

Date: Wednesday March 11th, 2026
Time: 1:00 PM

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Advisory Committee Members Attending: Brad Justice, Martha Sullins, Chris Steadman, Amber Graves, Chad Onthank, Mike Williams, Emily McMurtrey, Amber Graves, Cheri Kraft, Ryan Peterson, Carmen Farmer, Sam Parsaye, Dennis Lacerte

Commissioners' Office: John Kefalas

Staff attending: Cary Weiner, Andy Weakland, Jessica Callen, Matt Lafferty, Mike Williams

Other Members of the Community: Libby Christensen, Lily Lake

1:00-1:20

Call to Order and Roll Call

- Meeting called to order at 1:03pm
- Introductions: New members and staff provided backgrounds

Amendments to the Agenda

- The Farmstand update was postponed and removed from the current agenda.

Approval of the Minutes

- January 14th, 2025
 - Amendments
 - Corrected misspelling of "would" under staff updates and changed cattle industry date to "2025" under legislative update.
 - Minutes were approved with amendments.

Staff Updates (Jess Callen, Cary Weiner)

- Jess Callen
 - The *Farm 2 Local Biz* event was just recently held in February.
 - 137 participants
 - 20 producers and 40 business (80 people total)
 - 92% producers at the event said they made meaningful connections.
 - Success stories: Ginger and Baker reached out to source local lamb from a board member.
 - Upcoming Events:
 - *Soil Health 101*: Collaborative event with Climate Smart Future Ready; Jess serves on the Soil Health Action Committee.
 - *Spring Pest Management Webinar*: Scheduled for 3/25/26; 50 participants currently registered.

- *Drought Planning Workshop*: Currently in development with CSU. The Board recommended coordinating with the NOCO Water Alliance to ensure consistent regional messaging.
- Cary Weiner
 - Board Vacancy: John Forrest resigned; Commissioners approved opening applications to receive an application from a representative of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
 - Internship Programs:
 - Local food policy internship funded; May meeting will define scope.
 - Consumer Food Purchasing internship will study buyer behavior.
 - Jess Callen added that another Taste the Difference Event is being planned to be held at the Larimer County Farmers Market this summer.
 - ARDEC Tour: Board declined a group tour for the summer; Cary will instead look into having a CSU researcher present local research to the board

1:20-1:30

Commissioner Kefalas Updates

- Workforce Development Board: Seeking ag community members to serve on the board (meets monthly, Wednesday mornings).
- Ozone Study: A presentation was recently held about a study of Ozone and precursors to Larimer County.
 - Larimer County has some of the highest ozone levels in the country.
 - The purpose of the study was to get more data collection around ozone precursors.
- Tomorrow night, the County is sponsoring a meeting up in Livermore in regards to the Steinhill property
 - Meeting will be held at the Livermore community hall from 6:00pm-7:30pm
 - Larimer County Road and Bridge were given permission to sand and gravel mine on the property.
 - Community outcry stopped sand/gravel mining; the County is pursuing Stewardship Trust designation to protect the land and Commissioners have directed Road and Bridge to find another suitable location.
- Update on the Water Master Plan.
 - We continue to move forward with the plan, a lot of attention being given to how we preserve water for Ag use purposes.
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment: Report released covering rural and seasonal ag housing needs.
- NISP/Reservoir Update: 287 realignment (7-mile stretch) to start late 2026; participants must recommit by April; project costs now estimated at \$3 billion.

1:30-3:25

Discussion Items and Action Items

1:30-2:10

- Legislative Update (Brad Justice)
 - Please refer to the presentation
 - Discussion Points
 - Commissioner Kefalas questioned what bills should we be more engaged with in terms of Larimer County.
 - SB 26-064: Modify Colorado Agricultural Future Loan Program is one bill that we should be paying attention to.

- Commissioner Kefalas commented in regards to the data centers bill and discussion around data centers in Larimer County, we are currently updating our county land use code to address data centers.
- Cary Weiner noted that Extension's food safety staff have concerns around the HB26-1033 Expanding the Colorado Cottage Foods Act.

2:10-2:30

- Introduction to new Chief Building Official (Cary Weiner and Mike Williams)
 - Introducing Mike Williams, Chief Building Official.
 - Mike Williams expressed openness to finding paths forward for farmstands, recognizing the need for flexibility to support small business survival.
 - Some discussion from Mike and Commissioner Kefalas around one of the local building and land use bills that was addressed by Brad during his legislative update session.
 - Jess Callen commented on the work that has been done around the farmstand use code and where they are at in the process and how Mike can play a role.

2:30-2:50

- ~~Farmstand Document Update (Michael Murphree)~~ POSTPONED

2:50-3:05

- Larimer Conservation District - Agricultural Needs Assessment (Libby Christensen)
 - Please refer to the presentation
 - Discussion Points
 - Analysis of 74 Colorado conservation districts shows Larimer is an anomaly for lacking ag programming.
 - Focus groups identified key needs: equipment access, irrigation support, and pest/weed mitigation
 - Cary inquired about how the board would get the final product of the assessment
 - Hoping to have a deliverable by the end of June and would be able to share to the board at that time.

3:05-3:25

- Guidance on Approach to Ag Water (Jenna Brager)
 - Cary covering for Jenna as she was not available due to an emergency
 - Overview of Jenna's approach to the Water Master Plan
 - The main approach is protecting water rights for agriculture for Larimer County.
 - Once that is established then figuring out what education would help support that approach.
 - Strategy focused on protecting water rights and exploring tools like Transfer Development Rights (TDR).
 - Taking a look at the current tools being used in order to preserve irrigated agriculture and then looking at what other tools are available for us.
 - Board suggested looking into "right of first refusal" language for ditch shareholders to keep water in the ditch
 - Jess commented on also working with Jenna on taking a look at succession planning and how we can connect farmers that are retiring to new farmers so that we can keep agriculture land being used for agriculture.

Future Agenda Items

- Fort Collins Natural Areas: 5–10 year plan for grazing/cattle numbers - consider for a future agenda item.

- Agrivoltaics: Land use code standards for solar sites on grazable land - consider for a future agenda item.
- NISP impact on agriculture.

Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 3:20pm

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