

Bernalillo County Commission Observers Report

December 2024

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission Raises Salaries, Supports Housing Activities

All five commissioners attended the meeting. Steve Quezada, Barbara Baca, Eric Olivas, Adrainn Barboa, Walt Benson

Bernalillo County Commissioners gave themselves a 15% raise at their meeting on Dec. 10. That means commissioners will now make \$44,969 a year. The commission also passed salary increases for the County Clerk, Treasurer and Assessor, who will now make \$99,626 a year. The Probate Judge will make \$43,869. This is the first time commissioners have been free to set salaries at any level they choose. Formerly, the state legislature had guidelines about how much commissioners and other county officials could make, but voters passed Constitutional Amendment #4 in November. That removed all guardrails that constrained salary increases.

The League has no state or local position on salaries for public officials.

Bernalillo County continues to work toward housing solutions for special groups. The county owns a building at 2045 Wyoming Blvd. NE. It will be leased to a non-profit organization, Wings for Life to be used for inmates released from the Metropolitan Detention Center and their families. It's not completely clear whether the families will be housed at the building or whether it will be a center for support services.

The commission also approved an administrative resolution declaring an intent to issue project revenue bonds for \$16 million to finance the acquisition/rehabilitation of an existing 42-unit public housing property and the construction of an additional 46 units.

In a separate action the commission approved an administrative resolution to issue Project Revenue Bonds/Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds for \$28,900,000 in connection with a new multifamily development project.

The League has a strong housing position that supports public effort to find affordable housing solutions for county residents.

The commission voted down an ordinance change sponsored by Commissioner Quezada to allow commissioners to be appointed to positions in the county immediately after leaving office.

The Bernalillo County Commission passed an ordinance to allow fire fighters and first responders to consume medical marijuana when off the job.

In another action the Commission also agreed to co-operate with the City of Albuquerque to form an advisory committee to resolve problems with businesses and private property owners in determining the boundaries of the City and County on infrastructure issues.

The League has formally held the position that the City of Albuquerque and the County of Bernalillo should consolidate for more than 70 years.