

**Valencia Association of Local Elected Officials (VALEO)
Valencia Regional Emergency Communications Center (VRECC)
August 20, 2019, 6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Attendance (based on sign-in sheet):

Belen:

None present

Bosque Farms:

None present

Los Lunas:

Charles Griego, Mayor

Chris Ortiz, Councilor

Greg Martin, Village Administrator

Peralta:

None present

Rio Communities:

Mark Gwinn, Mayor

Peggy Gutjahr, Mayor Pro-Tem

Arturo Sais, Councilor

Bill Brown, Councilor

Leisa Haynes, City Manager

Valencia County:

David Carlberg, Commissioner

Duana Draskiewicz, P&Z Commissioner

Danny Monette, County Manager

Gabriel Luna, Community Development Director

Others Present:

Erin Callahan, Los Lunas Community Development Director (Guest Speaker)

Robert Rhatigan, UNM/State Demographer (Guest Speaker)

Shirley Valdez, VRECC Director (Host)

I. Call to Order

After allowing time for members to get some food, provided by the Village of Los Lunas, and eat, Los Lunas Mayor Charles Griego called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

II. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

III. Welcome

VRECC Director Shirley Valdez welcomed members to the training room of the new VRECC building. She offered tours of the building, and use of the training room to all member entities, if needed in the future. She referred to and handed out a poster with information about the VRECC and how members of the public can sign up for AlertSense—a tool to receive emergency alerts and community notifications via text message, email, pager, or voice call—and encouraged members to take and display the posters in their respective communities. She reminded and thanked the group for supporting the VRECC's successful capital outlay request in the past legislative session for \$1.1 million for the CAD/RMS Improvements Project, which is in the current fiscal year's budget. She asked for continued support from the group for another capital outlay request in the next legislative session for \$5.8 million for a 700 MHz Radio Upgrade Project, and encouraged member entities to include this project on their own ICIP Priority Lists. Mayor Charles Griego echoed the importance of the radio upgrade project for the safety and benefit of first responders and residents of all of Valencia County, and stated it is something we all need to support. Rio Communities Mayor Mark Gwinn agreed, and stated that this is a good example of how and why we need to work together, much like we did during the successful Valencia County Clean-up Day held back in April 2019.

IV. Review of Past Minutes

Mayor Griego asked if there were any comments or corrections to the Minutes of the May 21, 2019 VALEO Meeting, which was hosted by Valencia County. Rio Communities Mayor Pro-Tem Peggy Gutjahr pointed out that Joshua Ramsell's name was misspelled on the minutes. Mayor Gwinn made a motion to approve the minutes, as corrected (Joshua Ramsell's name), seconded by Valencia County Commissioner David Carlberg, approved unanimously.

V. New Business

Presentation on 2020 Census

Robert Rhatigan, UNM/State Demographer

Mr. Rhatigan stated the 2020 Census got underway in Valencia County several months ago when a number of senators and federal and state Census officials toured Valencia County. He gave a brief background and history on the reasons behind the Census—which occurs every ten years—including:

- Congressional Apportionment
- State and Local Redistricting
- Data Quality
- Economic Development
- Nearly \$1 trillion in annual federal funds distributed. (In FY2016, New Mexico

received \$7.8 billion.)

Mr. Rhatigan stated there are big costs for undercounting the population during a Census, and listed a few concerns for the 2020 Census, including:

- Citizenship Question
- Distrust of Federal Government
- Low National Unemployment
- Data Confidentiality (real and perceived)
- IT Systems Readiness

Mr. Rhatigan stated, for various reasons, New Mexico is the hardest state to count in the nation, and listed the following populations that are most at risk of being undercounted:

- Children, ages 1-4
- Renters
- Immigrants
- Native Americans
- African Americans
- Impoverished people
- Rural areas

Mr. Rhatigan stated there are a couple of things we can do to help ensure an accurate Census count in Valencia County:

1. Ensure an accurate address list exists for your community (which is basically done thanks to a major effort by communities and the LUCA program).

2. Establish a Complete Count Committee (CCC) in your community (which is also already done in Los Lunas and Valencia County, and CCCs have already begun meeting and working together). Roles of a CCC include:

- Raise awareness about the importance of the Census and getting an accurate and complete count.
- Educate the public about the laws and methods used to ensure confidentiality of data.
- Develop strategies to identify and reach out to unique/at-risk populations.
- Leverage existing networks and use trusted voices to help spread positive messages about the Census.

Robert Rhatigan Q & A:

Q: How do we make sure we reach remote and sometimes dangerous areas?

A: Safety is an issue. Enumerators (Census employees/counters) will do their best, but in some cases will have no choice but to estimate, which will always be lower than actual.

Q: Are there other organizations that can help get information out, Community Health Clinics, for example?

A: Yes, the CCC's role is to identify partners, such as Community Health Clinics, and develop strategies for helping them get the right messaging out.

Q: When does the Census itself begin?

A: Mid-March through the end of July, depending on which method you use for completing the form (online, phone, or paper form). April 1st is the official "Census Day," where they will want to know how many people were living at a particular address on that specific day.

Q: How do they count homeless people?

A: Enumerators will actually go out and try and count homeless people where they see them, or where they know they are.

Q: How do we overcome the distrust factor? Can churches help?

A: Yes, the CCC's should identify and work with churches because they tend to be trusted more than government workers.

Erin Callahan, Los Lunas Community Development Director

Ms. Callahan summarized what has taken place so far with regard to the 2020 Census in Valencia County. She stated that both Valencia County and the Village of Los Lunas have formed Complete Count Committees (CCCs), which met for the first time together last night (August 19th). She stated that, for efficiency and cost-saving's sake, people will be encouraged to use the online and phone response options, especially if there is distrust, since people are less likely to be contacted in-person by an enumerator to get the forms filled out. She stated the key dates and phases to remember are:

- 2018-2019 - Education Phase
- Jan-Feb 2020 - Awareness Phase
- March-May 2020 - Motivation Phase

Ms. Callahan listed some of the local challenges that have already been identified, including:

- No committee representation from 18-35 age group.
- Certain areas of the County have no internet or phone service.
- Certain areas of the County have no interest in the government knocking on their door.
- Past re-addressing in Los Lunas and Valencia County could pose challenges for people receiving Census materials.

Ms. Callahan also listed some local assets that are already helping, or will help, with the Census process, including:

- State and Federal Funding
- Facilities (schools, community centers, churches, county, cities, etc.)
- Census Materials (prepackaged social media posts, training materials, networks, partnerships, etc.)

Ms. Callahan stated the next steps in the process are monthly CCC meetings, formation of additional CCCs, and CCC event awareness and participation.

Erin Callahan Q & A:

Q: Is the State still losing population?

A: (Robert) Yes, there are less people being born, more people dying, and out-migration is happening (ages 30-50 out-migration is a bigger problem than ages 18-30 because they take their older kids with them, who will likely never come back).

Comment: Three people in a mobile home park in Rio Communities died in the same week!

Comment: It's good that the paper form is still available, because some people in the Senior population still prefer mail.

Q: How can we (elected officials) help?

A: Just keep talking about it wherever you go, emphasizing the importance of an accurate count, and encouraging 100% participation.

Q: When will the data be available?

A: In stages starting around December 2020, until April 2021.

Q: Are we (Los Lunas) going to have to redistrict at the next election in November 2021?

A: Maybe, depending on what the data shows, which will be available by then.

Q: Are materials available that we can give out at public events?

A: The contact people are Erin Callahan with the Village of Los Lunas, and Gabe Luna with Valencia County. Right now, we need to concentrate on getting the right people on board, then distributing materials at events planned for Jan-Mar 2020.

VI. Next Meeting

The next regular quarterly VALEO meeting will be on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, hosted by Belen.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.