



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

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on November 17, 2022, 6 p.m. at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM** – Kristy Evans, Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell, Andy Moore, Tina Walter, Allen Nash.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – The pledge was recited

**3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** –

Dave Solaro said he's been working on a couple of items. Mr. Moore sent a letter to BCC regarding the Geothermal proposal in Gerlach. We did receive the letter. He asked Candee to reach out to the BLM, and we received information back from them. This is their process. They have laws they have to follow. He wanted to make sure that this group is aware that the request by Ormat is exploratory to determine if the aquifer that has the geothermal resource is viable for a future power plant. It's important to point out. The proper process was followed for the exploratory process, and the BLM said if they did want to put a power plant after the exploratory, they would have to go through a full EIS process for that piece of the project. The BLM won't let them skirt around the law set by congress. They are following the process. They did approve the permit for exploratory drilling. Washoe County will stand by the BLM for that exploratory drilling. We will work closely with BLM going forward if they pursue an EIS. This is information received by the BLM. We are going through steps to verify things.

Ms. Gambrell thanked him; she said there was no response to the eight letters that were sent that talk about if they have to drill multiple times. They are approved for 23 sites. No matter what they find on the 23<sup>rd</sup> drill, we will still have 23 concrete pads in the valley. There will be disturbed ground and standpipe. How will they re-create the natural environment if they find nothing? Wellhead 19 was dug 8-9 years ago and is still a scar. Nowhere in their new plan is how they will put our land back to the way it was. This is before they even pipe it or find they can do a powerplant. What are you going to leave me in my backyard? BLM didn't address that.

Andy Moore said the noise abatement was not addressed. It's a large issue. No one has addressed that. Mr. Solaro said it included the EA but need to dig into and read how it's being addressed. Mr. Moore said there's nothing about decibels.

Mr. Evans thanked Dave for addressing this. It's a concern for us. It's been approved and will move forward, but I appreciate it's on his radar.

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 20, 2022** (for possible action)

**5. WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** – General Community Update (non-action item)

There is no representative present to provide an update.

**6. PAIUTE TRIBE FIRE CHIEF** – Don Pelt, Fire Chief of the Paiute Tribe Fire Department, General Community Update (non-action item)

Chief Pelt reported. He said he spent the weekend in Gerlach to attend the volunteer fire meeting. He said we were invited to have dinner with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the land speed records. He said we attended the races and the classic car show. He said he would have brought up his LeBaron. The crew stayed up and held a pancake breakfast. It was a good month for public relations. He said we only had 12 calls; 6 were medicals, 2 were vehicle crashes, two fires (vehicle with trailer), one brush fire, one search and rescue that was canceled, and a false alarm. It wasn't as active as burning man season.

He announced that on December 3, we would be hosting a Fire Department re-opening Spaghetti dinner from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.

All full-time positions under the new contract have been fired. Greg Nelson was brought on board full-time. He is knowledgeable of Gerlach and the water system.

Ms. Gambrell said \$1000 had been donated for volunteer training expenses.

Chief Pelt said a Fire1 academy would be held in Gerlach, so the volunteers in Gerlach don't have to leave to get their certification. He said he would also meet with those who will take the class to coordinate the schedule to meet their needs and be user-friendly in order for them to get their certification. Ms. Gambrell said she would forward information to Chief Pelt to put that information in the Gerlach Happenings, the local newspaper distributed all over town once a month.

Ms. Gambrell inquired about insurance for the care flight. Chief Pelt spoke about the ambulance saver program. There should be forms at the fire department and senior center. He said they are also on the website, but you cannot pay online now. He said he is working on that once they get a new comptroller in place. Ms. Walters asked if that information could be brought to the spaghetti dinner.

Mr. Nash asked if there were any openings for volunteers. Chief Pelt said yes. We never stop taking applications. Mr. Nash said he had submitted an application.

Brandy asked about setting up a tour of the mine. Chief Pelt said we went out yesterday and met with ORMAT at Empire Farms and went through their facilities. Touring the mines would be another good opportunity, including the volunteers, since they will be the first to respond.

Ms. Gambrell said introducing the firefighters in the Gerlach Happenings would be a good idea.

**7. FREQUENCY, DAY, TIME OF 2023 CAB MEETINGS** – The CAB will discuss and vote on the frequency, days, and time for Citizen Advisory Board meetings in 2023 (for possible action)  
Ms. Gambrell said she wanted to schedule the meeting to accommodate Kristy's Leadership academy. They discussed GID, CAB, and Fire meetings.

They decided on rescheduling it to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 6 p.m.

**MOTION: Ms. Gambrell moved to hold the 2023 meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 6 p.m. Mr. Moore seconded the motion which carried unanimously.**

**8. TRAFFIC AND STREET SAFETY IN GERLACH** – Hear from Washoe County Division Director of Engineering, Dwayne Smith, regarding traffic and street safety in Gerlach (non-action item)  
Mr. Smith noted Mitch Fink also works on the Washoe County traffic.

He provided a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Nash said he isn't sure this applies to us. We need a crosswalk. That's what we want to hear about. Mr. Smith said we had ordered it. There is a rapid flashing beacon crosswalk installation plan for February. At that time, the RRFB will be installed. This will allow pedestrians to push the button and notify the driver. He said there are other things that go along with it, including painting, stripping, and additional signage. If it's warm enough, we will do painting and striping when we install the RRFB on Main Street and Sunset, where the school children cross.

Ms. Evans thanked Mr. Smith. She appreciated him showing them where the traffic form was on the website. She said she is concerned about a yield sign on 447 and 34 meet. In our area, one challenge is that it doesn't happen all the time since we are sparsely populated. Mr. Smith said you have a unique traffic condition with low volumes but big vehicles during the day, proximity to buildings, and large events such as burning man. He said the policy allows staff to initiate a traffic response without getting input from the community. He said as we have gone through the burning man events and it's grown and has had impacts, we are now focused on the traffic issues at the point of time, which is different than we have done in the past. He said we had done traffic studies with BLM. There are community impacts that could be addressed. He said Sarah Tone is a business administrator who works with those permits. Those things are on our mind as well. It's difficult to think about the short-duration issues, but they do have impacts. We are looking at the mitigations. As you look at the traffic policy, reach out, and we can discuss your concerns. We use the forms to track the number of submissions.

The CAB members thanked Mr. Smith for the informative presentation.

**9. ANIMAL ADOPTION IN RURAL WASHOE COUNTY** – Learn how those living in rural areas surrounding Gerlach and Empire will be able to adopt animals and contribute to animal welfare in Washoe County. (non-action item)

**10. COMMISSIONER AND BOARD MEMBER ITEMS** — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members and potential general announcements from the county commissioner. (non-action item)  
Commissioner Herman was not in attendance.

Ms. Walters said she spoke with the crew who are installing the fiber. DTS is the service provider. It's still a year out. They are starting here, then going to Wadsworth. Ms. Ramos noted she would add this to the December CAB agenda.

Ms. Gambrell spoke about fundraising at the chili cook-off. A \$1500 donation for staff and volunteer lunches on field trips. 399.44 left after we gave \$8K to purchase new blinds and doors for the community center. \$5K for Gerlach/Empire Senior Citizen nonprofit. \$17,000 overall was raised.

Mr. Moore thanked Ms. Gambrell for her efforts with the chili cook-off and for raising those funds.

Mr. Moore asked if there is a process by which we can have ORMAT on the agenda and ask questions without violating the Open Meeting Law. Can we leave it as a standing item? Ms. Ramos said we could put it on there to allow the opportunity.

Mr. Nash thanked Ms. Gambrell for her efforts on the chili cook-off.

Brandy said we would do a light-up event for Christmas. \$100 for first place. She said she would be donating the money.

Mr. Nash thanked Brandy for attending. He said he would have medical treatments coming up and appreciated Brandy filling in.

**11. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** – Comments heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the agenda. The public is encouraged to submit a "Request to Speak" form to the Board chairman. Comments are to be addressed to the Board as a whole. (non-action item)

Mr. Solaro asked if he could receive a copy of the Gerlach Happenings so he could attend the events. Ms. Gambrell said to email [Gerlach.Happenings@gmail.com](mailto:Gerlach.Happenings@gmail.com).

Carl, a public member, thanked Ms. Gambrell for her efforts. He asked for a television translator for Gerlach.

**ADJOURNMENT** – the meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.