

Bylaws of the Grant County Food Policy Council

Article I. Name, Location and Background

Section 1. Name. The full name of the advisory body is “Grant County Food Policy Council” (hereby referred to as the Council).

Section 2. Location. The principal office of the Council is housed at the Grant County Community Health Council located at 3031 Highway 180 East, Silver City, NM 88061.

Section 3. Background. The Council is an advisory board to the Grant County Board of Commissioners on food and agricultural systems issues. Members are comprised of representatives from the government and non-government sectors who have come together around common interests and beliefs about a healthy, sustainable food system for Grant County. The Council was developed from the Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities initiative to reduce childhood obesity in Grant County by creating opportunities for policies, programs, projects and education to improve nutrition among children and families.

Article II. Vision, Mission, Purpose and Goals

Section 1. Vision. The Council envisions a healthy community and thriving local food system that 1) provides access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food for all residents; 2) values and preserves the land base, natural resources and labor skills necessary for sustainable, local food production; 3) strengthens advocacy among agencies, organizations, individuals and communities for New Mexico food and agriculture; and 4) meets the needs of the present generation without comprising the needs of future generations.

Section 2. Mission. The Grant County Food Policy Council improves and preserves the availability and access to safe, local, nutritious and affordable food for all residents of Grant County.

Section 3. Purpose. The purpose of the Council is to integrate all departments of the County as well as a diverse group of public and private stakeholders in a collaborative effort to:

- Establish and maintain a comprehensive dialogue and assessment of the current food system in Grant County through education, promotion and data compilation;
- Provide a forum for people involved in different parts of our local food system and government to meet and learn about how each others’ actions affect our food system;
- Identify and prioritize issues and make recommendations that promote, support and strengthen access to healthy, affordable food for citizens in Grant County;

- Develop strategies to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Grant County as it relates to food and agricultural systems;
- Affect and develop food policy; and
- Advocate and advise on policy implementation.

Section 4. Goals. The Council's initial goals are to:

- Review and comment on proposed legislation and regulations that affect the well-being and security of local food and agricultural systems;
- Make recommendations to the County and its communities on food, agriculture, and land use planning policy;
- Promote the viability of local farming and ranching and the retention and recruitment of small farmers and ranchers in Grant County;
- Support the development of local food infrastructure to support the production, processing, distribution and sale of safe, affordable, locally-produced/raised food products;
- Work to facilitate the promotion and support local farmers' markets and other points of sale to residents and visitors to support the local agricultural economy in Grant County;
- Establish an on-going educational program and projects for the public about food and agricultural systems based upon accurate facts, reliable reports and analyses;
- Be aware of and work to prevent food insecurity for families and children in Grant County and facilitate access to emergency food due to natural disasters or other causes;
- Develop and support greater access for New Mexicans who are in need of nutritious foods at fair prices, and to be sensitive to cultural and traditional food preferences;
- Educate farmers, processors, and consumers regarding safe food production, handling, and preparation; and
- Advise local, County, regional, state and federal governments to plan, promote and facilitate sustainable economic development opportunities for food producers in Grant County; and
- Education and promote stewardship and conservation of land, water and natural resources.

Article III. Guiding Principles

In keeping with the vision and purpose, the Council recognizes and supports the following principles:

Section 1. Asset-Based. The Council shall focus on assets of a diverse group of people, organizations and agencies rather than problems and liabilities, which ultimately provides a better return on invested time and resources by the Council.

Section 2. Community-Based Partnerships. Projects, programs and the policies that guide them are most vital and responsive when they are rooted in local communities. When partnerships among individuals, organizations and government agencies are formed around a policy issue at the local level, people and members are more invested and committed.

Section 3. Conflict Resolution. Conflict is a predictable result of collaboration and provides positive benefits when it is cooperatively resolved.

Section 4. Consensus and Decision-Making. Decisions will be made by consensus and reaching unity whenever possible. Unity does not necessarily require unanimity. It requires that all present avoid obstruction in a common search for agreement and has the great advantage of not leaving behind an unhappy minority.

Section 5. Diversity. Diverse groups', agencies', organizations' and individuals' viewpoints and constituencies provide the greatest potential for sharing, learning, and developing policies that benefit our food system, enhance our local economies, honor our social integrity, and value our environment and its resources.

Section 6. Full Disclosure, Accountability and Transparency. Open and honest sharing of information, analysis that looks with a critical eye into systemic issues developed with accuracy, clarity and accessibility, and that will generate the most opportunity for both individuals and the community as a whole.

Section 7. Harassment Prohibited. The Council shall maintain an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment in efforts to value diverse points of view and reach consensus.

Section 8. Participation. Values the contributions of all that choose to commit to participation in the goals and purposes of the Council. Develop procedures to encourage community participation in the education, deliberation and decision making processes. Democratic ethics are at the base of decision making.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. Meetings. The Council shall meet at least quarterly at the Grant County Administration Center Commissioner Board Room. The Council shall conduct all meetings in accordance with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act and adopted County policies and procedures.

Section 2. Special Meetings. The Co-Chairs, upon request by a Council member or by consensus, may call a special meeting at any time.

Section 3. Subcommittees. The Council may organize subcommittees whose membership shall be open to the public and include at least one member of the Council. Subcommittees will meet regularly as needed to perform the work of the Council. The Co-Chairs may appoint subcommittee and subcommittee chairpersons as needed.

Section 4. Quorum. A quorum consists of at least seven members, consisting of four non-government sector and three government sector members.

Section 5. Quarterly Reports. The Co-Chairs or other designated member of the Council shall give quarterly reports on the current status, activities and issues to the County Board of Commissioners.

Section 6. Conduct. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for the conduct of Council meetings. Members, by attending and deliberating at the meetings and gatherings, agree in good faith to participate and act in accordance with the Council's vision, goals, purposes and principles, or, through the deliberative process, in an open manner, to alter and amend them as circumstances necessitate.

Section 7. Decision-Making. The Council shall make decisions by consensus of a quorum. For each Council member, the standard for agreement is that they feel they can support the decision.

a. Criteria for Approving Decisions. The following criteria may be used for taking on issues:

- Is there a direct connection between the issue and the vision, mission and strategies?
- Is it an immediate issue that will have a major impact on the food system?
- Is the issue urgent or time sensitive?
- Does the issue build or sustain an existing effort?
- Can the Council make a difference or influence the issue? What community or affiliation is the Council trying to influence?
- Does the Council have resources to commit to the issue?
- Does the Council know enough to reach an informed decision?
- Who else is working on the issue?

b. Procedure. The Co-Chairs will check consensus by a thumbs up, down, or sideways poll. Sideways poll means "I need more clarification and/or I would like to discuss this decision further". Unanimous approval (thumbs up) is required for a decision to be reached. No abstentions.

- c. No Consensus. If consensus is not reached, the Council will decide how to proceed on a case-by-case basis. Options include deferring the decision and reconsidering it later, forming a subcommittee to gather more information, getting external feedback on the issue, or if an immediate action is required, a quorum may reach a decision by a two-thirds majority vote. If a Council member disagrees, s/he should clearly articulate concerns and try to offer an alternative solution.
- d. Exceptions. Council work tasked to subcommittees that require timely attention may be approved via email. A deadline for members to respond will be established and lack of response will be determined as consensus to move the issue forward. A Council member who must miss a meeting and has strong opinions about an issue that will be discussed should notify the Co-Chairs of their opinions in writing prior to the meeting.

Article V. Membership

Section 1. Appointment. All Council members shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Prospective members shall submit a completed application to the Board of County Commissioners. Members shall reside in Grant County, New Mexico, and shall have expertise in relevant fields, and to the extent possible, represent the diversity of the community aspects such as culture, gender, age, and geography. The Council encourages representation from agriculture, health, human and social services, food related businesses and organizations, environment, education, economics, nutrition, transportation, and legal, such as but not limited to regional associations, land and water organizations, agriculture commodity organizations, small scale food industries and distributors, local farmers markets, grocers, cooperatives, restaurants, schools, recipients of food and agricultural programs and consumers.

Section 2. Size. The Council shall consist of 13 members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Eight shall be from the private sector (non-government employees and those not under contract with a government agency) and five shall be government employees, of which two shall be employees of the County of Grant.

Section 3. Public Sector. Representation from related state, federal and local governments should be encouraged including (but not limited to) the women, infants and children (WIC) program administered by the NM Department of Health, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administered by the Income Support Division of the New Mexico Human Services Department, the County extension office administered by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and New Mexico State University, and those involved in food or nutrition education and public health. Two of the five public sector members shall be employees of the County of Grant including the County Manager or his/her designee and one member of the County Planning Department with the largest involvement in food-related issues and services or as otherwise appointed by the County Board of Commissioners.

Section 4. Private Sector. Of the eight private sector members, all should be actively engaged in at least one program, service, or business related to food insecurity, public health or economic development of the local food system, including the production, processing and distribution of

food. Private sector members may represent the food industry, non-profits, consumers, educators and dietitians. From among these eight, at least one should represent emergency food or food insecurity programs, one should represent agriculture, one should represent ranching, one should represent food or nutrition education, and one should represent the for-profit food industry.

Section 5. Terms of Office. Six members (four private and two government sector) shall be appointed for two year terms and seven (four private and three government sector) shall be appointed for three year terms. Subsequent terms shall be for three years to maintain staggering of terms. There shall be no limitation to the number of consecutive terms a member may serve.

Section 6. Compensation and Benefits. The Council shall serve without compensation. However, member benefits include opportunities to work with a broad based grouping of individuals, agencies and organizations centered on food and agriculture issues; opportunities to gain understanding of food and agriculture systems from working together on issues; and, by working together there is a greater likelihood that food and agriculture issues that are important to Council members will get the needed recognition, support and reform from relevant decision makers and institutions.

Section 7. Resignation. A Council member may withdraw membership at any time by giving written notice to the Co-Chairs.

Section 8. Removal. After three consecutive unexcused absences, a Council member may be removed and notified thereof by the Co-Chairs. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as initial appointments and shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term. Members may also be removed by the Board of County Commissioners as originally appointed, with or without cause.

Section 9. Rights and Responsibilities. Members are expected to participate in the work of the Council and its subcommittees. Members' duties are to:

- Create new and innovative ideas and plans for the food and agricultural systems and support the advocacy of selected policy issues and goals described above in Article II, Section 4;
- Be present and vote for all meetings;
- When unable to be physically present for a meeting, a member may:
 - Participate live via conference call, Skype or other electronic option. Participating electronically does not constitute a quorum for voting purposes.
 - Submit comments and voting preferences to the Co-Chairs or another designated proxy in writing prior to the beginning of the meeting.
- Start and end meetings on time;
- Turn cell phones to vibrate or off;
- Value each others' opinions, fully participate, actively listen and use open communication methods;

- Build trust by meeting commitments to other Council members and the public;
- Notify Co-Chairs and/or staff if unable to attend a meeting;
- Read minutes when a meeting has been missed; and
- Help to maintain the direction, purposes and goals, functions and responsibilities of the Council through participation in subcommittees and deliberations.

Article VI. Officers, Subcommittees and Staff

Section 1. Officers. The Council officers shall consist of two Co-Chairs.

- a. Duties of the Co-Chairs. The Council Co-Chairs shall be responsible for developing meeting agendas with staff and leading the Council meetings, serving as the main liaison between the Council and government representatives, representing the Council in the community, ensuring the Council acts in accordance with its policies and mission, facilitate consensus decision-making whenever possible, put aside personal opinions when speaking for the Council, and commit to keeping the work of the Council going between meetings. The Co-Chairs shall be elected by Council members and serve a one-year term.

Section 2. Subcommittees. The Council may organize subcommittees who membership shall be open to the public and include at least one member of the Council. The Co-Chairs may appoint subcommittee chairpersons as needed to direct the work of the subcommittee and provide monthly reports to the Council. Subcommittees perform the majority of the Council's work, directions and recommended action, including molding and selection of policy issues for advocacy. Subcommittees will meet regularly as needed to perform the work of the Council. As circumstances arise, the Council membership can alter, change or drop subcommittees.

Section 3. Staff. The Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities program will serve as the initial primary liaison to the Council until alternate arrangements are made. Staff will be responsible for:

- Planning agenda for next meetings including receiving requests from membership for agenda at least two weeks prior to next meeting and corresponding with Co-Chairs to develop agenda for the next meeting as needed.
- Publishing public notices no later than 10 days prior to next meeting and posting notices in online community calendars and the County website.
- Organizing the filming and airing of Council meetings on public access television stations.
- Meeting set-up and support including setting up meeting space, assure note taker and meeting leaders are present, assist with flow and time keeping during meeting, provide technical assistance as necessary, review minutes with members, and send minutes, next agenda and any attachments to the Council at least one week prior to the next meeting.
- General support including active participation in the workings of the Council, receive and distribute appropriate information emails to members, assist in seeking resources for

Council's work, assist Council connecting with other boards, committees, community groups and elected officials and assist subcommittees as needed.

Article VII. Fiscal Provisions and Miscellaneous

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The Council shall follow the fiscal year of the County of Grant.

Section 2. Contracts. Any officer authorized by the Council may, in the name and on behalf of the Council, enter into those contracts or execute and deliver those instruments that are authorized by the Council. Any authorization may be general or confined to specific instances. Without such authorization from the Council, no officers or other agent of the advisory board may enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name and on behalf of the Council.

Section 3. Distribution and Deposit of Funds. The distribution and deposit of funds shall be determined by the Council from time to time in accordance with County policies and procedures.

Section 4. Record of Accounting. The books and records of the Council shall be kept in its principal office or other location approved by the Council.

Section 5. Amendments. Provided that 30 days written notice of the proposed amendment is sent to the Council with the call to meeting, a consensus vote of a quorum may amend these bylaws at any regular Council meeting. The Council shall review the bylaws at least on an annual basis.

ADOPTION OF DOCUMENT

Approved by unanimous vote of the Council on January 20, 2011.



Deborah Nennich, Co-Chair



Judy Billings, Co-Chair