**Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board held on April 2, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Spanish Springs Library.

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

PRESENT – Brandon Partain, Shannon Martell, Bonnie Billings, Bradley Young, Renate York, Jason Evans

ABSENT – Brandon Partain

A quorum was established, and the meeting was brought to order.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT -**

Pat Davison, a resident of the North Valleys and regular attendee of the North Valleys CAB, shared comments regarding the ongoing CAB reorganization. She offered three suggestions. First, she recommended that the CAB agenda includes a link to the "Current Projects" webpage alongside the HUB page. This would provide clearer insight into which projects have submitted formal applications, who the assigned staff are, which decision-making body will hear the project, and the dates of those hearings. Second, she encouraged increased promotion of CAB meetings, noting they are a valuable but underutilized tool for two-way communication between the county and residents. She suggested outreach to HOAs and the use of Facebook to raise awareness. Third, she proposed including the Dignity Index in the CAB handbook. Adopted by Washoe County in 2023 and championed by Commissioner Andriola, the Dignity Index fosters respectful dialogue and encourages participation from all perspectives. Davison expressed hope that all CABs will participate in upcoming discussions as the reorganization process continues.

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE** **MEETINGS OF** March 5,2025-

A correction was made to the spelling of Michon’s name on the March 5, 2025, CAB meeting minutes.

Bradley Young motioned to approve the minutes and Jason Evans seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

1. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES –**

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District
Division Chief Joe Schum reported that the Spanish Springs station averages 186 calls per month, with an additional 35–40 calls into the City of Sparks through mutual aid agreements. In March, there were 151 medical calls, including traffic incidents, and other calls were minor in nature. Crews also assist Pyramid Lake tribal emergency services during concurrent emergencies. Staffing is fully operational for both ambulance and engine teams. Spring open burning began on April 1, and residents must have a valid 2024–25 burn permit. Burning status can be checked via the department’s website or phone line. However, the spring green waste program is suspended due to backlogs from fall collection efforts. Residents can instead use the Sutro Transfer Station or Lockwood facility for green waste drop-offs at no charge. On staffing, the department is currently fully staffed, with recent academy graduates completing field training. A new recruitment cycle for paramedic firefighters has begun in preparation for anticipated retirements, including the recent retirement of a battalion chief. Chief Schum plans to introduce newly promoted Chief Whitlock at the next meeting.

Joni Hammond asked about a bill in the Legislature proposing the consolidation of fire districts between Sparks, Reno, and Washoe County, and sought Chief Schum’s opinion on it. Chief Schum responded that the bill is currently in committee and being closely monitored by Fire Chiefs, County Commissioners, and the County Manager. Discussions are already underway among department heads to explore potential implementation, but he refrained from sharing personal opinions, stating that there are still unanswered questions, and they are waiting to see how the bill progresses.

Alan Cocilova noted the high call volume at Station 46 (La Posada) and asked about the possibility of adding a second ambulance or engine crew to address potential delays when the current crew is out on calls or transporting patients. Chief Joe Schum responded that while Truckee Meadows Fire has all 10 county stations staffed, they rely on coordinated support through mutual and automatic aid agreements. REMSA monitors ambulance locations in real time and can dispatch units accordingly. Nearby agencies, including Sparks and Sun Valley, also provide coverage if Station 46 is unavailable. Chief Schum acknowledged there may be some delays but emphasized the strength of interagency coordination. He also mentioned that Sparks has a new fire station under construction, and Truckee Meadows has proactively purchased land for a future expanded station to accommodate ongoing growth in the area.

Washoe County Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Whitmore reported a recent incident in which a deputy was hit head-on by a drunk driver near La Posada, emphasizing the continued rise in DUIs and the importance of public reporting. He encouraged residents to safely report suspected drunk drivers by calling in with vehicle details but reminded them never to endanger themselves. There has also been an increase in wrong-way drivers, which poses a significant safety risk. Whitmore noted that DUI arrests are increasing, aligning with the Sheriff’s strategic focus, and deputies are being more proactive in targeted patrols. He also provided an update on efforts at Golden Eagle Park, where deputies are partnering with BLM for enforcement and education regarding firearm use. While it's illegal to shoot over roads and highways, shooting on dirt trails remains legal, creating confusion. Pamphlets and the congested area map on the Sheriff’s app can help residents identify safe areas. The Sheriff’s Office is currently rebidding shifts for the next four-month rotation, with 73 deputies assigned across four teams—a significant improvement from past staffing levels. They are actively hiring new deputies but not accepting lateral transfers, aiming for long-term hires committed to the community. Finally, several promotions are expected soon, including new sergeants, lieutenants, and captains, as the agency prepares for leadership transitions and continues to manage resources carefully amid countywide budget constraints.

1. **EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY SELF-PREPAREDNESS –**

Kelly Echeverria, Washoe County’s Emergency Manager, delivered a presentation on effective emergency self-preparedness, emphasizing the importance of personal readiness and community-wide coordination. She introduced her small but growing emergency management team and their mission to mitigate disaster impacts before they occur. The Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC), jointly operated by Washoe County, Reno, and Sparks, serves as the county’s hub for information dissemination and resource support during emergencies. Echeverria explained that the county plans and trains for 13 identified hazards, including wildfire, earthquake, flood, extreme weather, and even volcanic ashfall. Emergency management operates through an ongoing cycle of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. She emphasized that preparedness is a shared responsibility and that residents should understand what to expect during evacuations. To support this, the county produced a multilingual evacuation video (with ASL), detailing how evacuation decisions are made, how alerts are issued, and how residents can prepare ahead of time. She reviewed the alerting process, including the switch to Smart911, which allows residents to receive alerts tailored to their location and accessibility needs. Residents are urged to sign up and identify any special needs in their households so emergency personnel can prioritize early notifications. The county also uses every available alert method—texts, landlines, TV, radio, and online platforms—to ensure the public is informed, even when technology fails. The perimetermap.com website allows residents to see evacuation areas, shelters, and road closures in real time, and is now used regionally thanks to Kelly’s efforts. This tool enables field personnel like fire and law enforcement to draw evacuation zones and closures directly into the system, which emergency management reviews and publishes. She underscored the importance of evacuating when told to, noting tragic past examples when residents stayed behind for fear of theft. With strong partnerships, including with the National Guard, the Sheriff’s Office works to secure evacuated areas. She shared her personal evacuation story during the Pinehaven Fire to highlight the real-life urgency of being ready—advising residents to keep personalized go-kits for themselves and their pets, including critical items like medications, documents, and comfort items. Echeverria also discussed operational responsibilities like mass care, sheltering, volunteer coordination, and damage assessment. Libraries now serve as pre-approved temporary evacuation points, enabling quicker response without lengthy activation delays. She highlighted several new initiatives: the Road to Resilience program, multi-agency evacuation drills, and the Tahoe Emergency Managers Group, which brings together Nevada and California jurisdictions for coordinated disaster response. The county has also launched the Events Operations Group to monitor large-scale public events in real time, helping balance emergency resources during overlapping incidents. Looking ahead, Washoe County will conduct a countywide evacuation study, thanks to a no-strings-attached donation. The study will identify top-risk areas, analyze evacuation routes, and recommend mitigation strategies based on hard data, including traffic patterns and population counts. The goal is to speed up evacuations, improve safety, and update emergency plans accordingly. Echeverria closed by reiterating the urgency of personal preparedness and encouraged residents to take advantage of county resources like readywashoe.com to create and practice evacuation plans.

A citizen shared a comment and recommendation, expressing strong appreciation for the development of perimetermap.com, calling it an “awesome, awesome tool.” They encouraged others in the audience to visit the site during a future emergency—even if not directly affected—to observe how it functions. This way, they explained, users can become familiar with its features, such as shelter locations and pet accommodations, in case they ever need to use it for their own safety.

Bradley Young asked how to obtain a copy of the upcoming evacuation study. Kelly Echeverria responded that the study will be made public and include a period for public comment. They are working on a method to allow residents to tie comments to specific roadways, ideally managed by the selected vendor. She emphasized that in other jurisdictions, public input was the most valuable part of the process, and once the study is underway, it will be widely shared through CABs and other channels to encourage community participation.

A citizen asked where they can access the video for friends and family. Echeverria explained that the video can be found at readywashoe.com and is about half way down the page.

A citizen expressed appreciation for the presentation and asked how hazardous materials incidents—particularly along I-80—are handled, especially in relation to evacuations. Kelly Echeverria responded that while her office is not directly responsible for hazardous materials, they coordinate closely with a group called the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which was originally focused on Hazmat. The group is now all-hazards but still prioritizes hazardous materials, with leadership from regional Hazmat experts, including Sparks Fire. She explained that they maintain an annually updated Hazmat plan, conduct joint training and exercises, and ensure strong coordination with partners like the sheriff's office and REMSA. She shared that the perimeter map was first used during a mercury spill at the library, demonstrating how well-established communication pathways support effective response during Hazmat events.

1. **REPORT ON REQUESTS FOR SERVICE FROM PREVIOUS CAB MEEITNGS -**

Bradley Young provided an update related to a public inquiry about potential property tax increases in response to the City of Sparks' budget deficit. He credited the commission support staff and Candy for compiling and sharing helpful information, including printed handouts available at the meeting. The concern had been communicated to Sparks City Council members and the City Manager’s Office, and a response was received acknowledging the city's financial challenges. The City of Sparks confirmed it is addressing a budget shortfall in the FY25–26 cycle, caused by factors such as inflation, declining sales tax revenues, and Nevada’s property tax structure. By law, property taxes cannot increase more than 3% annually, while property values depreciate at 1.5% each year. Homes older than five years typically do not generate enough in property tax to cover the services they receive. Nevada is also the only state that does not reset property taxes when a home is sold. A bill under consideration this legislative session may address that. Young concluded by noting there is a printed Q&A available and made a brief comment about the absence of car dealerships in Sparks.

Bonnie Billings summarized concerns from a previous public commenter about the rise in commercial development, particularly warehouses—over the past 10 to 15 years. The commenter had urged local officials to require evergreen trees around these developments to mitigate their visual and environmental impact and encouraged residents to advocate for more thoughtful planning. Billings confirmed that this suggestion was shared with the Washoe County Planning Committee. She also summarized a separate public concern about unsafe target shooting and trash accumulation in the Springs Canyon area near Golden Eagle Park. The commenter noted increased shooting near homes and recreational trails and called for action. Commissioner Andriola responded that she has been actively involved in addressing the Golden Eagle Park issues since April 2023. She shared that multiple jurisdictions—including Washoe County, the City of Sparks, BLM, and the Forest Service—are coordinating to explore the development of a designated shooting facility. The sheriff’s office has increased patrols in the area, including mounted units, and $80,000 has been designated for a study to support a formal proposal to BLM. Andriola noted that during a recent trip to Washington, D.C., she met with the new BLM director and is hopeful for quicker cooperation in resolving the safety concerns in the area.

Bonnie Billings reported that on March 6, the Board of Adjustment heard an appeal related to a code enforcement case involving property owned by individuals who had spoken at the March 5 Spanish Springs CAB meeting. The Board reversed the administrative hearing officer's decision but upheld the code violation, giving the property owner 25 days to remove stored RVs and other illegally stored items from the vacant lot. Full details can be found under item 8D of the March 6 Board of Adjustment agenda.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES –**

Candee Ramos provided an overview of how to access the Neighborhood Development HUB through the Washoe County website. She demonstrated how to search for “neighborhood meetings” using the homepage search bar, which leads to a page with a map and list of upcoming development meetings. Users can click on specific meetings—such as the grading at Village Green—to view details, including meeting dates, comment cards, recordings, and other materials. She explained that while only residents within 750 feet of a proposed development (or a minimum of 30 properties) receive mailed postcards, anyone can sign up to receive email notifications for any neighborhood development meeting by subscribing to updates for District 4 or neighborhood development in general via the county website. Ramos also encouraged residents to apply for two current board openings relevant to District 4: the Board of Adjustment and the Washoe County Planning Commission. She showed where to find application details, deadlines, and how to apply, urging those interested in shaping local planning and development decisions to get involved.

Commissioner Andriola reminded attendees that the deadline to apply for the open seats on the Board of Adjustment and the Washoe County Planning Commission is April 14 and encouraged everyone to consider applying and to share the opportunity with others. She emphasized the importance of increasing representation for District 4 and noted that recent efforts, supported by the board and staff, have made it easier for residents to engage. Meeting agendas now include direct links to the Neighborhood Development HUB and board and commission vacancies, making it more accessible for people to learn about and apply for open positions, even if they aren't able to attend in person.

1. **CAB MEMBER/ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ REQUESTS -**Commissioner Andriola began by apologizing for missing the prior meeting, noting she was still working during that time. She expressed gratitude and admiration for Emergency Manager Kelly Echeverria, praising her enthusiasm and professionalism, especially in high-stress situations. She announced several upcoming events and initiatives. First, she highlighted a Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) online meeting focused on the region’s water outlook, encouraging community participation and noting Spanish Springs’ unique abundance of aquifers. She invited attendees to contact her for the registration link if needed. She also promoted the upcoming Sequential Intercept Model Symposium on April 25 at Renown. This event, based on a nationally recognized model, focuses on diverting individuals with behavioral health needs away from the criminal justice system. She described the model's local success and urged attendance, offering to personally ensure anyone interested could attend despite the event being at capacity. Commissioner Andriola shared exciting news from the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO), where she serves as Vice President. Nevada has been selected to provide the national Christmas tree for Washington, D.C., and all 17 counties—including Washoe—will contribute 50 student-made ornaments. Washoe County School District has committed to participating, and each county will also provide a message for the tree skirt. She then introduced the Washoe Checkbook initiative, a financial transparency tool inspired by the State of Nevada’s checkbook system. Officially launching at the April 8 Washoe County Commission meeting, the tool will allow users to view revenues and expenses updated daily. Andriola emphasized the complexity of public budgets and announced an upcoming “Budget 101” session to help residents understand how to use the tool. She ensured that the session would be recorded and based on the current year’s budget for maximum relevance. She concluded by expressing pride in the County’s commitment to transparency and noted how enthusiastic the finance team has been in bringing this new tool to the public.

Bonnie Billings encouraged attendees to use the QR code available on the table to provide input on future speakers for their meetings, emphasizing that community suggestions are key to bringing in relevant and engaging presenters. She acknowledged the support of staff, including Candy, in coordinating these efforts. Additionally, Billings expressed a desire to formally incorporate the Dignity Index into their meetings and asked for assistance in making that happen.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Mike Wallace voiced concerns about the Village Green Commerce Center development on the east side of Pyramid Highway. He stated that a 200,000-square-foot warehouse is being placed in a residential area due to zoning changes, and that nearby homeowners are not being adequately notified about the project until late in the process—typically when the county sends out a meeting notice postcard. He mentioned an upcoming meeting about a grading permit for the site and urged the community to get more involved, warning that the development could become a major problem for the neighborhood.

**ADJOURNMENT –** The meetingadjourned at 7:34 p.m.