

MEETING MINUTES  
FARMER'S DITCH  
AZTEC, NM

These minutes are for the meeting held on April 8, 2025, at Flora Vista Water Association's office located at 2 Road 3499 #C, Flora Vista, NM 87415 at 6:00 p.m. mountain time.

The following were attendees (V = Voting member):

(V) John Lofgren - Board Member D1  
(V) Dale Rhodes - Board Member D2 (Temp)  
(V) David Elder - Board Member D3  
Dennis Taylor - Ditch Rider  
Rochelle Brown – City of Farmington Water Resource Specialist  
Bonnie Hopkins – NMSU Agricultural Extension Agent - Guest  
Pam Elder  
(V) Bonnie Yoakum  
(V) Mark Lukow  
Misty Boone  
(V) Richard Boone  
(V) Mike Wells  
(V) Mike Huddleston  
(V) Pamela Carlisle

These minutes are prepared in accordance with Farmer's Ditch bylaws, paragraph 2.3. These minutes are a summary of the meeting and are not a transcript. They are intended to record the key decisions and actions taken. **Any discrepancies shall be brought to the board for correction no less than two weeks prior to the next regular meeting, for inclusion into the final version.**

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mr. John Lofgren.
2. Prior to the meeting officially beginning a discussion was being held on the vacant board position left by Ms. Cargile. The two remaining board members, on or about March 1<sup>st</sup>, appointed Mr. Dale Rhodes. The discussion revolved around how long Mr. Rhodes was allowed to fill the temporary vacancy before an election was required. Ms. Bonnie Yoakum stated that per the New Mexico Statutes and Administration Code (NMSA); she believed December and election would be required. This prompted Mr. Rhodes to ask if Ms. Yoakum wanted the position, to which she replied, "Yes". Mr. Lofgren and Mr. Elder confirmed the swap and officially appointed Ms. Yoakum to represent District 2 (D2) as of April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Lofgren stated this would need to be updated on the ditch website (<https://farmersirrigationdistrict.com>).

3. The agenda item was announced – vote on the new Farmer's Ditch and City of Farmington Transportation of Water contract (contract). Mr. Lofgren handed out copies of the contract.

4. Ms. Misty Boone intervened to ask if there were meeting minutes or a financial report to be accepted into record, Mr. Lofgren stated there were not. The previous Board Member Ms. Leah Cargile had resigned February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and had not turned over ditch documents to date.

In addition, Ms. Dena McReynolds had also resigned from being the ditch's bookkeeper on or about March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and had not turned over the ditch's financials to date.

Misty Boone stated this was the second, quarterly meeting that did not have meeting minutes. Mr. Lofgren concurred.

5. Discussions began on the contract:

- a. The agreement distributed by Mr. Lofgren was not the most current and would not represent the final contract, if approved. Mr. Elder read the updates which included striking paragraph three (3), sentences four (4) and five (5), and updating paragraph 12 to read "December 31, 2026" vs. "December 31, 2027."

These changes reduced the contract length to two (2) years vs. 10 years and removed the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation rate.

The change to two years was to allow for Farmington and Farmers to properly track flow rates to ensure accurate readings of water delivered before committing to a long-term contract/rates.

Mr. Elder described how the acre feet, flow rates, etc. were established. Farmer's ditch can flow 54-57 cubic feet per second (cfs); it is estimated that Farmington can pump 46 cfs. It was determined that the water can flow from the headgate to Farmington Lake (18.2 miles) in 5.2 hours.

Additional numbers are available upon request.

- b. Ms. Brown provided clarification on Farmington's signatory process. She stated that the contract would not go through City Council, Mr. Rob Mayes could sign the document without further processing.
- c. A question was raised on clarity of point of delivery. The point of delivery will be the "wet well" and water usage will be counted at Farmington's pumps at this location.
- d. A question was raised on if quorum was present for a legal vote. A discussion on the interpretation of the Farmer's Irrigation Ditch By-laws (dated 2015) paragraph 2.3 began. Ms. Hopkins read the section out loud and stated she believed that a quorum would be a majority of those members present at the meeting, to include the board members.

Excerpt: “Items to be approved by a vote of the members shall be determined by a majority vote of the members present at the meeting. A quorum for any membership meeting shall consist of the members at the meeting”

Members present accepted this interpretation that those present could qualify as a quorum. A count of qualified, voting members (water right owners) was conducted, nine (9) members (including board members) were present. Each water owner would be entitled to one vote until further clarifications were made.

- e. Mr. Boone began a discussion about bylaw paragraph 2.4 and whether the contract would need to be voted on by all ditch members vs. only those present due to the contract value. The annual contract value is estimated at \$186,193.35 and the contract term is for two (2) years, bringing the contract total value to \$372,386.70.

Estimated Acre Feet	Per Acre Foot	Monthly Total	Per Season (7 mo)
969	\$27.45	\$26,599.05	\$186,193.35

Excerpt: “The board shall have all power granted by law, but no contract involving a consideration exceeding \$20,000 (twenty thousand dollars), and no contract for purchase, rental, or delivery, involving annual charges or payments exceeding \$7,000 (seven thousand dollars), per annum shall be binding unless such a contract shall be authorized by a majority vote of the districts *qualified electors*, according to the number of votes cast at a previous election.”

This prompted discussion of what a qualified elector was and if paragraph 2.4 was intended for outgoing expenditures only or both outgoing/incoming.

Per NMSA 1-1-4, A. “As used in the Election Code and rules promulgated by the secretary of state, "*qualified elector*" means any resident of this state who is qualified to vote under the provisions of the constitution of New Mexico and the constitution of the United States and includes any qualified resident.”

Per NMSA 73-10-7, A. In any district having an irrigable area of twenty-five thousand acres or less, a "qualified elector" is any person who:

- (1) owns one-half acre or more of agricultural land within the district or has evidence of title to such lands or is a purchaser of such lands under contract for the purchase of such lands from the state; or
- (2) is a resident entryman of public lands within the district; and
- (3) meets all other requirements of Section 73-10-7 NMSA 1978.

B. Any person who meets the qualifications of Section [Paragraph] A(1) is a resident freeholder.

Ultimately, it was decided that the quorum present could vote on, and legally enter, the contract being presented. Mr. Boone did clarify that the vote and resulting contract be filed with the County Clerk. All parties concurred.

- f. Mr. Richard Boone raised concerns on if the ditch was liable for meeting 13,000 acre feet of water per year (as written in the contract). His concern stemmed from the anticipated drought and water right usage above/North of Aztec impacting water availability. The Animas/LaPlata (ALP) water rights for tribal use may impact water flow capacity. It is anticipated that the Southern Ute Tribe will be pull 500 acre feet per month from the river before it reaches Farmer's Ditch.

Mr. Elder stated the ditch is not required; it is anticipated that Farmington will accept approximately 6,700 acre feet per annum.

Ms. Rochelle Brown stated that all parties had water rights, to include Farmington, and all would be under the same restrictions/conditions.

Tri-City Record article, Attachment 1.

- g. Ms. Yoakum raised the concern that the contract was not presented to all members of Farmer's ditch and those voting only had minimal time during the meeting to review and provide feedback. Mr. Lofgren stated that he and Mr. Elder had worked diligently with David Sypher (Farmington), and the contract was only completed the day prior. There was not time, nor did he know how to contact all members. He stated mailing out information costs approximately \$1,000 per mailing and the ditch did not have those funds. Ms. Yoakum recommended delaying signature for five (5) days while members were given time to read and distribute the corrected copy. Mr. Lofgren stated he placed two (2) notices in the Tri-City Record stating the meeting would be held this evening to allow for notice; it is also displayed on the website. Mr. Huddleston stated if they (members) cared, they would be present at the meeting.

Ms. Boone stated a "roll call" could be obtained from the county clerk.

Ms. Pamela Carlisle stated that mailing would take too long and what was the anticipated outcome?

Mr. Elder offered to read the contract verbatim, Mr. Huddleston stated it was not necessary.

A delay was not considered/approved.

- h. Mr. Boone stated he was uncomfortable with paragraph 16 and wanted to ensure that the board could not liquidate the ditch without all members voting. Mr. Elder stated he also did not like the paragraph, but it had been in all previous contracts. Mr. Elder further stated that Farmington implied they did not want ownership of the ditch if it could be avoided.
- i. Ms. Pamela Carlisle entered a motion to vote on the contract. Mr. Mike Huddleston seconded the motion. The motion carried by an affirmative vote of 8 members, with one member abstaining.

6. Mr. Lofgren stated that a spill way near the Flora Vista Arroyo. This spill way needed repairs to prevent water from entering the arroyo. This spill way is located on private property and access for repairs will need to be coordinated. Ms. Boone asked how it was damaged – no one knows. The damage may be due to age. In addition, Farmington has requested that the water levels be controlled to always maintain a level of 9' - 10.6" in the wet well. Adjustments to this spillway will be made to attempt to maintain this level.
7. Mr. Lofgren stated that a new bookkeeper will need to be hired. He has three current resumes for review. It is anticipated the bookkeeper will work 20 hours per week. Compensation of the previous bookkeeper was estimated at \$450 per month. This would be on the upcoming agenda.
8. Ms. Yoakum stated that the ditch is not in compliance in several areas. The Ditch Bylaws need to be updated and communication with the general membership is lacking. It was recommended that a Facebook page be created to reach a larger audience. Mr. Lofgren is hoping the new bookkeeper will help with compliance issues. Ms. Hopkins recommended the creation of two committees – Bylaw Committee and the Communication Committee. Ms. Boone volunteered for the bylaw committee.

Mr. Boone requested that roles and responsibilities be updated and clearly outlined in the new bylaws.

9. Ms. Boone raised a concern to the board that there is a headgate leaking on the ditch, located at the property identified by assessor tax ID R0012693 (2135 W Aztec, Blvd, Aztec, NM 87410). Mr. Huddleston confirmed he saw the leak. Mr. Taylor stated he believed a water main belonging to the City of Aztec/Flora Vista Water Association may be the cause. The Boones stated there are no water lines in that area.
10. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rhodes, the motion was seconded by Ms. Carlisle. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m. mountain.

ATTACHMENT 1  
Article from TriCity Record:

**Farmers Irrigation District preparing for water restrictions  
Water shortages likely to impact irrigation season for farmers  
Monday, Mar 10, 2025, 3:15 PM**

(Picture removed for consolidation)

**John Lofgren, Farmers Irrigation District president, discusses the water shortage. *David Edward Albright/Tri-City Record***

Farmers in the Farmers Irrigation District and other districts in San Juan County likely will face water restrictions, according to Farmers Irrigation District Board President John Lofgren.

An official decision is expected in April, he said Wednesday.

He emphasized that early implementation would help farmers manage their operations more effectively.

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, District 5 in Aztec, shares a similar outlook and suggests restrictions could follow a two-days-on, two-days-off schedule, affecting agricultural planning across the area.

The [San Juan Water Commission](#) canceled its March 5 meeting and has not announced the meeting date in April. Quarterly meetings are held for members to ask questions at the Lions Club, Aztec Public Library or Flora Vista Mutual Domestic Water Association office, depending on availability.

Water is expected to be flowing in the Farmers Ditch, which serves more than 2,000 users, by April 1.

Lofgren said water can be released from [Lake Nighthorse](#) to supplement water in the Animas River. The city of Farmington pays for water storage in that reservoir, he said.

The Farmers Ditch was constructed in 1892, drawing water from the Animas River north of Aztec, and was extended into the Flora Vista area in 1907, ending west of the Barton Arroyo,” it states on [farmersirrigationdistrict.com](#).

Additionally, the 1907 Jones Extension of the ditch apparently began near the start of the present-day concrete-lined section and continued to the Flora Vista Arroyo. The San Juan County Commission passed a resolution in 1954, making the Farmer’s Ditch a Special Irrigation District.

In 1963, the city extended the ditch across the Flora Vista Arroyo to the water storage reservoir at Lake Farmington.

The San Juan County Commission passed a resolution in 1954, making the Farmers Ditch a special irrigation district.

“This administrative change allows the district to ad valorem taxes upon all lands in the district, including urban property not irrigated or cultivated,” they state. “Revenue may be raised by the imposition of tolls and charges.”

Lofgren said a restructuring of the bylaws, calling for six board members with a nonvoting president in order to achieve a quorum. Board members have been rotating as president.

Farmers Ditch begins north of Aztec off Ruins Road and meanders about 18 miles to Lake Farmington. The city of Farmington is the largest customer of the Farmers Irrigation District. Lofgren said their financial arrangement with the city is contractual, based on their water rights. Farmington pays the district per acre-foot to transport the water in the ditch to Lake Farmington.

The rates with the city are being renegotiated, as it only pays \$16.50 per acre-foot. The irrigation district is asking for \$27.50 per acre-foot, Lofgren said.

“We think we’re being a good partner because we want to work with the city of Farmington,” he said.

A farmer pays \$68 per acre-foot and \$26.50 for the second and consecutive acres. The fees are paid to San Juan County in their property taxes.

Lofgren said water rights can be put in the bank for someone else to use, to prevent them from being lost. The bookkeeper for the district keeps those records, which are provided to the [New Mexico State Office of the State Engineer](#).

Lofgren said recently they noticed their revenue from Farmington had decreased drastically, falling from a peak of nearly \$300,000 six or seven years ago.

### **Problem with pumps discovered, resolved**

A problem with new pumps was discovered and resolved, as the screens were too fine and clogged, causing the pumps to overheat. Farmington can pump water from the Animas River to Lake Farmington at Penny Lane, but the electricity to pump that long distance is very costly.

“They were unaware of this problem, we were unaware of this problem. We just noticed it after COVID,” Lofgren said.

### **New Mexico Office of the State Engineer**

Shawn Williams, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer District 5 manager, explained that their office manages all the water, diversions, and appropriations in the San Juan River Basin. Real-time measuring stations on all main irrigation diversions measure water flow in cubic feet per second.

This year is looking rough, with record lows on the Mancos gauge, indicating a regional trend.

(Picture removed for consolidation)

**Shawn Williams, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, District 5, explains their outlook for the coming irrigation season. *David Edward Albright/Tri-City Record***

“We have real-time measuring stations on all the main irrigation diversions to all the ditches,” he said. Stations measure the water flow in cubic feet per second. The data is transferred to the Aztec office and stored on a server.

“This year is looking a little rough,” Williams said, comparing it to the “last bad year” of 2018, when rotations were done on the Animas River and low-priority ditches were shut off.

The Animas River gauge at Cedar Hill will serve as the guide for making water restriction decisions.

“Once that gauge hits about 200 cfs, we start thinking about it,” Williams said, adding they’ve seen record lows on the Mancos gauge, which shows a regional trend. “Yeah, it’s not looking good.”

As of March 10, the snowpack in Colorado's San Juan Mountains was below average, according to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](https://www.usda.gov/) at usda.gov.

Snowpack levels in San Miguel, Dolores, Animas and San Juan River Basins – encompassing much of the San Juan Mountains – are at 68% of the season median for snow water equivalent.

Snowpack data for the San Juan and La Plata mountains are available at [wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/ftpref/nwcc/basin-rpt/](https://wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/ftpref/nwcc/basin-rpt/).