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**Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board Minutes of the regular meeting of the Sun Valley Citizen Advisory Board held on August 4, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at Hobey’s Casino, 5195 Sun Valley Boulevard, Sun Valley, NV 89433.**

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

Absent – Mark Neumann, Carmen Ortiz

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**The pledge of allegiance was recited
2. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**
Mel Coladonato expressed concerns about homeless individuals living in abandoned vehicles near 200 West Second Street, adjacent to a dirt road. He noted that while the property is not owned by Sun Valley, the situation is creating safety concerns for him, his wife, and a recently widowed neighbor. He described an incident where a man emerged from a vehicle with bike parts, became agitated, and threw items into the street. Law enforcement responded, spoke with the individual, and directed him to clean up the area, but no further action was taken. Coldadonato shared that he provided his contact information to the Sheriff’s Office and wanted the CAB to be aware of the ongoing issue.

Cindy Leslie announced that the Sun Valley Senior Center will host its second event on November 15. The event is for seniors only, and additional vendors are needed at a cost of $15 per table.
3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF** July 12, 2025

Michael Rider motioned to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2025, CAB meeting. A CAB member seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES**
**Washoe County Sheriff’s Office**
Lieutenant Nick Tone, recently promoted after 13 years with the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office, introduced himself as the new point of contact for the Sun Valley CAB. He reported on the Sheriff’s Office second quarter “scorecard,” noting that Sun Valley, referred to as Beat 3B, saw 4,051 calls for service this quarter compared to a three-year average of 3,368. He emphasized that much of the increase was due to proactive deputy activity such as DUI enforcement and traffic stops rather than 911 calls and encouraged members and residents to reach out with any questions.

Mel Coldadonato raised concerns about a dirt road near 200 West Second and Slope Corner, where multiple cars are parked without access to bathrooms, leading to sanitation issues. He noted the heavy traffic there late at night, around 2–3 a.m., and said it is unclear whether the property is public or private. As a realtor, he believes it must have legal access to nearby homes but is unsure of ownership. He also mentioned challenges with security cameras after an employee stole his equipment, though he intends to replace them so deputies can access footage if needed. Lieutenant Nick Tone responded by noting he would look into the matter further, including clarifying the property’s status, and offered continued support from the Sheriff’s Office.

A citizen commented that morning traffic through Sun Valley has become increasingly dangerous, with commuters running red lights and ignoring traffic signals along Sun Valley Boulevard. Lieutenant Nick Tone explained that this stretch of roadway falls under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Highway Patrol, but he committed to reaching out to them to address the issue and acknowledged the growing safety concerns.

Veronica Cortes asked for clarification on traffic laws, specifically whether not wearing a seatbelt is a secondary violation and how laws apply to driving in the left lane. Lieutenant Nick Tone explained that seatbelt violations are secondary, meaning a driver cannot be pulled over solely for not wearing one, but they can be cited if stopped for another primary violation such as speeding or reckless driving. Regarding left-lane use, he said Nevada law does not currently prohibit slower drivers from remaining in the left lane, though it is considered courteous for slower traffic to keep right, and some states are adopting laws against “camping” in the left lane. Cortes thanked him for the explanation and said she is interested in pursuing changes to improve traffic conditions.

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District
Battalion Chief James Solaro reported that Sun Valley saw 237 calls last month, with EMS making up the majority. While most fires occurred in the North Valleys—including one that grew to more than 100 acres—Sun Valley itself experienced 19 fires ranging from wildland to vehicle and structure incidents. He emphasized that wildland fire activity is increasing and urged residents to practice prevention by securing trailer chains, using spark arrestors on ATVs, and following safe practices to avoid human-caused fires, which remain the leading cause. He also reminded the community that school starts next week, noting heavier traffic on Sun Valley Boulevard since the high school moved to Wildcreek, and asked drivers to stay alert and cautious around the area’s elementary and middle schools.

Carol Burns asked whether the Cold Springs fire over the weekend involved Sun Valley crews and who would respond locally if an incident occurred at the same time. Battalion Chief James Solaro confirmed the fire was within their district and explained that response is managed through a coverage model. Engines from Cold Springs, Stead, Sun Valley, Verdi, Reno units, and BLM all responded to that fire, while backfilling and staff recalls were used to maintain coverage elsewhere. He noted that ambulances are prioritized for re-staffing due to lower personnel needs, and that mutual aid from Sparks and Reno engines helps ensure Sun Valley remains protected during large incidents.

Carol Burns asked whether the county would resume cleaning up the right-of-ways, noting it was done in the past. Battalion Chief James Solaro clarified that this responsibility falls under Washoe County Public Works rather than the fire department, specifically the Roads Division. A CAB member asked Carol Burns to clarify what she meant by “cleanup,” and she explained that in the past the county regularly cleared rights-of-way, removing leaves and brush since those areas belong to the county. The CAB member said she had called 311 before regarding illegal dumping near Leon Street, and while she was told part of the area was private property, the county did follow up and had motorhomes and trash removed. Burns emphasized that the right-of-way cleanups used to be routine in Sun Valley. The CAB member noted that calling 311 is still the way to report issues so they can be routed to the proper department.

Mike Revty asked why many fire hydrants in Sun Valley are not being cleared and whether that is the fire department’s responsibility. Battalion Chief James Solaro explained that hydrants are owned by Washoe County, and while the fire department handled maintenance in the past, budget limitations shifted that responsibility back to the county. He added that the county has contracted with TMWA to perform hydrant maintenance, though firefighters sometimes face challenges because hydrant maps are not always accurate.

Veronica Cortes shared community concerns about whether Washoe County is adequately prepared for a large-scale wildfire, referencing issues in California where reservoirs were not filled during major fires. Battalion Chief James Solaro assured her that all county water tanks maintain a required reserve for fire flow, and if levels ever drop, the fire department is notified immediately. He explained that in the event of a major fire, TMWA can activate pumps at the Glendale plant to replenish tanks, and that monitoring of water levels is handled directly by TMWA.

Michael Rider added that the Sun Valley Water System has nine tanks, each with designated emergency reserves for firefighting. He explained the system is monitored wirelessly and can shift water between tanks as needed, with millions of gallons available—far more than areas like Palisades in California. Rider emphasized that Sun Valley is well-prepared to support fire response, noting ongoing partnerships with the fire department and TMWA for hydrant support, and shared plans for a new, much larger tank near Esther Bend that will further increase fire flow capacity, funded by private groups.

1. **LACK OF LOCAL BANKING SERVICES**Veronica Cortes raised concerns about the Wells Fargo branch in Sun Valley, saying she had heard it had been robbed multiple times and that employees feel unsafe due to a lack of security. She noted that workers are instructed to hand over money during robberies, which discourages people from wanting to work there. Cortes suggested the community consider advocating for more secure and supportive banking options, such as attracting credit unions, to better serve Sun Valley residents.

Michael Rider commented that while bank closures are not unusual, the departure of Wells Fargo leaves Sun Valley without any banking services, creating a clear opportunity for another institution. He explained that banks often have territorial agreements that limit competition, but with no bank currently in the valley, another provider could step in to serve the community. Rider stressed that Sun Valley has supported a bank since the 1970s and that losing both a local store and a bank in quick succession is alarming, especially for residents who do not want to travel long distances for basic services. He suggested the community and county consider outreach efforts, including contacting the media, to highlight the gap and attract interest from banks or credit unions that may not yet realize the opportunity in Sun Valley.
Amy Owens said the closure of Wells Fargo leaves a major gap in essential services for Sun Valley and emphasized that something must be done to address it. She supported the idea of reaching out to the media, agreeing it could quickly draw attention to the community’s need for a new bank.

Michael Rider said the Sun Valley GID already has a PR and media representative, and he plans to approach her about helping raise awareness of the community’s need for a new bank. He noted there may be limits since the GID is a separate entity, but he believes it makes sense to involve their PR resources and will bring it up at their upcoming meeting to explore how they might support outreach efforts.

Mariluz Garcia explained that she has already been working on the Scolaris shopping center issue, contacting both local and California-based property managers to stress the community’s urgent need for another grocery store. She is personally advocating for a Grocery Outlet, noting its community-focused model, and said those discussions are already underway. Garcia offered to include the ATM/banking concern in her efforts and suggested that a stronger, unified message—such as a joint press release from the County, CAB, and GID—could help elevate the issue and attract solutions.

A CAB member motioned to further look into the banking and the grocery store in Sun Valley. Another CAB member seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
2. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**Alexandria Wilson provided updates on upcoming meetings through the Neighborhood Development Hub. She announced a Development Code Amendment meeting on Article 304 regarding continuum of care for seniors, scheduled for August 6 from 5–6 p.m. as a hybrid meeting at the Washoe Complex. She also highlighted a District 3 community meeting on August 26 at Hobey’s Casino banquet room to discuss a proposed development project on West Second Avenue, which includes a Master Plan Amendment, zoning changes, and a regional plan amendment. Wilson explained how residents can access details, contact planners and developers, and submit comments online to be included in staff reports. Additionally, she announced an opening on the Capital Improvement Advisory Committee for a representative from the real estate development or building industries. The four-year term runs through 2029, and applications are due August 11. She encouraged attendees to share the opportunity with anyone qualified and noted that appointees receive $80 per meeting. Wilson said she will continue sharing future board and commission openings at CAB meetings.

Judy Jensen asked about a vacant lot near 8th and Lupin, wanting to know how many houses are planned for that site. Alexandra Wilson said she did not have the details, but Michael Rider explained the project includes a little over a dozen single-family homes, likely around 14, and no apartments. He noted the project was proposed years ago, delayed, and then revived. Rider encouraged residents to attend the Sun Valley GID meetings, held the second Thursday of each month, where updates on all local developments are shared, since the GID is closely involved due to water services and often learns details before the general public.
3. **BOARD MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ REQUESTS/ DISCUSSION**Mariluz Garcia provided several community updates. She said she recently visited a constituent to review clogged ditches and culverts, noting that sediment buildup should be reported to 311 since those cases are prioritized for cleanup. Garcia encouraged residents to act as “eyes and ears” for the county and suggested a volunteer effort in the spring to help cut back weeds in fire-prone areas. She also updated the CAB on efforts to attract a new grocery store, sharing that she is advocating for a Grocery Outlet because of its community-focused model and reassured members that the property owner wants to keep a grocery store at the site rather than other uses. She reported on a burned home on Carnes Drive, explaining that the county cannot locate an heir or owner to address the property, making resolution difficult. Garcia invited residents to a ribbon cutting at the Cares Campus for a new 15-unit permanent supportive housing building serving people with complex needs such as mental illness, substance use, or mobility challenges, emphasizing the county’s role in supporting its most vulnerable residents. She also announced a school supply giveaway this Saturday at Sun Valley Park, made possible through community donations, and asked for help spreading the word. Finally, she previewed plans for Emergency Preparedness Month in September, including working with the Red Cross on a fire alarm installation program for seniors in Sun Valley, modeled on a successful effort held several years ago.

Amy Owens asked who is responsible for the cleaning of the ditches and Garcia responded that Washoe County is responsible. They elaborated that they would make a report by calling 311.

Mariluz Garcia shared that Washoe County roads are continuously monitored and assessed for condition, with pavement preservation taking priority during the summer months. She explained that while culverts and ditches are tracked in the county’s system, limited staffing and resources often mean they are not addressed as quickly. Garcia noted that road maintenance has become extremely costly, creating budget challenges not only for the county but also for neighboring jurisdictions like the City of Sparks, making it difficult to keep up with overall road conditions.

Michael Rider asked about the status of the county manager position. The response was that Kate Thomas is currently serving as interim county manager, and the county will soon hire a firm to conduct a nationwide search, with the goal of appointing a new county manager by January 2026.

Kate Dyer asked whether property owners could be required to clean up ditches filled with trash, weeds, and debris, noting frustration that some residents maintain theirs while others do not. The response clarified that ditches are under county jurisdiction, and while some homeowners voluntarily maintain them, enforcement is limited. The county prioritizes sediment-filled culverts over weeds or brush, but residents are encouraged to continue documenting and reporting problem areas to 311 so they can be entered into the system and addressed when resources allow.

A citizen raised concerns about parking and pedestrian safety near the south side of Gifford Park, explaining that during baseball games cars crowd the street and children often run out without looking, despite a fence the Sun Valley GID installed. Mariluz Garcia responded that the issue is still being worked on, but some expected funding fell through, and the GID is exploring other options with the county. She added that they recently learned Sun Valley is not eligible for CDBG funds this year, which had previously supported similar road improvements, but they will continue pursuing alternatives and keep the community updated.

Veronica Cortes asked if the homeless camp on Second Street falls under the county’s responsibility and whether it could be addressed or reported through 311. The response confirmed that 311 is the proper channel and noted that outreach cards in both English and Spanish are being distributed to help connect people with resources.

Michael Rider thanked Veronica Cortes for providing pizza at the meeting, recognizing her efforts to address the ongoing challenge of refreshments. Cortes added that she is reaching out to local businesses to donate food for future meetings, hoping to rotate offerings so members can share a meal, enjoy free food, and support local establishments.

Mary Esposito followed up on a previous discussion about having Michaela Truelove’s husband speak to the CAB about phone and email scams. Alexandra Wilson explained that while he has IT experience, he is not a subject matter expert in scams, so she is working to find someone currently in the field who can provide a more informed presentation.

Heidi Soper reminded attendees that brochures on fire safety and Smart 911 are available at the back table for everyone to take home and read. She announced that the next CAB meeting will be on Tuesday, September 2 (moved from Monday due to the holiday), after which meetings will return to the regular Monday schedule. Heidi thanked both new and familiar faces for attending, noting this was the first Monday meeting and playfully adding that they’ll now be competing with Monday Night Football.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Judy Jensen asked about the recording that took place earlier in the meeting. Alexandra Wilson explained that Washoe County’s contractor, SOSU, was gathering natural sound, video, and interviews from CAB meetings to feature in the upcoming State of the County event in September, highlighting citizen advisory boards as a key part of community engagement. Jensen then added that she had signed up for Smart911.com after the last meeting and quickly received an evacuation alert during a fire, stressing how valuable the system is and encouraging others to sign up since it provides phone calls, texts, and emails during emergencies.

Kate Dyer said that during evacuations it would be helpful for residents with trailers to know designated places to take them beyond just the fairgrounds. She explained that in a past incident, the only listed site was the library, which has limited space, and stressed the need for clearer guidance on where trailers can go to avoid traffic congestion. The response acknowledged this as an important issue that should be looked into and possibly added to evacuation planning.

1. **ADJOURNMENT –**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 pm**.**