

Date: Wednesday, November 12th, 2025
Time: 1:00 PM

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Advisory Committee Members Attending: Eric Umbreit, Martha Sullins, Carmen Farmer, Amber Graves, Sam Parsaye, [Audrey Welsh](#), Ryan Peterson, Brad Justice, [Dennis Lacerte](#), [Forrest Carlson](#)

Commissioners' Office: Commissioner John Kefalas

Staff attending: Cary Weiner, Andy Weakland, Jessica Callen, Matt Lafferty, Mike Murphree, Lesli Ellis,

Other Members of the Community: Lucy McGehee, Owen Unangst, Lily Lake, Libby Christensen

1:00-1:20

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 1:00pm

Amendments to the Agenda

- No amendments to the agenda

Approval of the Minutes

- September 10th, 2025
 - Correction to the term (ARCO) to (ARPA), American Rescue Plan Act, on page 2 under the Commissioner Updates
 - "Suicide prevention training" misspelled on page 2 under Commisisioner Updates.
 - Minutes approved with corrections

Staff Updates (Jess Callen, Cary Weiner)

- Jess Callen
 - The Colorado Agrivoltaics Learning center is coming to town.
 - Will present a documentary they helped create called "Save the Farm Save the Future."
 - Register on the Colorado Agrivoltaics Learning website. Information will be emailed out.
 - This will be held at the Lyric from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on 11/18/25.
 - Farm to Local Biz will be happening again.
 - February 5th, 2026
 - This event is about connecting producers with local food businesses.
 - Last year we had just over 100 participants, hoping to have more this year.
 - We have spots for 30 producers to host a table and share their products with local businesses.
 - December 1st deadline for producers to register so that we have enough time to market the event and highlight the producers.
 - We will be having a pumpkin drop off directory due to high demand and need from the holiday season.
 - We are also researching where to drop off christmas trees as well as some more directions on how trees can be donated/recycled.
 - Grant and Grow happening again this year. Not as many grants available so we are calling it Grant, Loan and Grow.
 - January 15th at the Ranch. Information to be shared soon.
 - Farm stand document updates.

- The Farm Stand documents are still in process but some of the other documents that were discussed during the last meeting will be going into the 2026 workplan.
- Cary Weiner
 - The Roberts Ranch educational event that occurred was successful.
 - Over 60 people attended. Went on a 2 mile hike and learned about natural resources on the ranch as well as ranch management practices. Also learned about pioneer and archeological history.
 - 94% of survey respondents said they developed a closer connection with agriculture as a result of the program.
 - We have hired a new Natural Resources Coordinator.
 - Jenna Brager
 - Completing her Masters at CSU in conservation leadership.
 - She will be taking the Natural Resources program responsibilities from Jess so that she can focus on more of the agricultural programming and open up her capacity.
 - This new Natural Resources position will be working with strategies around the Larimer County Water Master Plan, including agriculture.
 - Membership Updates
 - [Maureen McDonough](#) has resigned as a board member. She has not been able to attend meeting this year
 - Brad Justice and Martha Sullins have been re-appointed
 - Forrest Carlson will actually be moving and not be able to continue as a board member.
 - We have received a number of new applications, more to come on those. We will be looking for balance in terms of expertise.
 - [Audrey Welsh](#), this is her last meeting as well and will not continue as a board member.

1:20-1:30

Commissioner Kefalas Updates

- Story in CBS news, October 31st - "Colorado Farmers Will Turn to AI to Survive As the State Loses Nearly 3000 Farms."
 - The Assessor brought this news story to Commissioner Kefalas's attention.
 - According to the latest survey by the USDA, Colorado has lost more farmland than any other state in the country. Between 2017 and 2022 the state lost 1.6 million acres, a 5% decrease.
 - Agriculture is the second highest economic driver in Colorado yet the industry is shrinking as commodity prices stagnate, costs soar and the supply of workers plummet.
 - Shortage of workers being reported comes before the recent crackdown on immigration.
- Larimer County Fair and Rodeo 2025 Annual Report has been published.
 - The website is <https://www.treventscomplex.com/>. Search for the annual report.
- Northern Colorado Labor Market Profile has been released and posted online.
 - <https://www.larimer.gov/spotlights/2025/11/5/northern-colorado-labor-market-profile-released>
 - Presented at a recent NoCo Works regional economic development initiative meeting.
 - The interactive dashboard that is available online provides great information on demographics, commuting patterns, talent demand and other great information
- Monday, 11/10/25, we held our county budget hearing. December 11th we hope to certify the mill levy as well as approve the 2026 Larimer County Budget as well as the revised 2025 budget. .
- Update on new landfill and transfer diversion station. All is going as planned so far. Still planned to open on July 1st of 2026.
- Two county ballot measures on this past election cycle; 1A failed again (Transportation Funding) and 1B passed (Childcare funding).
- Credit to our local producers for stepping in during the recent government shutdown to help support food insecurity.

1:30-3:20

Discussion Items and Action Items

1:30-1:50

- Housing Focus Group (Lucy McGehee)
 - Agricultural Advisory Board Focus Group Presentation
 - Challenges for people involved in agriculture
 - Some items that were discussed by the board:

- Availability and affordability were discussed as main issues.
 - Question: Any conversations with the USDA on these topics?
 - No but that is something that can be done.
- How has housing changed in the past 5-10 years?
 - Things have gotten extremely more expensive. This includes the costs associated with code.
 - Grazing land being transformed into housing developments, or other uses, was discussed.
- How do housing issues affect attracting and retaining workers
 - Cost of housing is the number one reason why workers turn down a job.

1:50-2:00

- Building and Land Use Code Process Improvements (Michael Murphree)
 - Upcoming worksessions to address building and land use code struggles.
 - Question: As part of the 2026 work plan for community development are we looking into the issues around improving the process between county and citizens?
 - Yes, that will be considered after we take a look at the broad spectrum of issues that are occurring.
 - Hoping to get an additional FTE approved by the county to work on this.
 - Not sure of what this timeline will look like as of yet. There is a possibility of expanding this beyond the Farmstand code. We will first get some of these worksessions underway in order to get a better idea on where to expand. Willing to come back after these worksessions and discuss updates.

2:00-3:10

- 2026 Work Plan Scoping and Vote (Cary Weiner)
 - Discussion over the results of the workplan survey that occurred.
 - Three clear priorities came out as a result of the survey: code work, water, and the local food economy.
 - Vote planned for next time
 -

3:10-3:20

- Officer Elections (Amber Graves)
 - Martha Sullins nominated for Chair, seconded.
 - Carmen Farmer nominated for Vice Chair, seconded.
 - Nominations have been voted upon and passed.

3:20-3:30

Future Agenda Items (Cary Weiner)

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 3:18pm