

**SIERRA COUNTY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
June 9, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER: 10:00 am

The Sierra County Board of County Commissioners met in Special Session at 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at the Sierra County Commission Chambers, 1712 N Date, Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

ROLL CALL:

**Commissioner James Paxon, Chairman
Commissioner Hank Hopkins, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Sandy Jones, Member**

Clerk of Board: Amy Whitehead

County Attorney: Dave Pato

County Manager: Amber Vaughn

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

NEW MEXICO STATE FLAG PLEDGE:

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Kaycee Edwards, Monica Zepeda, Ryan Williams, Denny Womack, Tim Kudzdrowski, Bob Whelan, Amy Whelan, Cameron Sandoval, Nehemiah Whelan

II: PUBLIC HEARING:

Emergency Ordinance/Proclamation 2026-003 Restricting the Sale and use of fireworks in the Unincorporated Areas of Sierra County.

III: PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Whelan: Spoke in opposition of the ordinance stating that he is Associate Pastor of New Hope Revival Church and they do ONE big fundraiser a year and that is Firework sales.... He also stated that the terrain here is not heavily wooded and not a huge fire danger. This is the 250th anniversary of America and we should be able to celebrate as Proud americans. It's unamerican not to be able to keep the tradition of celebrating with fireworks.

Denny Womack- New Revival Church, asking to please not ban any fireworks. The Governor is only URGING Counties to ban them not demanding it. It's anti-american and our area is desert and not much to burn- we are expecting more rains to come.

People go to other areas and buy the fireworks and still bring them back to Sierra County. The firework stand pays gross receipt tax which helps the County.

Tim Kuzdrowski- Elephant Butte This County is bigger than T or C, we have the Gila and lots of grassland. Why should we put money over trying to protect our lands stop fires?

EM Ryan Williams- Trying to mitigate all risks and protect the safety of our Citizens. We are in a severe drought. From January- May 536 wildfires in the state of NM. Everyone started banning fireworks.

Public Hearing Closed: 10:25 am

IV: ELECTION CANVASS

Commissioner Paxon- Is there a motion to Convene as the County Canvassing Board?

Commissioner Hopkins moved to Convene as the County Canvassing Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Clerk Whitehead did a Roll call vote and motion carried.

Clerk Amy Whitehead presented the Canvass packet and results to Commissioners and stood for questions.

Commissioner Hopkins expressed his concerns regarding the low voter turnout. Commission Chair Paxon asked if any votes were rejected, Clerk Whitehead stated no except for some write in votes that were written incorrectly.

Attorney Pato asked if there were any omissions or errors on the election returns? Clerk Whitehead stated that there were none. And do the returns contain the executed certificates? Clerk Whitehead stated yes they do.

Commission Vice Chair Hopkins moved that they Certify the election and approve the canvass as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried with Commissioner's Districts 1-2-3 voting yes.

Commissioner Jones moved that they close the hearing as the canvassing board and reconvene the County Commission meeting. Commissioner Hopkins seconded the motion. Motion carried with Commissioner's Districts 1-2-3 voting yes.

V: RESOLUTIONS-ORDINANCES-PROCLAMATIONS

A: Emergency Ordinance /Proclamation 2026-003 Restricting the sale and use of fireworks in the unincorporated areas of Sierra County.

Attorney Pato: This ordinance declares extreme or severe drought conditions exist within the unincorporated areas of Sierra County and that pursuant to the fireworks licensing and safety ac-imposes temporary restrictions on the sale and use of certain types of fireworks to protect public health and safety.

Much discussion took place regarding the ban with Commissioners asking questions to our Emergency Manager Ryan Williams. He provided answers and statistics. Commission Chair Paxon called Sheriff Baker to the podium and Sheriff Baker stated that Ban or No ban- the SO gets tons of calls on the day and night of July 4th.

Commissioner Hopkins asked Attorney Pato if they pass the ordinance, can it be lifted if we get moisture in Sierra County? Attorney Pato stated that the Ordinance would have to be modified and he would be happy to do that.

Commissioner Hopkins made a motion to adjust the ordinance to state that the ban can be lifted IF Sierra County receives some moisture between now and the holiday. The lifting of the ban would be determined by the County Manager and Emergency Management. Commission Chair Paxon seconded the motion. Commissioner Jones asked for some discussion on the motion stating that he is not comfortable putting the pressure of the decision to lift the ban on ANY County Employee should Sierra County receive moisture. He stated that he cannot support the motion because it is strictly unenforceable and the County has never enforced it.

Commission Chair Paxon stated that there is a motion and a second and he asked for a roll call vote re: passing the ordinance with the ability to lift the ban with some moisture at the discretion of the County Manger and Emergency Manager.

Clerk Whitehead did a roll call vote with Commission Chair Paxon voting FOR the ban with opportunity to lift with moisture. Commissioner Hopkins voted FOR. Commissioner Jones voting NO. Motion passes with Commissioner District's 1-2 voting yes and 3 voting no.

Ban will last for 30 days from the date of adoption.

Commissioner Hopkins MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Commission Vice Chair Paxton SECONDED the motion.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:55 AM

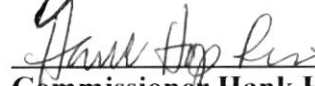
There being no further business to come before the Board, Commission Vice-Chair Paxton adjourned the meeting

Dated this 9th day of June, 2026.

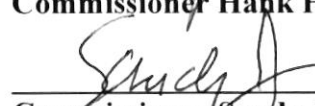
SIERRA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Commissioner James Paxton, Chairman

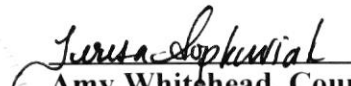


Commissioner Hank Hopkins, Vice-Chairman



Commissioner Sandy Jones, Member

ATTEST:



Amy Whitehead, County Clerk

