

Paula Linhares, Constituent Services Specialist

O: 719-520-6423

M: 719-235-8635

PaulaLinhares3@elpasoco.com

Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Board of County Commissioners

Holly Williams, District 1

Carrie Geitner, District 2

Bill Wysong, District 3

Cory Applegate, District 4

Lauren Nelson, District 5

**CITIZEN OUTREACH GROUP (COG)
MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: July 21, 2025

Members Present

In Person and Via

Virtual/Teleconference

Meeting: Ruble Henderson (Chair), Candi Boyer, Sarah Brittain Jack, Amber Campbell, Lanz Cook, Jim Godfrey, Angie Greene, Brenda Miller

Members Absent: Ed Dills (excused), Dale Warner (unexcused)

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Carrie Geitner, Commissioner Holly Williams

County Staff Present: AmyJo Fields, Natalie Sosa, Paula Linhares

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 9:30am by COG Chair Ruble Henderson.

I. Administrative Items - Ruble Henderson

- a. Motion made by Candi Boyer to excuse absent Board members. Lanz Cook seconded. Motion passed.
- b. Motion was made by Sarah Brittain Jack to accept the June 16 minutes with correction to *Section III. Introductions*. Brenda Miller seconded. Motion passed.

II. Commissioner Liaison Comments – Commissioner Geitner and Commissioner Williams

- a. Commissioner Lauren Nelson was appointed on June 24 to represent Commissioner District 5. The seat was previously held by Cami Bremer who resigned in June and is currently serving as CEO of Pikes Peak United Way. Lauren has also served on the School District 11 School Board. Due to recently passed HB25-1319, Lauren will serve on the BoCC at least until the next general election in November of this year.
- b. Despite fiscal headwinds at the State and City levels, the County budget remains on target due to conservative estimates reflected in the 2025 budget. One exception is the County's Department of Human Services (DHS), which is impacted by the State budget. In the coming weeks, the County may need to make adjustments to certain DHS programs.

- c. Governor Polis may call for a special session in August due to the State's budget crisis.
- d. The El Paso County Fair (July 12-19) was successful. 31,501 attendees, 500 more than last year. Special thanks to COG board members for their participation and support, and to the Commissioners who braved the dunk tank. Note: The Fair is self-sustaining from revenues generated. County general funds are not used to support the Fair. **County Fair highlight:** Protein 4 Helping Others (P4HO), a non-profit, partners with the El Paso County Junior Livestock Sale at the County Fair to donate meat to the Springs Rescue Mission. The initiative buys back livestock from the sale and donates the meat, providing a valuable protein source for the Mission's meal programs and culinary training of its clients – an example of rural/urban partnership. El Paso County is the only county in the state with this program.

III. **County Communications and PIO Update – Natalie Sosa and AmyJo Fields**

- a. COG talking points are attached below for the Treasurer's Office new option to prepay property taxes in monthly installments. COG Board is encouraged to share information with neighbors and others in their networks.
- b. Café Conversation with Commissioner Cory Applegate will be held on Friday, August 29, 9:30am-11am at Western Omelette Restaurant 2, 311 N. Santa Fe Avenue in Fountain.
- c. Commissioner Nelson Café Conversation – date/location TBD.

IV. **Citizen Outreach Group New Member Orientation – Paula Linhares**

- a. Copy of the orientation slide deck is attached below.

V. **Citizen College 2025 Update - Subcommittee**

- a. Ruble Henderson and Ryan Parsell to coordinate County Government, Budget and Land Use on **October 13**.
- b. Amber Campbell and Lanz Cook will be assigned to coordinate the sessions at Citizen Service Center (CSC) on **October 14**. Angie Greene can advise, as needed, based on her experience serving as Session Manager for CSC last year. Ruble will check with Dale Warner to see if he is able to continue as Session Manager for CSC this year.
- c. Jim Godfrey reports that Emergency Management and Public Works sessions on **October 15** are on track.
- d. Ed Dills reports (in absentia) the 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office session on **October 16** is on track.
- e. Brenda Miller will solidify the plan for El Paso County Combined Courts session with Chief Judge Sokol on **October 17**. It was suggested that Judge Sokol designate a back-up presenter in case something arises that precludes her participation. Brenda will follow up with Judge Sokol's assistant on this.
- f. Sarah Brittain Jack reports that sessions at the Sheriff's Office and Coroner's Office on **October 18** are on track. Sheriff Roybal may not be available, but she is awaiting confirmation from Commander Deborah Harris who is POC for the Sheriff's Office session. If Roybal can't participate we can reach out to Undersheriff Jeff Kramer.
- g. Candi Boyer is assigned as Session Manager for the Parks session at Fountain Creek Nature Center afternoon of **October 18**.
- h. Group discussed Citizen College press release and roll-out of registration. AmyJo suggested that additional promotional messaging recommended by Sarah Brittain Jack could be incorporated in social media pitches and podcasts vs. press release.

Idea was discussed to ask former Citizen College participants to provide testimonials on social media and podcasts.

- i. Registration will go live today, July 21. Bi-weekly digital promotions will follow.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am

COG Talking Points

Treasurer's Office New Option to Prepay Property Taxes In Monthly Installments

- El Paso County Treasurer's Office launched a new option that allows residential and business property owners to prepay their property taxes in smaller, manageable monthly payments.
- The program, offered through EscrowTaxes.com, is a secure, cloud-based platform that enables users to set up equal monthly pre-payments.
- Property owners can pay electronically using e-check, card, or digital wallet.

Who Can Participate:

- Property owners who own their property free and clear
- Homeowners or taxpayers who prefer consistent, predictable monthly payments
- Senior citizens on fixed incomes
- Business and commercial property owners who want to better manage their tax obligations

How to Enroll:

- Visit the El Paso County Treasurer's Office website and follow the instructions in the EscrowTax Portal to create an account and set up recurring monthly payments.

Note: Property must be owned outright and accounts must be current to qualify for this option.

Cost to Participate:

- E-checks: \$1 per transaction
- Credit and debit cards: 2.5 percent processing fee

For more information or to enroll, visit [EscrowTaxes.com](https://escrowtaxes.com) or <https://treasurer.elpasoco.com/>. For further information, contact the El Paso County Treasurer's Office at 719-520-7900.

Citizens Outreach Group New Member Orientation



Presentation Overview

- ❖ County Volunteer Training Recap
- ❖ Purpose, Vision, and Values of Citizens Outreach Group
- ❖ Responsibilities
- ❖ Program Overview
- ❖ Bylaws
- ❖ Meeting Frequency, Logistics, and Expectations
- ❖ Staff Point of Contact





County Volunteer Training Recap

County Volunteer Training Recap

- County training included a manual and videos that explained the services the County offers, the organization's strategic plan, and important legal issues.
- Organization: The County is led by elected County Commissioners, who appoint a County Administrator and a County Attorney. Staff who do not work for an independent elected official report to either the County Administrator or the County Attorney.
- Services: The County provides crucial services to residents that no one else offers.
- Volunteers are subject to Open Meeting laws, Sunshine Notice requirements, Gift Rules, Conflict of Interest provisions, and Anti-Discrimination and Anti Harassment policies.
- Any questions?





Purpose, Vision, & Values of Citizens Outreach Group

Purpose, Vision, & Values

Purpose

The purpose of the Citizens Outreach Group is to educate residents of the work and services provided by El Paso County, serve as a citizen ambassador on behalf of the organization to the public, and assess the progress of County strategic initiatives in order to encourage and enhance transparency and collaboration between citizens and County Government.

Vision

The vision of the Citizens Outreach Group is to be a premier volunteer group where volunteer members proactively identify, plan, and execute programs or events that fulfill the purpose of the committee. By adhering to this vision, the Citizens Outreach Group becomes a model volunteer group that positively influences other similar organizations within the Pikes Peak Region.

Values

The values of the Citizens Outreach Group aligns with the Core Values of the El Paso County Strategic Plan: Service Focused, Accountable, Transparent, Collaborative, and Trustworthy.





Responsibilities

Responsibilities

As a volunteer on the COG, you are responsible to complete the following tasks each year:

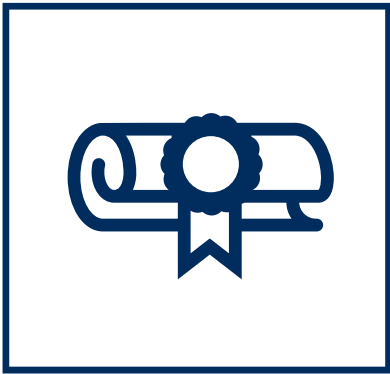
- Actively plan, coordinate, facilitate, and develop content for no less than one Citizen College.
- Work with elected county commissioners and district appointees to schedule, plan, and coordinate community town hall meetings.
- Annually review activity regarding the El Paso County Sheriff's Office Public Safety Sales Tax, the El Paso County Strategic Plan, and the El Paso County Budget.
- Represent the County at county-sponsored events, such as the El Paso County Fair.
- Disseminate information to the community on behalf of the El Paso County Communications or Government Affairs teams.





Program Overview

Program Overview



Citizen College

- COG members plan and coordinate this event.
- Staff guides volunteers, provides advice, and advertises the program to solicit attendees.
- Program informs residents of the inner-workings of the County, including various elected offices, services provided, the budget, etc.
- Citizen College “formula” can be adjusted by COG members.
- Held at least once a year, typically in the fall.



Program Overview



Town Hall Meetings

- District appointed COG volunteers lead the planning and coordination of these events, other COG members help as requested.
- Staff guides volunteers, provides advice, and advertises the event to solicit attendees.
- Program serves as assistance to elected county commissioners to facilitate community outreach within the commissioner's district.
- Held at the discretion of the elected county commissioner.



Program Overview

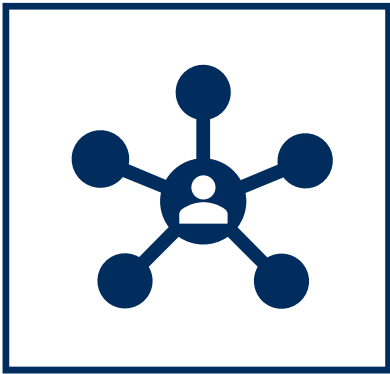


Annual Reviews

- COG volunteers review Public Safety Sales Tax, Strategic Plan progress, and the County Budget during annual meetings. The COG chair or vice chair may present to the Board of County Commissioners during Budget Hearings.
- Staff schedules and prepares presentations.
- Program serves as citizen review of these important functions.
- COG members share their observations with the community.



Program Overview



**Represent the
County**

- COG volunteers can represent the organization at County-sponsored events, such as the El Paso County Fair, or other similar events.
- Staff informs COG members of upcoming events and coordinates attendance.
- COG volunteers answer community questions and enhance the reputation of the organization.



Program Overview



**Disseminate on
behalf of Comms.
& Gov't Affairs**

- COG volunteers disseminate information to their networks on behalf of the organization. Examples include informing the public about upcoming Budget hearings or inviting people to participate in townhalls.
- Occasionally present a citizen/organization perspective at legislative hearings.
- Staff informs COG members of messaging and opportunities.





Bylaws

Bylaws

Membership

- One (1) citizen from each County Commissioner District, who serves at the sole discretion of the duly sworn-in Commissioner for each respective district, and up to six (6) at-large citizens appointed to specific terms by the Board of County Commissioners.
- If you are a district representative, you serve at the sole discretion of the Commissioner that appointed you.
- If you are an at-large member, you serve for a specific three-year term and may be appointed to serve one additional term.



Bylaws

Leadership

- At the first meeting of the year, you will elect a Chair and Vice Chair.
- The Chair and Vice Chair serve for the duration of the year. Someone may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms as Chair or Vice Chair.
- The Chair is tasked with fairly running meetings, calling votes, setting the agenda, and ensuring that voting members are carrying out their duties.
- The Vice Chair fulfills the role of the Chair in the Chair's absence.



Bylaws

Quorum

- All meetings must have a majority of voting members in attendance to make a quorum.
- No official business can occur during a meeting without a quorum.

Standard of Conduct

- Required to perform your duties in good faith, and in the best interest of the committee and the County.
- No inappropriate, lewd, harassing, or intimidating behavior will be tolerated.





Meeting Frequency, Logistics, & Expectations

Meeting Frequency, Logistics, & Expectations

Frequency

- Generally, on the third Monday of each month, from 9:30 am – 11:00 am.

Logistics

- Attend in-person where possible, but remote participation is an option.
- Staff will validate your parking costs if you park in the Sahwatch parking garage.
- Notify the Chair via e-mail prior to the meeting if you cannot attend. This will ensure your absence is excused.

Expectations

- Attend at least 80% of the meetings and have no unexcused absences.
 - Be actively engaged in the work of the committee and follow-through on your commitments.
-





Staff Points of Contact

Staff Points of Contact

Meeting Schedules, Agendas, and Other Logistics

- Paula Linhares - office: (719) 520-6423 cell: (719) 235-8635 email: PaulaLinhares3@elpasoco.com

Project Guidance and Other Support

- Ryan Parsell – office: (719) 520-6540 cell: RyanParsell@elpasoco.com
- Natalie Sosa, (719) 520-6250, NatalieSosa@elpasoco.com



Questions?

