MINUTES

Executive Standing Committee Meeting

Hybrid Meeting

Monday, September 21, 2026
809 Copper Ave. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102
1:30 pm

Opening Notes

Before the meeting started Art Martinez explained that when voting takes place, we will ask for a roll call for those who don't approve and then identify the names of the members that did not respond to the don't approve as an affirmative vote. Additionally, prior to the affirmative roll call members that abstain from voting will respond via voice confirmation to the Board Chair and describe the reason. After the names are called for the affirmative vote, the chair will pause and ask those that do not concur with the affirmative roll call vote to voice a different vote. To ensure that a quorum remains, Ms. Nicole Giddings monitors the participants to ensure quorum is present and notes if a member is not available.

Call to Order

Vaadra Chavez Chair at 1:34 pm

Roll Call – Determination of Quorum

Facilitator: Nicole Giddings

Attendees:

Attendee	Organization	In Person	Virtual	Not Present
Honorable Stave Anaya	City of Moriarty			X
Karla Causey, Treasurer	Black Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico	X		
Vaadra Chavez, Chair Elect	Scale Smart HR		X	
Gabriel Esparza	Albuquerque Job Corps		X	
Justin Hilliard	City of Albuquerque, Economic Development		X	

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Attendee	Organization	In Person	Virtual	Not Present
Antoinette Holmes	NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation		X	
Dr. Kristopher Johnson	Rio Rancho Public Schools			X
John Mierzwa	Ingenuity Software Labs, Inc		X	
Debbie Ortiz	RDO Enterprises	X		
Stacy Sacco, Chair	SACCO Connections			X

Summary: The attendance table identifies meeting participants, their organizations, and whether they attended in person, virtually, or were not present.

Agenda Items

Approval of WCCNM Executive Standing Committee Agenda, September 21, 2026

Motion: Karla Causey
Second: Debbie Ortiz
No Discussion
Action: Passed unanimously by Voice Vote

Member Name	Yes	No	Abstain	No Vote
Steve Anaya				
Karla Causey	I			
Vaadra Chavez	V			
Gabriel Esparza	V			
Justin Hilliard	V			
Antoinette Holmes				
Dr. Kristopher Johnson				
John Mierzwa	V			
Debbie Ortiz	I			
Stacy Sacco				

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Summary: The voting table records board member participation and voting outcomes for the agenda item, including affirmative votes, negative votes, abstentions, and members who did not vote.

Tab 1: Approval of WCCNM Full Board Minutes

November 17, 2025

November 24, 2025

Motion: Justin Hillard
Second: Gabriel Esparza
No Discussion
Action: Passed unanimously by Voice Vote

Member Name	Yes	No	Abstain	No Vote
Steve Anaya				
Karla Causey	I			
Vaadra Chavez	V			
Gabriel Esparza	V			
Justin Hilliard	V			
Antoinette Holmes				
Dr. Kristopher Johnson				
John Mierzwa	V			
Debbie Ortiz	I			
Stacy Sacco				

Summary: The voting table records board member participation and voting outcomes for the agenda item, including affirmative votes, negative votes, abstentions, and members who did not vote.

Action Items

Tab 2: Approval of Operational Policy No. OP-410 Change 13 Supportive Services

- Mr. Art Martinez presented Operational Policy 410, which addresses supportive services for individuals participating in intensive workforce training programs.

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- The proposed policy update would include additional supportive service payments to assist participants enrolled in highly intensive, immersive training programs.
- The primary focus is on two, in-demand occupational training programs: Internet of Things and Quantum Technology.
- These programs require participants to attend classroom instruction approximately 40 hours per week, in addition to completing homework and other coursework.
- Due to the demanding schedules, participants are generally unable to maintain employment while enrolled in the programs.
- Art noted that similar supportive services were previously provided through the TechHire program in 2018.
- The purpose of the proposed update is to help reduce financial barriers and support participants in successfully completing these intensive training programs.
- Staff clarified that participants must first meet WIOA eligibility requirements to qualify for supportive services.
- Eligibility alone does not automatically establish a need for assistance. Each participant must undergo a comprehensive assessment to determine and justify the specific need for supportive services, including mileage, needs-related payments, or other allowable assistance.
- The identified need must be documented in the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP).
- Justin Hilliard expressed strong support for the policy, highlighting the success of the training programs in placing participants directly into employment upon completion of the boot camp. He also noted the program's value in attracting businesses and supporting company expansion.
- Vaadra Chavez noted that the Operations Subcommittee had previously reviewed the policy and supported the proposal. She emphasized the importance of targeting assistance to individuals with demonstrated needs rather than making it available to everyone participating in part-time training.

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- The committee recognized that the policy could help eliminate financial barriers for individuals who cannot afford to leave employment or go without income while participating in intensive, full-time training programs.

Motion: Justin Hillard
Second: Gabriel Esparza
No Discussion
Action: Passed unanimously by Voice Vote

Member Name	Yes	No	Abstain	No Vote
Steve Anaya				
Karla Causey	I			
Vaadra Chavez	V			
Gabriel Esparza				
Justin Hilliard	V			
Antoinette Holmes	V			
Dr. Kristopher Johnson				
John Mierzwa	V			
Debbie Ortiz	I			
Stacy Sacco				

Summary: The voting table records board member participation and voting outcomes for the agenda item, including affirmative votes, negative votes, abstentions, and members who did not vote.

Tab 3: Approval of Operational Policy No. OP-430 Change 4 Self Sufficiency

- Mr. Martinez presented Operational Policy 430 – Self Sufficiency, which addressed revisions to simplify compliance requirements and improve administrative efficiency.
- The revised policy removes outdated, time-sensitive information and instead references the purpose of the self-sufficiency wage standard and the criteria used to establish its necessity.
- The State will provide an annual letter to the administrative entity identifying the current self-sufficiency wage standard. The administrative entity will then distribute the information to service providers.
- Staff clarified that the self-sufficiency wage amount is established and published by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), not locally determined by the Board.

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- The revision eliminates the need to formally update the policy each year when the published wage amount changes.
- Staff emphasized that meeting the income standard alone does not automatically qualify an individual for services, as additional eligibility requirements must still be met.
- The Operations Committee previously reviewed and concurred with the proposed changes, agreeing that referencing the published standard would reduce unnecessary administrative work and improve compliance efficiency.

Motion: Justin Hillard
Second: Antoinette Holmes
No Discussion
Action: Passed unanimously by Voice Vote

Member Name	Yes	No	Abstain	No Vote
Steve Anaya				
Karla Causey	I			
Vaadra Chavez	V			
Gabriel Esparza				
Justin Hilliard	V			
Antoinette Holmes	V			
Dr. Kristopher Johnson				
John Mierzwa	V			
Debbie Ortiz	I			
Stacy Sacco				

Summary: The voting table records board member participation and voting outcomes for the agenda item, including affirmative votes, negative votes, abstentions, and members who did not vote.

Informational Updates

Tab 10: WIOA Updates

Mr. Martinez provided an update on current WIOA activities and anticipated developments:

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- He stated that, he along with our Board Chair and Chair-elect will be heading to D.C. for an upcoming Conference.
- Final federal funding allocations for WIOA and other programs are expected to be released on December 11 and potential impacts are expected following the federal discussions.
- Performance negotiations with the State are expected to take place in the near future. Participants will include the Board Chair, CEO, and Art.
- The State's performance criteria have not changed significantly, so substantial changes to local performance expectations are not anticipated.
- Mr. Martinez indicated he plans to request some flexibility regarding enrollment targets, which are established every two years, with the goal of making performance expectations more reasonable for service providers.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at: 2:17 pm

Next Meeting

Date	Time	Location
Monday, January 25, 2027	1:30 pm	Mid-Region Council of Governments, 809 Copper Ave. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Summary: The table provides the date, time, and location details for the next scheduled meeting.

Approval

Approved at the WCCNM Executive Standing Committee Meeting held on XXXX

Should you require a signed copy of these minutes, please contact Nicole Giddings at ngiddings@mrcog-nm.gov

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Anyone requiring special accommodations please notify the MRCOG office at 247-1750 seven (7) days prior to the meeting

Equal Opportunity Statement
"Equal Opportunity Program"

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