



## **Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held December 16, 2021 at the Gerlach Community Center, BRUNO'S COUNTRY CLUB, 445 MAIN STREET, GERLACH, NV 89412 and via teleconference.

**1. \*CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM** – The meeting was called to order at **6:15 p.m.** A quorum was determined.

**CAB MEMBERS Present** Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell, Tina Walters, Brooke Covey, Andy Moore, Kristy Evans, Allen Nash

**2. \*PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

**3. \*GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION THEREOF** – There were no requests for public comment.

A public member spoke about dark skies. She stated there would be another meeting. She said she will provide a Powerpoint slideshow in January or February. We are a borderland to a designated dark skies town. Nevada passed a dark skies law. Nevada wants to be a dark skies state. It's about shields and types of lights. She said we need to hire someone to tell us where we are today, metering lights, measure light impact, and assess what that looks like. They can help us plan as far as mediation on personal property, commercial property, schools, and the firehouse. Safety goes into planning. We need to understand our goal. Kristy Evans asked about the ORMAT facility. The public member stated they are partners in this process. She said there will be an environmental impact statement and tourism impacts on dark skies. A public member spoke about mining included in the dark skies conversation. She said the mining impacts dark skies. It's worth looking into. It might be a good future agenda item.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE AMENDED MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 13, 2021 AND MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2021 (for Possible Action)** – The CAB members unanimously approved the minutes of May 13, 2021 and November 18, 2021.

**5. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING UPDATE & WASHOE ARTRAIL UPDATE – Gabrielle Enfield, Community Reinvestment Manager (Non-Action Item)**

Gabrielle Enfield provided a Powerpoint slideshow.

Allen Nash spoke about the 50% allowed on social service on the first go-around of spending, which Ms. Enfield delineated in the \$44 million. He asked at what point do we apply for broadband. He stated we could get funds from ARPA funding and the Jobs Investment Funding necessary for the distance we have to travel. Ms. Enfield stated she wasn't sure Washoe County would fund Broadband through Washoe County subgrants. We would be giving grants to private non-profits for non-infrastructure programs. Infrastructure will be focused at the State level. The \$100 million for infrastructure jobs act is not coming to the County; it's being administered through the State. We are working with the States to make sure we get the money for the rural communities for broadband. She spoke about the broadband speed test. She said we are identifying the areas and looking at what is needed to construct the infrastructure. We are asking people to go to a website to collect data about how fast or slow your internet is. That will help support getting those funds. She said she would send

that to Candee so she can email that to everyone. Manager Brown is on top of getting broadband out to the community. Gerlach is at the top of the list. They are having those conversations at the State.

Schatzi Gambrell asked about community grant projects that could help the entire District. Ms. Enfield stated it's broad. The grant would have to go to a non-profit or government agency like the GID. There are two ways: it could go towards projects to address impacts of COVID or address the impact of COVID or provide services to communities that COVID has disproportionately impacted. She said that category is extremely broad. Any community that has a census track that is identified by higher needs. Gerlach is in that type of census track. She said we have not yet developed the grant making evaluation of what we are asking for. Some of that will be defined as we meet with the County Commissioners about their priorities, strategic planning, and goals. There will be more parameters put on what they are looking to fund.

A public member (Christy) stated at the last meeting; Manager Brown had indicated that he is working with the State on broadband. They already had a pipeline of funding for that. She said that she was already in the process if she understood it correctly. Ms. Enfield stated that is possible but didn't have that conversation with him. She stated the State of Nevada wanted to use State ARPA funding and didn't want the County or cities to focus on broadband because they wanted to take responsibility state-wide. Christy stated we used to have a community health clinic out here that doesn't exist anymore. She said it would be helpful to have a mobile unit out there. However, ARPA is only one-time funding. She stated affordable housing is another need out here. We don't have any non-profits, we don't have affordable housing, we don't have homeless shelters or a health clinic; how do we utilize those funds when it doesn't already exist in the community. Ms. Enfield said if you have needs, we can work with you to identify a local non-profit in Reno to help support services in Gerlach. Christy said the easiest need to address would be a mobile health clinic. We currently do not have those services. Ms. Enfield said a mobile health unit would be an allowable project. She said several non-profits are similar to the health clinic in Gerlach that shut down 12 years ago. ARPA could fund coordination and collaboration. It could fund the equipment. Ongoing expenses are an issue because ARPA cannot fund it. Christy stated it's a need in this community. We could apply for other grants down the road. Ms. Enfield stated there are State Rural Health clinics. It's worth having that conversation, getting an assessment, and getting a mobile clinic once a week or something to address chronic health issues such as diabetes.

Linda asked how we could apply. Ms. Enfield said there is an ARPA website on the County website. She advised them to subscribe; when the grant process is ready, she will email subscribers. She said she is about to send an email to subscribers to notify them about projects that have just got awarded. The State of Nevada has a portal and accepts applications as well.

Ms. Enfield provided a Powerpoint slideshow of the ArtTrail.

Dave Cooper stated he needed to talk with her. He said some of the Gerlach residents are proposing a Gerlach interpretive/Art Trail as a hiking/biking trail that is a couple of miles long. We are moving forward with applying for a grant with the National Parks Service Rivers and Trails conservation assistance program to provide planning and everything necessary such as putting partnerships together with the State and the County, BLM, GID, Burning Man and other partners to work on the hiking/biking trail. The GID is not on board yet, but it includes 38 acres of GID owned property in the playa wetlands east of the gas station. It would be a great trail and art park. The areas you discussed for art park along state route 34 conflict with ORMAT construction of wells and mines. Not sure if that side of town would work for an art park. It's just discussion and ideas about this trail and wrapping the art trail, art park, and artworks in this hiking, biking interpretation trail. It would be interpretive. The

important point would be that the County could pick up that GID property that is open playa and wetlands that are not suitable for development. There needs to be an ongoing discussion. Funding is available through sources such as Great American Outdoors, land and water conservation funds, southern Nevada public lands management act funds. All of which are not tax monies. Ms. Enfield asked who is submitting the application. Mr. Cooper stated Friends of Black Rock would submit it on behalf of the community. He said it needs to be a partnership. State outdoor recreation and the County. The application would include the letter of support from the partners. Ms. Enfield stated she saw he submitted that request through 311 today or yesterday. Ms. Enfield stated the County supports it and is happy to provide a letter of support and be part of the planning group. We have looked at this site before. She asked how she could help. Mr. Cooper stated Mark Hall with BLM stated the art park be part of the trail project. Ms. Enfield asked for clarification on the art park. He said Burning Man is proposing an art park on their property and the hiking and biking would connect to it. It's a large project. He said the art trail needs to be wrapped into it. He requested this topic to be on the next CAB meeting. He said the deadline for the application is March 1 and would like the application done by mid-February which means he would like to have the letters of support. Ms. Enfield stated she would like scope of work so we can frame our letter of support around the project. Ms. Gambrell stated she will let her know if this will be on the next CAB agenda.

#### **6. BURNING MAN UPDATE – Melissa Adams, Burning Man (Non-Action Item)**

Melissa Adams provided an update. She spoke about amenities at the RV Park such as miniature golf with art and theme based on the town such as a fly geyser, ichthyosaur, and involvement by the Paiute Tribe.

#### **7. (AMENDED ITEM) BRIEF UPDATE ON CONCIERGE PLANNING FOR RURAL RESIDENTS – Marc De La Torre, Community Outreach Coordinator, Washoe County (Non-Action Item)**

Marc De La Torre provided an update about concierge planning provided by Central Services. He provided the contact information for business license: [businesslicense@washoecounty.gov](mailto:businesslicense@washoecounty.gov). Builder of the day (BOD) (775) 328-2020, [building@washoecounty.gov](mailto:building@washoecounty.gov). If you call and get a voicemail, they will get back to you within 24 hours. They prefer emails so they can research your questions. Planning & Development contact community services department help desk – Planner of the Day (POD) can help you with projects you are working on; (775)328-6100, [planning@washoecounty.gov](mailto:planning@washoecounty.gov). He said they understand it's an investment for you to drive down to the County building. There will be someone assigned to you to help with your projects. Ms. Gambrell stated that what was discussed with this concierge service was an expert in the high desert plan. It's nice to have these contacts, but we are back to square one if we get a random planner who doesn't understand the high desert plan. Mr. De La Torre stated he could pass that question on to Dave Solaro and have him get back. Christy asked the difference between building and planning. She would like more detail, so we go to the right person. Mr. De La Torre stated he would get an answer as that is not his department.

#### **8. WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE- Washoe County Commissioner Jeanne Herman may be available to provide updated information on discussions and actions by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). (Non-Action Item)**

Commissioner Herman stated she is available to answer questions.

#### **9. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members. (Non-Action Item)**

Jonathen Prichard introduced Don Pelt, Pyramid Fire Chief, Paiute Tribe. Chief Pelt apologized for not attending the last meeting. He provided an update regarding the negotiations with Washoe County to enter into a contract to provide fire and EMS services operations for the community of Gerlach. He said what we would be providing would be fire, medics, firefighter/paramedic, or firefighter/EMT at your station 24/7. The community will not lose its identity. It would still be the Gerlach Fire Department. It's important you keep your identity. We started this process in June. The Truckee Meadow Fire Rescue approached us to see if we were interested in entering into a contract. Our executive team wrote up a brief outline with Truckee Meadows in August. It's been in place since August. We hoped to be on the BCC agenda. On December 7, he said he met with Mr. Solaro, who advised him that we wouldn't be on the agenda for the fire department until May or June because the budget doesn't begin until July 1. The County runs on a fiscal year budget; the Tribe runs on a calendar year budget. He said his budget begins in January. It's a bit of a friction point with planning budgets. He said we would need time on whether or not this will go into effect to hire personnel. He said we need time to get people trained. We won't send complete inexperienced firefighters. We will send a new and experienced firefighter to provide quality service. We will be extending Emergency Medical Services from intermediate to advanced lifesaving support. Every ambulance would have a paramedic who can provide lifesaving medications. They want us to enter into a cooperation agreement with you and increase service levels. We want to work on processes such as community paramedicine to help address health issues that don't necessarily need to go to the hospital. That would be huge for you since it's 133 miles to the nearest hospital. That would be a bonus if we could treat in the field and not take you to the hospital. Whatever happens here at the Lake will happen for you in Gerlach. We do in-house firefighter 1&2 certifications; in-house EMT and advanced EMT certificates; CPR courses; HAZMAT; and emergency vehicle operations. Whoever works in Gerlach will come down to the Lake to be trained. He said he knows training has been a huge issue. We intend to address that. He said Commissioner Herman could help them get on the BCC agenda. He said he could not move forward with the Tribal Commission until he gets something from the County Commission that they even want us up there. We are in a limbo stage.

Mr. Nash asked what Gerlach citizens can do to put a light a fire under the County Commission. Chief Pelt encouraged them to call your commissioners every day. Call all the commissioners, not just Commissioner Herman. He said he would call the Manager's office as well. You have to light a fire under them to get it on the agenda. They need to be aware it needs to be put on the agenda. We feel it's important for you. It's win-win for the County and the Tribe.

Ms. Gambrell stated she had heard nothing but good things about Mr. Pelt. She thanked him for being involved. She asked who he is negotiating with and if there is anyone from the Gerlach community or District. He said we are in the early stages. He said the community hasn't been as engaged as we would like them to be. It's step one of many. He said we started with Truckee Meadow Fire Rescue because they covered the work up there. Then we transitioned into talking with Assistant County Manager Solaro. It's been going on so long, it became important to give you an update. He said he didn't want to you to think the ball stopped rolling at the Tribe. He said he understands the County's position.

There are no bad guys in this. Two different budgets and two different budget years throw a monkey wrench in the process. And need to get it figured out. We are exceeding the abilities of the Tribe to continue to service Gerlach for free. Since August, when we started this service by sending an ambulance, we have been doing it free of charge for the County. We have been doing it with mutual aid agreement. He said the staffing up there has dropped so low; when someone in Gerlach calls 911, we are the sole response. Mutual aid means to respond with the fire station; however, it just became us. We are doing the contract work. The County is not compensating us. He said during the

December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Solaro asked him to prepare an agreement to cover costs for responding to Gerlach. He said right now, it strips my resources. He said he has to call in other resources or mutual aid to backfill from Storey, Truckee Meadows, or REMSA. He said it could be advantageous to do a temporary contract where they pay us. We are hoping if your committee could get that expressed to the County Commissioner and County Manager's office and the sooner, we can get it in place. He said this is our first opportunity to speak with you folks.

Ms. Gambrell stated according to the 2021 budget, Truckee Meadows got \$289,683.71 to run our fire department for the 2021 budget year. If they didn't run from August until now, where is the rest of that budget. She said she favors this going to the County Commission meeting. Mr. Brown provided a three-point report of what is needed up here. She is yet to see that report. We have been talking to County Commissioners. We have been attended meetings to let them know how desperate we are in this community. She said we are concerned citizens. Chief Pelt stated they aren't trying to keep us off the agenda, but there is lack of enthusiasm with putting us on the agenda. He said part of the issue is you mentioned \$289,000 for budget, we received a budget proposal for \$338,000. Our proposal is \$378,000. We are over what they plan on spending for Gerlach per year. Ms. Gambrell stated they have been dropping our budget for the last five years. He said, we will provide you what the County hasn't, you have been provided one firefighter per day. We are giving you a bigger bang for the buck by providing two firefighting. They can take the engine and start firefighting. They can run the ambulance and load the patient and get them going. He said the ambulance wouldn't be there 100% of the time. With this agreement, we would do what is called auto-aiding. If we a call, we would move your ambulance up the road to a designated mile marker and wait until we get a call here and backfill us and vice versa. Gerlach units get a call; my guys will come up. If they get a fire in Gerlach, we would send a fire engine with a captain and two firefighters to help the two firefighters in Gerlach to meet the 2-in 2-out rules. Everything we are looking at doing is improving the system.

You would go ALS day-one which is a huge increase in our costs to provide that service, but it's worth it to you because you are far away. Gerlach and the Lake is classified as frontier medicine because we are so far away. It's critical to get that medicine and critical to providing lifesaving services in your community. Ms. Gambrell asked if they have been clear with him that their service area boundary goes up to the State border. Chief Pelt confirmed they would cover up to Oregon, California, Persing, and Humboldt counties. There are mutual aid agreements with Cedarville and Modoc to cover the far north areas. We would meet with those departments to maintain those relationships and back up those departments in California. He said he wanted to be forthright. You will have fire protection but may move based on other community needs. So when we call the other communities, they are coming to us. We want to foster those relationships and don't know how well they have been fostered in the past. He said he wants you to know that every call will get answered.

A public member said she appreciates what has been said. It sounds wonderful, and appreciates the support and hope it moves forward. She asked if we would maintain our volunteer piece of the fire department and have access to your training. He said absolutely; it would be a requirement that they train with us. We will do what we can to recruit volunteers. He said when you look at what is required in regard to training to be a volunteer firefighter; it's hard for folks to give up that time. He spoke about the training time commitment. He said they become eligible for a paycheck. He said it kills the volunteer services. He said when he started, we took a 40-hour class; today, they have to do everything a career firefighter does. He said volunteers are as professional as those getting a paycheck. We will train them. She said we have burning man out here; does that fall to you or is that Truckee Meadows. A Public member stated a child was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. She said the school can help light the fire at the Commission. Chief Pelt said our paramedicine service can help with those doctor referrals and check to make sure they take their medicines and help with education.

Ms. Gambrell stated she would like to put a standing agenda item for status updates for the fire department negotiations with Washoe County and Pyramid Tribe Fire Department. Mr. Nash stated he would like to submit a letter of support. Ms. Walters suggested everyone needs to call the Commissioners. We want this on the County agenda before May or June. Chief Pelt thanked them.

Ms. Gambrell had suggestions for future agenda items. She asked why the GID is getting planning documents instead of the CAB. She said with the restructuring of the CAB, it appears the GID is getting planning questions about an aggregate change for the ORMAT plant. GID only deals with water, sewer, garbage, and the property they own. When it comes to planning, the CAB needs to be involved. GID only covers a specific area. She said she would like that added to next month's agenda. She requested with the agenda item regarding the Fire Department that someone from Gerlach is involved in reviewing the agreement to let the community know how it's working out. She said she would like to see action taken for our water and sewer upgrades regarding the ARPA money as our equipment is old. She said the CAB and GID could be involved in that. She said regarding in-lieu of tax payment, our fire department, schools, roads, operations money is going to the general fund in Washoe County and is not siphoning down for our areas. She said the statement in the fire memo stated it's because our taxes aren't high enough out here based on our population. She said she wanted to find out. She said she would like someone from the County to explain this. Ms. Gambrell stated the proposal that Gabrielle put through, item 17, regarding sheriff's deputy positions, would get \$1.556 million for new positions; she hasn't received any response to our ARPA funding for 24/7 sheriff patrol. She would like an update about our deputy position.

A public member stated the proposed Ormat drilling project public comment period to the BLM is open until January 10<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged people to provide comments.

A public member stated the planning and building department wasn't necessarily helpful with what we needed to get our project through. She stated we were being ignored. She wasn't sure about those resources provided. She stated they didn't move us any closer. They didn't even deny our permit, they stated it was confusing. Commissioner Herman responded (inaudible). Ms. Gambrell stated this goes back to her request to Dave Solaro about having a planner with high desert plan knowledge. Lisa Nash stated this is what she is doing full time. Dan Cahalane is a planner who knows the high desert plan and respects this community. She encouraged them to reach out to him. He knows the area. They are all very busy, so he may not get back to you right away. Ms. Walters stated we could share his emails and Lisa's email.

**10. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** – There were no requests for public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.