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**Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board Minutes of the regular meeting of the Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board held on July 12, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. at Hobey’s Casino, 5195 Sun Valley Boulevard, Sun Valley, NV 89433.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**
Present – Michael Rider, Heidi Soper, Veronica Cortes, Amy Owens, Carmen Ortiz, Mary Esposito

Absent – Charles (Mark) Neumann

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**The pledge of allegiance was recited
2. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**Carol Burns expressed concern on behalf of residents living near a burned-out property at 520 Farms, adjacent to Columbine Court. The mobile home burned down on July 3 of the previous year, and the remains have not been cleared. Burns stated that the property is now occupied by squatters with no utilities, posing health and safety risks. She noted that the property is still listed under a deceased owner with no probate or will, and it is scheduled for auction in April due to unpaid taxes. Burns called on the County to take action, citing similar unresolved issues in other areas like Lemmon Valley. She urged Commissioner Garcia and the County to address this ongoing public safety concern.

Theresa Antisdel introduced herself as a job seeker with over seven years of experience in payroll, HR management, customer service, and leadership, including serving as a senior branch manager for a FedEx location. She expressed concerns about job scams on social media and is taking a traditional approach to finding work by reaching out directly to her community. Antisdel emphasized her organizational skills, servant’s heart, and interest in roles within education or nonprofit sectors.

Sean McGrath announced that his church is hosting an annual clothing fair. Community members are invited to donate clothing on Friday, and anyone in need can pick up clothes for free during the shopping event on Saturday. Flyers with details were provided at the meeting.
3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF** June 7, 2025 –

A CAB member motioned to approve the minutes of the June 7th Sun Valley CAB meeting. Mary Esposito seconded the motion and the minutes passed unanimously.
4. **ELECTION OF CAB OFFICERS**Michael Rider motioned to nominate Heidi Soper as CAB Chair and another CAB member seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and Heidi Soper was elected as the Sun Valley CAB Chair. Mary Esposito nominated Amy Owens to be Vice Chair and Veronica Cortez nominated themself as Vice Chair.

Amy Owens argued that she has been on the Sun Valley CAB for several years and that they would like to get more involved and make an impact within their community.

Veronica Cortes, a lifelong Sun Valley resident and third-generation Nevadan, shared her deep ties to the community and her desire to serve as Vice Chair of the Sun Valley CAB. She highlighted her background as a small business owner, longtime school district employee, and founder of a local nonprofit that helps individuals complete community service locally. Cortes is also active in her church and volunteers extensively. She emphasized her commitment to representing the community as a non-politician with a passion for serving others and being a voice for Sun Valley residents.

A question was asked by the public if they partake in the vote for CAB officers and it was answered that no, only CAB members will vote.

The vote for Amy Owens as Vice Chair was in the majority and she was voted as the Sun Valley CAB Chair.

1. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES –

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District**Fire Chief Richard Edwards introduced himself to the community, expressing excitement about relocating to Reno with his wife as recent empty nesters. With over 30 years of fire service experience, including 25.5 years with the City of Stockton and serving as fire chief for the past 5.5—he brings expertise in finances, contracts, service agreements, and dispatch operations. He looks forward to applying his knowledge to support and enhance fire services in the area.

Battalion Chief James Solaro provided an update on fire department activity, reporting 268 total calls in the past month, including 7 fires and 172 medical calls. He noted an increase in wildland fire activity due to drying conditions, with current fire danger rated high to extreme levels typically seen in August. Solaro urged residents to prevent fires by securing trailer chains, avoiding metal blades when mowing, and refraining from grinding metal or unsafe target shooting. He also advised the public to stay hydrated, use sun protection, and take precautions during high temperatures.

Mary Odell asked if there were any 4th of July fires caused by fireworks. There were some small things but nothing major according to Solaro.

Mariluz Garcia asked if they had determined the cause of the Marie fire and it was answered that it was still under investigation.

Cindy Leslie asked if Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District has plans to expand services in Sun Valley given ongoing housing growth. Fire Chief Richard Edwards responded that while there are no specific plans yet, the district continually evaluates how to provide the highest level of service while staying within budget. He noted that consultants help assess future needs through strategic planning documents that guide fire station placement and coverage as the community grows.

Carmen Ortiz emphasized concerns about fire safety in light of approximately 1,000 new homes being built in Sun Valley, which she noted is unusual for the area. She referenced a recent incident where a long-abandoned trailer burned down, as previously predicted by neighbors, and nearby residents had to act quickly to prevent the fire from spreading to other homes. She also mentioned issues accessing water during the incident. Fire officials acknowledged the concern and said they would look into the matter.
2. **COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP) -**

Micaela Truslove, with the University of Nevada, Reno’s Living With Fire program, gave a detailed presentation on wildfire preparedness specific to Sun Valley. She began by explaining that her program focuses on community education and outreach to help residents prepare for wildfire. She noted that Sun Valley has a relatively high wildfire risk—greater than 98 percent of communities nationwide—making local preparedness especially important. Her presentation centered on a three-part approach to readiness: home hardening, defensible space, and evacuation planning. She explained that home hardening involves modifying structures to be less vulnerable to fire, such as using one-eighth-inch mesh screens to cover vents and decks to block embers. Defensible space is the buffer zone around a home that can slow the fire spread and give first responders space to work. Truslove emphasized the first five feet around the home as the most critical to keeping clear of flammable materials. She also stressed the importance of evacuation readiness, noting that residents may have as little as 15 minutes to leave during an emergency, and that driveways and address signage should remain visible and unobstructed. Much of the fire risk, she said, comes from embers rather than direct flame. Embers can travel ahead of fire lines and ignite structures, particularly when homes are closely spaced or have vulnerable features like open eaves or cluttered decks. She warned that 60 to 90 percent of homes lost in wildfires are ignited by embers, and approximately 84 percent of buildings in Sun Valley are at risk. Truslove urged residents to sign up for Smart911, the county’s new emergency alert system, and to update their contact information if they previously used CodeRED. She also highlighted NV Energy’s Green Cross program for residents with durable medical equipment, which ensures utility providers are aware of special evacuation needs. A resident raised a concern about a neighbor’s tree that obstructed the street sign, and whether anything could be done if the neighbor refused to trim it. Truslove acknowledged the challenge and encouraged a community-based approach, suggesting events like block parties or neighborhood barbecues to help build trust and cooperation. While she did not offer a legal solution, she emphasized that strengthening neighbor relationships is often the most effective way to promote collective safety. Truslove announced that Washoe County is beginning the process of developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and encouraged residents to participate by signing up for community input sessions. She explained that the CWPP helps identify priority areas for fuel reduction and opens up opportunities for grant funding to support mitigation projects, such as water access and address signage. She also shared that Living With Fire will offer workshops to help communities write their own CWPPs. Even if residents don’t complete a full plan, she said, the process itself improves awareness and builds stronger connections between residents and emergency services. Finally, she introduced a new Neighborhood Ambassadors program designed to support community members who are passionate about wildfire safety and engagement. These local leaders can receive support from other ambassadors across the state, especially in learning how to increase event participation or resolve community challenges. She concluded by encouraging attendees to pick up free defensible space guides, sign up for updates at the back of the room, and speak with her directly after the meeting.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES –**Alexandra Wilson from the Washoe County Manager’s Office announced that the Senior Advisory Board is currently seeking alternate members from any district, with terms running through June 30, 2029. She encouraged those interested in senior-related issues or community involvement to apply, noting that applications are available online or in printed form upon request. She also shared that applications for the Open Space and Parks Commission were recently closed, with about 20 applicants under review for appointment. Additionally, she provided information about the Neighborhood Development Hub, a tool available through the Washoe County Planning Division, and offered to help anyone navigate the site. She noted there are no current neighborhood development meetings scheduled for Sun Valley in unincorporated Washoe County, but she is available to assist with information related to other areas like Marango Springs or Incline Village.

Michael Rider asked if one had to be a senior to be on the senior advisory board and it was answered that there is not an age requirement.

Carmen Ortiz expressed concern about the lack of information regarding street closures related to ongoing development projects in Sun Valley. She noted that closures on streets like Highland Ranch Parkway are often inconsistent with posted signs, making it difficult for residents to plan accordingly. She suggested that this information be made available through the county’s existing website or that developers be required to maintain an up-to-date webpage showing current impacts, along with contact information for specific projects. Alexandra Wilson responded that currently there is no central location for real-time construction updates due to the unpredictable nature of project timelines. However, she acknowledged the suggestion as valuable feedback and said she would share it with planning staff to explore incorporating such information into the Neighborhood Development Hub. She also agreed with the idea of linking to developer-managed project updates if possible. Wilson noted that Ortiz had previously mentioned having a list of development projects and asked for it to be shared so she could research and provide updates at future CAB meetings.
2. **BOARD MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ REQUESTS/ DISCUSSION -**

Commissioner Mariluz Garcia began by welcoming Fire Chief Richard Edwards to the community, praising his extensive experience and leadership, particularly during challenging times such as the City of Stockton’s bankruptcy. She expressed confidence in his ability to guide local fire services during tight budget cycles and emphasized her excitement to have him in the role. She shared updates on recent and upcoming community initiatives. Garcia recently sponsored a free swim day at the Sun Valley General Improvement District pool, which was well-attended and included complimentary admission and Mexican-style popsicles for children and families. She said she hopes to organize another similar event in partnership with the district. Separately, in collaboration with Senator Angie Taylor and Assemblywoman Heather Golding, Garcia is organizing a back-to-school supply drive focused on Sun Valley students, especially middle schoolers at Desert Skies who are required to use clear backpacks. The drive aims to collect school supplies and purchase clear backpacks for 7th and 8th graders who don’t receive them for free. Garcia announced that CAB meetings will now move from Saturdays to the first Monday of each month at 6 p.m. at Hobey’s. She assured attendees that this change will not impact who can serve or participate in CABs. Thanks to a one-mile amendment she passed, residents from both District 3 and District 5, including those in the Highland Ranch area—will still be eligible to serve and stay involved in Sun Valley CAB activities. Turning to public safety, Garcia responded to earlier concerns about fire hazards and nuisance properties by stating she has already begun discussions with Assistant County Manager David Solaro and Chief Edwards about strengthening Washoe County’s enforcement codes. She shared examples from Sun Valley and nearby areas where code enforcement could not act because issues weren’t visible from the street or were located on private property. One example involved an illegal structure and woodpile threatening a neighbor’s safety; another referenced people living in RVs against county code; and a third highlighted a Reno squatter situation that resulted in a fire near the Peppermill casino. Garcia said these examples reflect a need for policy reform, especially where public safety and fire risk are concerned. She is working on identifying gaps in nuisance code enforcement and ways to empower code enforcement officers to better respond to such concerns. Looking ahead, she plans to host another community-wide fall cleanup, building on the success of past cleanups. In the spring, her team is exploring a volunteer-led ditch cleanup after the seasonal spraying to help reduce overgrowth and potential fire hazards. She’s also working on cleanups for private properties, offering to sponsor dumpsters and gather volunteers if homeowners agree to receive help clearing debris that could present safety risks. She concluded her update by emphasizing her ongoing commitment to fire prevention, public safety, and responsive community support.

Michael Rider shared that the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID) has a program that provides dumpsters for properties flagged by code enforcement as needing cleanup. He suggested this resource could support Commissioner Garcia’s planned cleanup initiatives. In response, Garcia enthusiastically welcomed the partnership, encouraging Rider and the community to help spread the word once dates are announced. She emphasized that these events can be highly efficient, noting that significant progress is often made within an hour.

Micaela Truslove offered to help promote upcoming cleanup events by sharing the information through the Living With Fire program’s social media channels. She asked that the event details be sent to their team for distribution.

A resident asked whether the Sun Valley and North Valleys CABs were scheduled to meet on the same Monday each month, based on information from another commissioner. Alexandra Wilson clarified that there is no conflict—Sun Valley CAB meets on the first Monday, North Valleys on the second, West Truckee Meadows on the third Monday every other month, and Incline Village on the fourth Monday. She confirmed the schedule is intentional to avoid overlapping. The resident expressed appreciation for the thoughtful scheduling and for not holding meetings on Thursdays, which would conflict with the GID meetings.

A resident asked whether all Sun Valley schools, including Virginia Palmer, are Title I schools. It was confirmed that they are, and Commissioner Garcia added that, although these schools typically receive school supplies through Title I funding, principals have reported significant funding cuts. The upcoming supply drive is intended to help fill that gap and support students in need.

Michael Rider reflected on his nearly decade-long service on the Sun Valley CAB, including time as Vice Chair and Chair. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve his community through various phases of the CAB’s evolution, including development-focused meetings, virtual sessions during COVID, and the current structure. He congratulated the newly elected Chair and Vice Chair, praising their dedication and community involvement, and encouraged the public to support them. Rider emphasized the importance of resident participation and urged community members not just to attend meetings but to get actively involved, noting that meaningful change happens through engagement. He explained his decision to step down from the Chair role, saying it was time to let others lead while he continues serving as a CAB member and remains active in other community efforts. He also announced that the Sun Valley General Improvement District (GID), where he also serves, is launching a new website with a development tab. This feature will allow residents to view current and upcoming projects within the GID’s scope, such as Five Ridges, Ladera Ranch, Highland 2, and others. He plans to propose adding updates about street closures and utility work to that page so residents can better navigate construction impacts. Rider closed by encouraging others to use the CAB as a learning platform and a steppingstone to greater civic involvement.

Amy Owens thanks Michael Rider for his service to the CAB.

Heidi Soper shared that she recently attended the North Valleys CAB meeting and learned that local fire departments now have the ability to scan pet microchips. If a chipped animal is found and turned in, the fire department can read the chip and contact the owner directly. She also announced her participation in the Swift Exit evacuation study, which involves gathering public input to improve emergency evacuation planning. She plans to keep the Sun Valley CAB informed as the year-long study progresses. Soper reminded attendees of the upcoming CAB meetings scheduled for August 5 and September 2, both on Monday evenings, and expressed her appreciation for outgoing Chair Michael Rider, thanking him for his service. She also welcomed new Vice Chair Amy and praised all board members for their dedication. Finally, she encouraged continued community attendance despite the move from Saturday to Monday meetings, noting that more guest speakers are scheduled in the future.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Rodger Edwards, representing the North Valleys CAB, invited Sun Valley residents to attend their meetings in Cold Springs. He noted that the North Valleys CAB also meets on Mondays and encouraged community members to participate, emphasizing that both areas are neighbors and can benefit from sharing information and updates.

Judy Jensen noted that the morning of September 2 coincides with Senior Fest at the Old Town Mall (formerly Reno Town Mall), and that the Great Reno Balloon Race is also scheduled for that same weekend.
Theresa Antisdel shared a warning about a new scam targeting students, after her 16-year-old son, a TMCC High School student, was nearly a victim. He received an email that appeared to be from the college, using a legitimate-looking address and the name of a real math professor. The scam involved emailing a fake $3,000 check with instructions to deposit it electronically to purchase equipment for a supposed research assistant job. Her son brought the check to the TMCC library to print, and after Theresa raised concerns, they took it to the cashier’s office, where staff confirmed it was a known scam with multiple reported incidents. She explained that although printing and depositing checks from third-party websites is a legitimate practice in some cases, this situation was a fraudulent misuse of that process. Antisdel highlighted how convincing the scam was and urged awareness, especially as scammers increasingly target students through digital means.

Sean McGrath shared a personal experience about resolving a tree obstruction issue in his neighborhood. He submitted a maintenance request through Washoe County’s 311 system for a tree that was blocking a road sign. The county responded within 48 hours and trimmed the tree. While they were on-site, he also had them address additional trees in a nearby ditch that were obstructing visibility at an intersection. McGrath encouraged residents to use available county tools like 311 to report similar issues and thanked the CAB members for their service.

Michael Rider warned residents about a scam targeting Sun Valley involving emails about a supposed water quality settlement. A constituent contacted him after receiving one of these emails, which appeared to be from an official source. Rider confirmed it was fraudulent and emphasized that the General Improvement District (GID) does not send such communications via email. He reassured residents that Sun Valley’s water quality is among the best in the nation and regularly reported on the GID website. He urged the community to remain cautious and not open suspicious emails.

Veronica Cortes shared that she recently received a scam phone call claiming to be from Border Patrol and Homeland Security. The caller alleged she was under investigation for drug trafficking and that her accounts would be seized. The call appeared legitimate, displaying a real Border Patrol number. When she called the number back, it connected to an actual Border Patrol line, but only after selecting option 8 did it reveal that the call was part of a known scam. She advised others to be cautious and listen to the scam warning if they receive similar calls.

1. **ADJOURNMENT –**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 am**.**