshop Meeting Minutes February 24, 2026
- f. Workshop Meeting Minutes February 25, 2026

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve consent items 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, and 5f with an amendment to 5b on page 7 change differ to defer. Councilor Harmon seconded the motion. 4-0.

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call vote.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner – Yes
Councilor Harmon – Yes

Councilor Williams – Yes
Councilor Arnold – Yes
Motion Carried.

6. PRESENTATIONS

a. **Sierra County Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Joshua Baker**

Sheriff Baker presented his written report as submitted to the mayor and council and reported there were 6 reports and 96 patrol hours for the month of February.

b. **Matejka & Jay Santillanes MJS Consulting – Lobbyist**

Jay Santillanes introduced himself to the council and public as the lobbyist for the City of Elephant Butte. J. Santillanes presented a report to the council and staff regarding what they had tracked during the legislative session. J. Santillanes noted that several of the passed bills including NMFA Water Fund, Medical Malpractice Changes, Bond for Schools & Libraries, and Gross Receipt Tax all of which may affect the city. J. Santillanes stated that the City of Elephant Butte received \$600,000.00 under the Capital Outlay for Wastewater Expansion.

Matejka Santillanes introduced herself to the council as the lobbyist for the City of Elephant Butte. A report was provided to the council for their review. M. Santillanes went over the report in detail with the council stating there were 812 pieces of legislation that were introduced during this 30-day session. M. Santillanes stated that today is the last day for the governor to act and sign the bills. M. Santillanes to provide an finalized report after the governor has signed all bills, this will be provided to Janet Porter-Carrejo. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that the city is in need of water tank and for MJS Consulting to keep that in mind when they are working for the city in obtaining funding. Janet Porter-Carrejo stated they have already been in contact with the water fund.

c. **State Parks**

City Clerk Cobleigh prefaced this presentation by stating that members joining by zoom would not be able to view the presentation and requested a full copy of the presentation to share with the mayor and members of council.

Joey Flemming, Lands Programming Planner for NM State Parks – Presenting today the basis of design for the NM State Parks (NMSP) to connect into the City of Elephant Butte wastewater system. In 2024 there was a park study done to include utility improvements. Within this study it does reflect Elephant Butte Lake State Park (EBLSP) connecting to City of Elephant Butte wastewater. There was an analysis done regarding the need for a pretreatment facility in the park before the discharge would reach the City of Elephant Butte system. NMSP has partnered with engineers from Daniel B Stephens and Associates to complete this analysis and prepare this report. Fleming turned over the presentation at this time.

Alex Nunez-Thompson, Engineer with Daniel B Stephens & Associates – Introduced the basis for design of the proposed connection between EBLSP and City of Elephant Butte. As part of this work Nunez-Thompson personally was on site to check the septic tanks as well as being able to tour the City of Elephant Butte wastewater treatment plant with David “Smitty” Smith. Nunez-Thompson stated he had been meeting with members of the City of Elephant Butte staff for several months as part of the preparation for this analysis. Nunez-Thompson stated there is currently a manhole on along Lakeshore Road at the intersection of the entrance to the EBLSP and that is where they are looking to tie in at. This initial project is aimed towards tying the comfort stations, admin, and maintenance buildings. Nunez-Thompson stated that during this investigation they performed two separate wastewater samplings; May 29, 2025, just after Memorial Weekend and the end of August 2025. Based on the 2024 reports the biggest concerns were coming from the dump station. The septic tank connected to the dump station had the highest strength waste tested. There are two additional septic tanks that this one drains into before it goes to the leach field and disposes underground. In the design the first tank is left in place to collect a lot of the trash and waste before it even gets close to the City of Elephant Butte wastewater system. Pressure sewer design layout was displayed on the large screen. Replace the downstream septic tanks after the large one with pump stations. These would aid in moving the waste

uphill to the manhole. Nunez-Thompson presented another slide for the proposed project. On this design Nunez-Thompson pointed out a red square that signifies a pretreatment system. A pretreatment system was also done. EBLSP would manage and maintain the pretreatment system. Nunez-Thompson noted that the waste would be less than what comes from a standard residential home. It was noted that during this process they are looking for BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) to help support a healthy balanced pretreatment system. EBLSP collected as much water usage data as they could for this report to view water use patterns. Nunez-Thompson stated that this was compared to what the wastewater treatment plant is rated for and stated by this they were able to determine adequate capacity at the plant. Volume will be low enough so that the current plant can handle the connection. Nunez-Thompson stated that the next action if the City of Elephant Butte approves the connection would be a formal survey along the corridor before moving into a design plan.

Toby Velasquez, NMSP Director – Introduced all present members of the NMSP that were here for the council meeting today: Joey Fleming Park Planner, Colleen Baker Deputy Director of Administration, Randy Bayliss Sewage Engineer, Jonathin Horsely Superintendent, and Saul Baquera SW Regional Manager. Velasquez stated that they are all here to protect and enhance the EBLSP. Velasquez stated that he hopes this request is supported as it is needed for a sustainable future.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner thanked all participants and attendees for all of the research and studies they have done on this proposed project. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated there are some pieces she would like to share for consideration. The City of Elephant Butte went online with the wastewater treatment plant in 2008 with a total capacity of 200,000 gallons per day. This was designed to service 1,400 homes. As of February 2026, we have 1,020 customers connected to the wastewater. The City of Elephant Butte has 1/3 of the wastewater plant that has already been pledged to citizens not yet online. PreReal is breaking ground on a hotel as well as having been approved for a 52-lot subdivision. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that there were 12 original phases for the wastewater. Currently the city has completed 3.5 of those phases and is on Phase 4b. Phase 4b has cost a total of \$7,000,000.00. The very last phase that is planned is connecting the landing as well as a partnership with the City of TorC in connecting their Sheriff Posse area into the wastewater treatment plant. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated again how much she appreciated this and they want to be partners but as it is the City of Elephant Butte is already over pledged on capacity. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that connecting the admin building and boat training center makes sense.

Councilor Williams apologized for the NMSP not being included in the loop on what was going on with this project. First and foremost, this cannot be a simple hookup to the City of Elephant Butte wastewater system. Our wastewater treatment plant does not have the capacity to connect EBLSP without compromising current and future commitments. City of Elephant Butte residents on septic tanks, we must reserve the capacity for planned phases. Evaluation to tie EBLSP into City of Elephant Butte wastewater system would require construction of new sewer mains and lift stations, significant capital investment by City of Elephant Butte, commitment for long term maintenance responsibility, and loss of current capacity needed for residents. Usage of EBLSP is not limited to an annual amount of 100,000 visitors, that number can be reached in one holiday weekend. The increase in of wastewater during peak season far exceeds what the wastewater treatment plant can handle while still meeting current obligations. The alternative option was constructing a dedicated wastewater treatment plant for the EBLSP , but EBLSP has voiced concerns over having to employ an operator. Councilor Williams noted at that time the City's recommendation as well as Bohannon Huston's was and still is that EBLSP construct and operate their own wastewater treatment plant within on the same site as the City of Elephant Butte's wastewater treatment plant or on State Park's land. In summary the City of Elephant Butte cannot responsibly commit to financing wastewater expansion to accommodate EBLSP.

Councilor Arnold – No Comment

Councilor Harmon – No Comment

Janet Porter-Carrejo, City Manager – Stated she wished that staff would have had access to the reports that members of council referenced. Porter-Carrejo stated that they have included Bohannon

Huston into these discussions with EBLSP. By building the other tank to help purify would be a design to look at and take into consideration.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that she as Mayor Pro Tem was not included in Mayor Mortensen's absence for any of this discussion from August to December of 2025. Stated that the decanters were failing at the wastewater treatment plant in 2022 took a year to get them repaired. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that the City of Elephant Butte did not gain more capacity just restored what we already had.

d. **Bohannon Huston**

Matt Thompson referenced the prior month's meeting with the council where he talked about the City of Elephant Butte's sewer system and current phases. Thompson first stated regarding the EBLSP presentation and to Councilor William's comment that it was absolutely true that Bohanna Huston had recommended EBLSP to construct their own wastewater treatment plant. Thompson stated that they want to support the EBLSP and the administration offices are something logical and this was what they were advising on for the planning phase. Thompson went over several key points of the wastewater treatment plant. The plant is rated for 200,000 gallons per day with it currently sitting at 50% capacity. Thompson went over the obstacles that would be associated with the connection to EBLSP and the added workload placed on the operator of the wastewater treatment facility with the added flow. Thompson stated there are currently numerous phases planned for the city, while displaying a map showing white lines for areas not connected and green lines for areas connected. Thompson stated that the priority of phases has been on the most densely populated areas to connect first as the phases go. Thompson stated that Phase 4 first begin planning and design in 2010 which is when it was separated into subphases of 4a, 4b and currently applying for funding for 4c. Thompson went over another map that was colored for each phase that is proposed with yellow being the upcoming 4c. Thompson talked about each phase and what they encompass. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated that the project phase 4c is estimated at \$7,000,000.00, Thompson agreed. Thompson stated that it has been 15 years since the initial design and the design will need to be refreshed for the proposed phase 4c. Thompson stated that funding for phase 4c will be for FY2027-2028. It is projected to take 15 years to complete all remaining phases. Thompson's closing statement is re-enforcing the ordinances and the pretreatment programs for oil and grease separators from restaurants to all new subdivision development. Making certain that all impact fees are in place. Thompson stated it is important for all fees to be made into the fund to aid in the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant.

7. **PUBLIC HEARING**

a. Ordinance 227 – Right-of-Way Management

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner requested a roll call to enter the public hearing.

Mayor Richard Holcomb – Present by Zoom

Mayor Pro Tem Kim Skinner – Present

Councilor Cathy Harmon – Present

Councilor Michael Williams – Present

Councilor Skylar Arnold – Present

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call and declared a quorum.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner asked if all legal notices had been posted. City Clerk Cobleigh certified all notices were posted.

Janet Porter-Carrejo swore in all parties as a group who wish to testify at this public hearing, Rachel Black, Land Use Administrator.

City Presentation

Rachel Black, Land Use Administrator presented this ordinance for final adoption to the city council. Black stated that this ordinance will repeal all previous Right-of-Way Ordinances that were adopted by the City of Elephant Butte. Suggested amendments from staff: page 2 line 97 strike cross section view, page 3 line 144 add (D) permittee shall contact 811 two days prior to commencement of work.

Councilor Harmon asked for clarification on - the utility company backfills and City of Elephant Butte will then repair the roadway. Black stated, that is correct. Councilor Harmon made the amending suggestion for page 3 line 141 “with same material”.

Councilor Williams – No Comment
Councilor Arnold – No Comment

Public Comment

Staci Avendano, New Mexico Water – Asked about dirt roads that may have utility cuts and what the standards are for those roadways. Black stated dirt roadways will still require a right-of-way permit.

Close of Hearing.

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve Ordinance 227 Right-of-Way Management, with the following amendments page 2 line 97 strike through cross section, page 3 line 141 with same material, page 144 add (D) permittee shall contact 811 two days prior to commencement of work. . Councilor Harmon seconded the motion. 4-0. Motion Carried.

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call vote.
Mayor Pro Tem Skinner – Yes
Councilor Harmon – Yes
Councilor Williams – Yes
Councilor Arnold - Yes
Motion Carried.

Ordinance 227 has been unanimously approved and adopted by the Governing Body. Notices of Adoption are to be posted at all adopted posting locations in accordance to the open meetings resolution.

8. REGULAR ITEMS (DISCUSSION POSSIBLE ACTION)

a. Discussion/Possible Action: Water Rate Increase

Janet Porter-Carrejo, City Manager presented this item to council. This was an item that had been discussed in the planning workshop that the council had. The request is to raise the City of Elephant Butte’s water rates by 8% to match the pending rate increase of New Mexico Water that will take effect April 1, 2026.

Councilor Williams made a motion to request staff to draft a resolution for the water rate increase of 8% to be presented at the March 20, 2026, special meeting for approval with rates taking effect with April billing. Council Harmon seconded the motion. 4-0.

City Clerk Cobleigh conducted a roll call vote.
Mayor Pro Tem Skinner – Yes
Councilor Harmon – Yes
Councilor Williams – Yes
Councilor Arnold – Yes
Motion Carried.

- b. Discussion/Possible Action: Event Committee
Janet Porter-Carrejo introduced this item to the council and members of the public. This was an item that was discussed during the planning workshop that the council had. It was noted that Councilor Arnold will serve as the event committee coordinator for the City of Elephant Butte. Janet Porter-Carrejo noted that she would like for the City to have a float in the TorC Fiesta Parade.

No formal action taken.

9. CITY STAFF REPORTS

- a. Discussion of Department Reports

City Manager

Janet Porter-Carrejo provided a draft report of the planning session from Eugene McPeck. Porter-Carrejo stated that herself and Rachel Black met with Pre-Real and Sam Senn to follow up on the annexation project as well as the Cielo Entrada 52 home site. Porter-Carrejo mentioned the 3-day workshop with the council that was a good working event. Porter-Carrejo stated she had met with the NMML on obtaining water funding. Met with Bohannan Huston on the MAP Project. Porter-Carrejo stated that the council would need to schedule a special meeting for Monday March 16, 2026, regarding a resolution for the LGRF MAP application program. Members of the council agreed to be present on March 16, 2026, with the only item for discussion being the resolution for the LGRF MAP. Time to be decided.

Code Enforcement

Lindsey Cobleigh provided the council with a written report. There was a total of 12 records presented to the city council. Cobleigh went case by case with the council to provide updates of all cases.

City Clerk

Lindsey Cobleigh stated she is continuing to work on the records management and organization of the records shed. She is hopeful to have all records ready for destruction soon.

City Treasurer

Laura Whiteside provided the council with a written report. Councilor Williams questioned an expense in the amount of \$81,000.00 as well as two payments to Sierra Vista Hospital. Whiteside stated the \$81,000.00 was a fire department purchase of extrication equipment and that Chief Long could speak on this more. The two payments were not duplicated, one at the beginning of the month and one at the end of the month for two separate months' payments.

Fire Department

Chief Long provided the council with a written report. Chief Long stated that there was a total of 31 calls: 28 EMS, 1 Fire, 1 MVA, and 1 Carbon Monoxide. Chief Long stated the department has been very busy within continued education trainings. One training course was provided by Jim Tuma who previously served as a Deputy Chief of the Elephant Butte Fire Department, was a part of Bernalillo Fire and taught at the state academy in Socorro. There was an extrication training with the newly acquired equipment that Councilor Williams had brought up. This training took place on February 27, 2026. This equipment was purchased with rollover fire funds and approved by the State Fire Marshall.

Land Use

Rachel Black provided the council with a written report. Black noted there were 11 issued permits this month and no denied requests.

10. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMENTS

Mayor Holcomb stated that he is very pleased with the cooperation between the community. NMML will help with funding. New staff on board at the NMML to assist with ordinance review and revision.

Councilor Harmon stated she will attend the SCCOG meeting at the end of the month and there is nothing planned for the RTPO at this time.

Councilor Williams – No Report

Councilor Arnold reported she will be attending a Department of Justice training course on IPRA on March 19, 2026.

Mayor Pro Tem Skinner reported the entire council took part in a three-day planning workshop held at the community center. Mayor Pro Tem Skinner stated there is a scheduled MRGEDA meeting on Friday.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. ~~Closed pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(7) to discuss pending litigation *Masearo Saavedra v. COEB, Bachicha v. COEB.*~~

12. POSSIBLE ACTION

- a. ~~Action required following discussion pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(7) to discuss pending litigation *Masearo Saavedra v. COEB, Bachicha v. COEB, Sierra Vista Hospital.*~~

****Removed by approval of the agenda item 3.****

13. ADJOURNMENT

Pro Tem Skinner adjourned the meeting.

Minutes approved and adopted at the City Council meeting on April 8, 2026


Richard Holcomb, Mayor

ATTEST:


Lindsey Cobleigh, City Clerk



