



# Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

**THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT) OF THE TOWN OF  
MESILLA WILL HOLD A REGULAR MEETING AT THE  
MESILLA TOWN HALL, 2231 AVENIDA DE MESILLA**

**MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026**

**~ 5:00 P.M.~**

## **MINUTES**

**TRUSTEES:** Russell Hernandez, Mayor  
Stephanie Johnson-Burick, Mayor Pro Tem  
Biviana Cadena, Trustee  
Veronica Garcia, Trustee  
Gerard Nevarez, Trustee

**STAFF:** Ben Azcarate, Marshal  
Lorenzo Astorga, Public Works Director  
Greg Whited, Fire Chief  
Eddie Salazar, Econ & Com Development Director  
Gloria S Maya, Town Clerk/Recorder

**PUBLIC:** Eric Walkishaw                      Catharine Walkinshaw  
Andrea Byran                              Greg Lester  
Richard Knopp                             Lori Miller  
John Knopp                                 Van Bullock  
Rafael Ruiz                                 Dasa  
Crystal Whited                             Edith Wyndham  
Rob Cabellos                               CR Beesley  
Mary H Ratje

### **1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Hernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **2. ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

#### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Mayor Hernandez, Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Trustee Cadena, Trustee Garcia, Trustee Nevarez

### **3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion:** To approve agenda with correction, Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.

**Motion passed unanimously**

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** (The Board will be asked to approve by one motion the following items of recurring or routine business. The Consent Agenda is marked with an asterisk \*)

- a) **\*BOT MINUTES** – Minutes of BOT, February 23, 2026
- b) **\*PURCHASE ORDER: APIC Solutions – Community Center Security Upgrades - \$31,77.48**
- c) **\*PURCHASE ORDER: A Mountain Construction – Calle del Norte Bridge - \$110,866.52**

**Motion: To approve consent agenda, Moved by Trustee Cadena, Seconded by Trustee Nevarez.**

Trustee Garcia commented

Mayor Hernandez commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**5. PRESENTATION:**

- a) **Historic Preservation & Historic Properties – Liana Aguirre**

Ms. Aguirre made a presentation regarding Historic Preservation & Historic Properties.

**6. PUBLIC INPUT ON CASES – The public is invited to address the Board as allowed the chair.**

Mr. Knopp commented

Mr. Bullock commented

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **APPROVAL: PZHAC SIGN #062098** – 1200 W. University, submitted by Jornada Masonic Lodge. Requesting approval to install a sign. ZONE: Single-Family Residential (R1)

**Original Motion: To approve PZHAC SIGN #062098 – 1200 W. University, submitted by Jornada Masonic Lodge. Requesting approval to install a sign with condition. ZONE: Single-Family Residential (R1), Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Nevarez.**

**Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented**

**Mayor Hernandez commented**

**Mr. Salazar reviewed PZHAC Sign #062098.**

**Trustee Nevarez commented**

**Amended Motion: To approve PZHAC SIGN #062098 – 1200 W. University, submitted by Jornada Masonic Lodge. Requesting approval to install a sign with condition that the request goes through the process required by Department of Transportation (DOT). ZONE: Single-Family Residential (R1), Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Amended Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

Trustee Garcia commented

Mr. Salazar commented

Mayor Hernandez commented

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented

Trustee Cadena commented

**Original Roll Call Vote: Motion failed (summary: Yes-1; No-3)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick No  
Trustee Cadena No  
Trustee Garcia No  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**b) APPROVAL: Terralogic Document Systems – Court DWI Case File Conversion - \$8,591.82**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed the Court DWI Case File Conversion.

**Motion: To approve Terralogic Document Systems – Court DWI Case File Conversions - \$8,591.82, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**c) APPROVAL: Changes to Rules of Order**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed the changes to Rules of Order.

**Motion: To approve Changes to Rules of Order, Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick.**

Trustee Garcia commented

Trustee Cadena commented

Mr. Cabellos commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**d) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-07 – Colonias Emergency Funding**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-07 - Colonias Emergency Funding.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026- Colonias Emergency Funding, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**e) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-11 – Historic Property Registry Designation:  
2380 Calle de Principal.**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-11 – Historic Property Registry Designation: 2380 Calle de Principal.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-11 – Historic Property Registry Designation: 2380 Calle de Principal, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Cadena.**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented

Mayor Hernandez commented

Ms. Aguirre commented

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**f) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-12– Historic Property Registry Designation:  
2600 Avenida de Mesilla**

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-12 – Historic Property Registry Designation: 2600 Avenida de Mesilla, Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

Trustee Nevarez commented

Ms. Aguirre commented

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**g) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-13 – Historic Property Registry Designation: 2090 Snow Rd**

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-13 – Historic Property Registry Designation: 2090 Snow Rd, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

Trustee Nevarez commented

Ms. Aguirre commented

Trustee Cadena commented

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion denied (summary: Yes-1; No-3)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick No

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia No

Trustee Nevarez No

**h) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-14 – Mesilla Rules of Order**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-14 – Mesilla Rules of Order.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-14 – Mesilla Rules of Order, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**i) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-15 – 2026 Colonias Application – Water Tank**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-15 - 2026 Colonias Application – Water Tank.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-15 – 2026 Colonias Application – Water Tank, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Cadena.**

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**j) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-16 – 2026 Colonias Application – Fire Hydrant Replacement**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-16 – 2026 Colonias Application – Fire Hydrant

Replacement.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-16 – 2026 Colonias Application – Fire Hydrant Replacement, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Cadena.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**k) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-17 – LGRF Cooperative Agreement**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-17 – LGRF Cooperative Agreement.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-17 – LGRF Cooperative Agreement, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**l) APPROVAL: RESOLUTION 2026-18 - LOCAL SOLAR FUND/DESIGNATION SOUDER, MILLER & ASSOCIATES**

Mayor Hernandez reviewed Resolution 2026-18 – Local Solar Fund/Designation Souder, Miller & Associates.

**Motion: To approve Resolution 2026-18 – LOCAL SOLAR FUND/DESIGNATION SOUDER, MILLER & ASSOCIATES, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Cadena.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**m) APPROVAL: ORDINANCE 2026-01 – Wireless Telecommunications**

Mr. Cabellos commented

**Motion: To approve ORDINANCE 2026-01 – Wireless Telecommunications, Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

Trustee Nevarez commented

Trustee Cadena commented

Trustee Garcia commented

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**n) APPROVAL: ORDINANCE 2026-02 – Amend MTC 18.60.340 General Provisions, wall height between McDowell & Bowman Along University Ave**

Mr. Salazar reviewed Ordinance 2026-02 Amend MTC 18.60.340 General Provisions.

**Motion: To approve ORDINANCE 2026-02 – Amend MTC 18.60.340 General Provisions, wall height between McDowell & Bowman Along University Ave., Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Cadena.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**o) APPROVAL: ORDINANCE 2026-03 – Amendments to MTC 18.65 Signs; A-frame signs, maximum size in Commercial zone, & temporary signs**

Mr. Salazar reviewed Ordinance 2026-03 – Amendments to MTC 18.65 Signs; A-frame signs, maximum size in Commercial Zone & temporary signs.

**Original Motion: To approve ORDINANCE 2026-03 – Amendments to MTC 18.65 Signs; A-frame signs, maximum size in Commercial Zone & temporary signs, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

Mayor Hernandez commented

Trustee Nevarez commented

Trustee Cadena commented

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented

**Original Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes  
Trustee Cadena Yes  
Trustee Garcia Yes  
Trustee Nevarez Yes

**Amended Motion: To approve ORDINANCE 2026-03 – Amendments to MTC 18.65 Signs; A-frame signs, maximum size in Commercial Zone & temporary signs with condition allowing two (2) temporary signs per year, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Trustee Garcia commented**

**Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented**

**Mayor Hernandez commented**

**Mr. Salazar commented**

**Trustee Cadena commented**

**Amended Motion Rescinded: To approve ORDINANCE 2026-03 – Amendments to MTC 18.65 Signs; A-frame signs, maximum size in Commercial Zone & temporary signs with condition allowing two (2) temporary signs per year, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Amended Roll Call Vote for Recension: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

Trustee Cadena commented

Mr. Salazar commented

Mayor Hernandez commented

**8. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**a) The Governing body will convene in executive closed session pursuant to Section 10-15-1(H)(2) NMSA 1978 for discussion of limited personnel matters, including the appointment, employment, evaluation, discipline, or dismissal of a public employee(s).**

**– Marshal Department**

**b) The Governing body will convene in executive closed session pursuant to Section 10-15-1(H)(7) NMSA 1978 for discussion of matters pertaining to the attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation.**

**Motion: To enter into Closed Executive Session, Moved by Trustee Nevarez, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**Entered Closed Executive Session at 8:17 p.m.**

**Motion: To enter Regular Meeting, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Motion passed unanimously**

**Entered Regular Meeting at 8:33 p.m.**

**c) Any possible action in open session that may arise as a result of executive session**

**Motion: To approve the hiring of Mr. Edgar Ramirez as Codes Officer/AC, Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick, Seconded by Trustee Garcia.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**Motion: To dismiss pending Court Cases and Bench Warrants, Moved by Trustee Garcia, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick.**

**Roll Call Vote: Motion passed (summary: Yes-4)**

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick Yes

Trustee Cadena Yes

Trustee Garcia Yes

Trustee Nevarez Yes

**9. PUBLIC INPUT – The public is invited to address the Board as allowed by the chair.**  
Ms. Ratje commented

**10. BOARD OF TRUSTEE COMMITTEE REPORTS**  
Trustee Nevarez: Economic Development Department meeting; Taylor Historic Site meeting  
Wednesday

Trustee Garcia: MPO meeting Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.; Marshal Department meeting; participated in the walk on Friday

Trustee Cadena: SCRTD meeting; Taylor Historic Site meeting

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick: MPO meeting Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

Mayor Hernandez: MPO Executive meeting; MPO meeting Wednesday; several other meetings; participated in the walk on Friday

**11. BOARD OF TRUSTEE/STAFF COMMENTS**  
Marshal Azcarate gave a department (Marshal) update.  
Trustee Garcia commented

Fire Chief Whited gave a department (Fire) update.  
Trustee Nevarez commented  
Trustee Garcia commented  
Mayor Hernandez commented

Mr. Astorga gave a department (Public Works) update.  
Trustee Nevarez commented  
Mayor Pro Tem Johnson-Burick commented

Mr. Salazar gave a department (Economic Development) update.

Mayor Hernandez commented

Trustee Cadena commented

Mayor Hernandez commented

**12. ADJOURMENT**  
**The Town of Mesilla Trustees unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting. (Summary: Yes-4)**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9: P.M.**

APPROVED THIS 23<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2026.



Russell Hernandez  
Mayor

ATTEST:



Gloria S. Maya  
Town Clerk/Treasurer



**\*\*BOT MEETINGS ARE AVAILABLE LIVE ON TOWN OF MESILLA'S YOUTUBE PAGE\*\***



My name is Richard Knopp. I own the property at 2090 Snow Road.

My great grandparents, Paul and Mary Ginther who lived in Mexico, purchased several small farms just outside of Mesilla during the early years of the 1900s, during the war in Mexico. They were eventually able to put together a contiguous farm of approximately 300 acres. Since they had no intention of living there permanently, they asked their nephew, Victor Ginther, to move to the farm to manage it.

Within a few short years, one of his daughters, Grace, needed a place to live with her two young children. The three subsequently moved to the farm.

During the ensuing years other extended family members came to live on the farm for various lengths of time. My mother grew up on the farm, and I was born there 77 years ago, as were my brother and sister. Although my family moved to El Paso, so that my father could obtain work, we continued to visit the farm on a weekly basis. A practice that I have continued throughout my life.

What would become the farm headquarters consisted of an adobe, one-bedroom farmhouse, an adobe barn, and a row of workers quarters running parallel to the barn.

As the number of family members continued to increase, it necessitated the need to remodel the existing buildings to accommodate them.

Additions were made to all sides of the original farmhouse. The entry way was enclosed to become an additional room and front and back porches were added. Unfortunately, due to finances, they were not done in adobe as the original house was. It no longer resembles the original farmhouse.

New workers' quarters were built at another location on the farm so that the existing ones could be converted into additional living space for the family. This was accomplished by taking out the back wall of the quarters and extending the existing walls to the side wall of the barn, thereby adding nine additional feet to each of the original worker's rooms (a floorplan of the remodeled barn and worker's quarters has been distributed to you).

This made for an unusual and awkward floor plan. An additional glass enclosed porch was added to the entire North side of the house, making it appear more modern. Unfortunately, it was not constructed of adobe either. It no longer resembled the original worker's quarters. This not only made for an unusual structure for the house but now made the barn appear lopsided and no longer resembled the original barn.

My grandmother always thought that she would like to incorporate the barn into the house but again finances would not permit. If she had been able to accomplish it, it would have added to the history of the farm and enhanced the overall appearance of an otherwise hodge-podge-looking building.

My brother and sister and I have recently sold the last farm acreage. Within an agreement between us, my part in the agreement was that I would retain sole ownership of the remaining 10 acres which contain the original headquarters. They obtained other family properties located elsewhere. We all depend on the properties which we inherited, to sell and use the money for our old age. I personally can say, unfortunately, that other than social security, that is all I will have to live on. I have been retired for some years.

In putting the property up for sale I have been made aware by my realtors that anyone purchasing the ten acres would have no need for a 4300 square foot barn that once was used to support a 300-acre farm.

I have recently been advised that there was someone interested in purchasing the property. It came to my attention that they wanted to remodel the barn in the same manner that my grandmother was thinking about. It would, understandably, require placing windows and doors in the

south side of the barn (as marked on your copy of the floor plan).

I would normally not have been privileged with this information until they made the official offer on the property. Unfortunately, it had been suggested that my prospective buyer visit Eddie Salazar to find out if their plans for remodeling would be actable to planning and zoning before making an offer to purchase the property. Evidently Eddie introduced her to Liana Aguirre, Mesilla's new historic preservation specialist, whom I had no knowledge of, nor did I have any knowledge of the historic preservation movement in Mesilla.

They then proceeded to my property where Miss Aguirre proceeded to tell my buyer and her builder that she could not put doors or windows in the wall of the barn when converting it from a barn to part of the adjoining house. When being informed of this by my realtors was the first time that I had heard of my property being proposed for historical preservation. I could not believe that someone from the town of Mesilla would go onto my property and dissuade a prospective buyer without even notifying me of a pending historical preservation action even being considered. I consider that to be a behind the back, underhanded move. I

am then told by miss Aguirre, that the property owner's consent is not needed in this matter.

My brother, John Knopp, who lived on the property for 30 years, reminded me that he used to be on the Mesilla zoning and planning commission board several years ago. He let me know that the board he sat on would never have considered doing something like this.

My prospective buyer has since withdrawn here request for remodeling and has decided not to go through the hassle of fighting with Mesilla and has decided not to make an offer to purchase my property which is listed for \$895,000. Many would now consider that Mesilla now owes me \$895,000.

If this situation continues it will make it virtually impossible to sell my property. The same could be said for anyone else's property that is designated in the future. It will destroy my portion of the agreement which I have with my brother and sister and require us to go back to the bargaining table to redistribute family holdings. This makes my entire family very upset.

My wife is ill and needs care. I incidentally had to leave her alone to come to this meeting. I am not young and will soon have needs in keeping with my age. I will need the money from the sale of the property to help pay for my wife's and my needs in the near future. We have no family here to help.

Miss Aguirre has publicly stated that a property owner's personal financial situation should not be considered when the historical preservation of the area is at stake. I would ask anyone in the room today as to whether they would be willing to sacrifice their retirement years for the good of the town.

The house and barn have already been extensively changed from their original design. The house no longer looks like a farmhouse, and the barn no longer looks like a barn. It was told to me by Miss Aguirre that the part of the property that remains to appear original is the south wall of the barn, which is the wall which would need to be remodeled to convert it to be part of the house. To preserve one wall of one building on a ten-acre property does not appear to me to warrant what is being asked of me or my potential buyers.

If the town of Mesilla wishes to keep the property in its exact state, I would be more than willing to sell it to the town for \$895,000. They could then preserve it exactly as they see fit. But as long as it is under private ownership, I contend that there should be no restrictions as mentioned by Miss Aguirre, and if any, only those that are agreed to by me, the owner.

I, unfortunately, can in no way afford to pay out of pocket for something that the town deems historically advantageous,

and that I would not receive anything in return and jeopardize my remaining years and those of my wife.

The historical significance of Mesilla is in its generations of families that have lived here. They settled here to make a life for their family to come. My grandparents would not have moved to the Mesilla area and built what the town seeks to preserve today, had they known that the town would attempt to treat their family in this manner. We are the history of Mesilla.

I have spoken to my attorney about this situation.

Unfortunately, considering the short time we have had since finding out about this situation, it was not enough time for him to prepare for this meeting, but he assures me that he will have no problem in doing so going forward if need be.

Everyone to whom I have relayed this story to, of which there have been many, all agree that this is as unamerican as anything they have ever heard.

I would be glad to answer any questions that you might have at this point. I also brought extra written copies of this presentation if anyone would like to have it for later reference.