****

**Warm Springs/Rural Minutes of the regular meeting of the Warm Springs/Rural Citizen Advisory Board held on May 14, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. via ZOOM**

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

Present – Larry Chesney, Hugh Ezelle, Pamela Roberts, Kevin Cook
Absent – Marshall Todd

A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

 The pledge of allegiance was recited.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Peck, a 12-year volunteer with Truckee Meadows Fire, encouraged community members, especially local valley residents—to consider becoming volunteer firefighters. He noted that although there are other volunteers, most live in town and are often unavailable, leaving him to respond to many calls alone. Currently, only he and John Murphy are active valley-based volunteers. He asked interested individuals to contact Truckee Meadows Fire and ask for Marissa to get started. Brian plans to continue attending meetings to share this message and distribute flyers. His contact information was provided: 775-447-4017.
2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF March 12, 2025**The spelling of Jan Mortensen’s name was corrected for the March 12, 2025, minutes. Following the correction, Hugh Ezelle motioned to approve the minutes and Larry Chesney seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATE**

**Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District**
Joe Schum, Division Chief of Operations for Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue, provided a public safety update for the Warm Springs CAB area. So far this year, there have been 58 calls for services, down from 63 the previous year. April saw 14 calls, including one fire, six medical incidents, a vehicle crash, and several false alarms. Fire activity is lower than last year, but wildfire risk is elevated due to a high fuel load from dry grass and minimal snowfall. Northern Washoe, including Palomino Valley, is at especially high risk. Schum emphasized the importance of fire prevention, especially as human-caused fires remain a top concern. The department has completed its annual training and multi-agency preparedness drills, with more underway. All stations are fully staffed and operational. He also announced the selection of a new Fire Chief, Richard Edwards, who has accepted the position and is currently in contract negotiations. Schum plans to introduce him to the community soon. Lastly, he highlighted a recent structure fire where local volunteers, including Ryan, played a key role in the quick initial response. Although the home was under construction and the cause is unclear, efforts from all involved were commendable.

Hugh Ezelle asked about the other mentioned fire and Joe Schum did not have the specifics and clarified it was likely a small fire as anything major would have come across his desk.

Hugh Ezelle asked where the newly appointed TMFPD Chief Edwards was coming from, and it was answered that he was coming from Stockton where he served 25 years. In addition, he worked for other departments in the central valley of California and has been Fire Chief of Stockton since 2020.

Jan Mortensen asked whether fire departments are communicating with insurance companies about fire protection and coverage in areas like Palomino Valley, particularly in light of policy cancellations. Division Chief Joe Schum responded that the concern is valid—especially in non-urban, high-risk areas. While the fire department tries to engage with insurance providers and advocate for residents by highlighting efforts like fuels reduction and defensible space, most insurance-related decisions are driven by corporate risk assessments and handled at the legislative level. He noted that the State and County Commission are actively working on bills to prevent insurers from dropping coverage without considering on-the-ground mitigation efforts.

Hugh Ezelle followed up by asking about cancellations. Joe Schum told a story of his friends success in negotiating with an insurance company. Furthermore, he advocated that the best bet is for people to work through the political system for insurance coverage.

**Washoe County Sheriff’s Office**
Sergeant George Gomez from the Washoe County Sheriff's Office reported 196 calls for service in the rural area this quarter, up slightly from 181 in the same period last year. He explained the increase is largely due to proactive, officer-initiated activity. He also announced the deployment of two dedicated DUI enforcement units, operating from 4 a.m. to 2 a.m. with overlapping shifts Tuesday through Sunday. Their primary focus is removing impaired drivers from roads, especially along Pyramid Highway, a known high-risk area for DUIs.

Larry Chesney expressed appreciation for the increased law enforcement presence and noted that as more people move into rural areas, issues arise with individuals unfamiliar with rural living—particularly those camping on properties or public easements. Sergeant Gomez responded by encouraging residents to report such activity via the non-emergency dispatch line unless it’s an emergency. He explained that the Sheriff's Office has a dedicated Homeless Outreach and Preventive Efforts (HOPE) unit that focuses on connecting individuals with resources rather than making arrests, aiming to move people off private or public property safely and respectfully.

Kevin Cook asked if law enforcement would have a presence in the Moon Rocks area over Memorial Day weekend. Sergeant Gomez confirmed that there is a full action plan in place, and deputies will be present throughout the weekend, particularly during the evening hours, in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He also noted that they are working proactively with BLM to address issues related to target shooting in rural areas like Winnemucca Ranch Road and Moon Rocks. The goal is to prevent potential wildfires by increasing patrols and enforcement in these high-risk zones as the weather warms.

Scott Catron let the CAB know that he has free range cards for WCSO to give to people shooting in unsafe areas. The idea is to help prevent illegal shooting.

1. **YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WASHOE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK & MEETING SPACE, OPERATED BY NEVADA FIREARMS ACADEMY & RANGE**

Scott Catron Scott and Makala Catron shared that the Washoe County Regional Shooting Facility remains county-owned but is now privately operated under their management, similar to how some county golf courses function. Their goal is to make the facility more community-oriented, accessible, and safe. The range is now open seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with expanded programming and significant renovations to enhance safety and aesthetics. They emphasized their commitment to youth and community involvement, noting the return of programs like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and youth rodeo. The facility also supports events such as CCW training, women-focused firearm classes, and community gatherings. Upcoming events include a Reno Rodeo Foundation fundraiser and a three-gun competition, with built-in safety measures for participants. The Catrons highlighted recent collaborations with law enforcement and veteran organizations and described their efforts to maintain fire safety and reduce wildfire risks through site maintenance. They are also working with local schools to help implement a federally funded firearm safety education program for children, with pilot programs starting this fall in private schools and a broader rollout expected in 2026 through the Washoe County School District. They closed by expressing their excitement for future growth, continued community partnerships, and additional facility enhancements like a five-stand shotgun course. Their approach is grounded in education, inclusion, and a commitment to not saying "no" to community ideas.

Larry Chesney praised the Nevada Firearms Academy for doing a fantastic job operating the county’s only range. He mentioned that in Palomino Valley, residents can legally shoot on their 40-acre parcels and that he personally shoots clay targets, but he was unaware the facility also offered clay shooting. He suggested using platforms like the Palomino Valley Facebook page and Nextdoor to better promote offerings and attract more community interest. Scott Catron responded enthusiastically, confirming that the range now includes clay throwers, prone shooting pads, and new target systems designed to improve the shooting experience. He agreed with the need for better outreach and acknowledged the past communication gaps when the county closed the range and later reopened it quietly. He emphasized that the current leadership is focused on rebuilding trust and community engagement. Catron also discussed plans to expand the facility’s capabilities, including upgrading the 1,000-yard range with additional distance markers (300–900 yards) to achieve national POMA (Precision Outdoor Marksman Association) standards. This would allow for national competitions and help bring visitors and revenue to the area. He encouraged anyone with dirt to donate it for berm construction and explained the safety measures being put in place, such as chevrons and new access roads, to safely operate multiple shooting bays alongside long-distance targets.

Pam Roberts shared her experience with 4-H shooting sports and asked if the Washoe County 4-H group is involved at the range. The Catrons responded that the Washoe County 4-H shooting group recently returned after 17 years and completed their qualifying event at the facility. They are also working with local high schools to revive shotgun teams and promote youth shooting sports, noting the lack of such programs in Nevada despite their popularity in other states. The Catrons highlighted their expanding partnerships, including a new agreement with the Battle Born Cowboys Single Action Shooters, who are building a themed "cowboy town" on site—visible from the highway to draw public interest. They emphasized their openness to creative, safe uses of the space, including planned vegetation burns for fire safety and community events. They shared their commitment to fire prevention, noting efforts like hillside scraping and maintaining a full water buffalo tank. They also expressed their desire to bring more people back to the range and promote safe shooting, even offering free access to those willing to leave unsafe backcountry shooting areas. Finally, they mentioned efforts to restore a local polling station at the range for future elections and encouraged community members to reach out directly, providing personal contact info and assuring their availability seven days a week

Hugh Ezelle shared a past complaint about the National Guard using the range on a Sunday, firing machine guns so loudly it disturbed the peace. After calling the range master, the issue was resolved quickly, but he expressed concern about the possibility of increased military use as the range expands. Scott Catron responded that they had no communication or coordination with the military and were unaware of that incident. They assured the community that there are no plans involving military training. They also noted they’ve increased security measures, including repairing fences, installing surveillance and game cameras, and adding alarms to the facility to enhance safety and prevent unauthorized access. They apologized for the past issue and confirmed it occurred before their management.

A citizen emphasized to NFA that they should add the aforementioned social media platforms. Makala Catron said that they will.

Hugh Ezelle noted the increasing number of organized groups using the range and asked how long Nevada Firearms Academy has been operating the facility. Scott Catron explained they officially took over operations about 10 months ago, though he was involved earlier under county management. He said their goal is to grow the facility by welcoming more groups, many of which were previously displaced or restricted, like the Single Action Shooters and Palomino Valley Gun Club. They’ve also made physical adjustments to berms to address safety perceptions and allow competition shooting again. Ezelle asked about public access and pricing. Catron confirmed the range is open to individuals at $15 for adults, $10 for seniors, and $5 for kids—all-day access including one paper target. He welcomed ideas to improve visibility and outreach, agreeing with Hugh’s suggestion to post signage near Winnemucca Ranch Road encouraging people to use the safe, affordable range instead of illegally or unsafely shooting in open areas. Catron also noted they keep the facility clean and allow brass collection. In response to earlier community suggestions, they’ve launched a 15-day punch card for $150 and are developing tiered monthly memberships—potentially including benefits like FFL transfers—with pricing expected around $29.99/month.

Pam Roberts asked whether Nevada Firearms Academy has a website. Scott Catron confirmed they do—**nfareno.com**—and mentioned the URL is also included on their presentation slides. He encouraged attendees to take a business card and reach out anytime with questions or ideas. Catron emphasized that the range belongs to the community, and they’re there to help support it. He welcomed suggestions for events or fundraisers and noted that they regularly donate range time for local causes, such as the Reno Rodeo Foundation and veteran groups, as part of their commitment to community involvement.

1. **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB**

Casey McDonald shared that there is currently no active neighborhood developments listed on the Neighborhood Development HUB; however, residents can track the progress of any development by following the applications link. He also offered to help residents navigate development information using the county’s online tools. He demonstrated how to view past and upcoming planning applications, including how to check for updates by district on the Washoe County website. He also introduced the county’s new **Community Engagement Portal**, a tool designed to gather public input beyond Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs). Residents can access it via the county website or a QR code at the meeting. The portal allows people to submit feedback and suggest topics for future CAB meetings. Casey noted that he personally reviews these submissions weekly and brings them to his team to help shape meeting agendas and community responses. He encouraged residents to use the portal, reach out with questions, and grab his business card for follow-up assistance.

Pam Roberts expressed concern about the April 28 neighborhood meeting regarding the proposed Palomino Farms subdivision. She noted that under the new system, CABs no longer review or comment on such proposals, and that neighborhood meetings are supposed to be recorded. However, she said there was no visible recording at the meeting and is worried that the developer's summary of public comments might be incomplete or biased, omitting critical feedback. Pam asked where she could find what the developer submitted to the county as the official summary of that meeting. She emphasized the importance of transparency and fairness, noting that while these meetings are intended to provide early community input, the process lacks oversight without CAB involvement. Casey McDonald acknowledged her concerns and agreed that a recording and summary should exist. He said he would investigate the issue, look into why a recording might not have been shared, and follow up with her via email. He also agreed that if a meeting is recorded, attendees should be informed as a matter of courtesy.

1. **WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE -**Jeanne Herman stated that she is working on the County budget and had nothing else to comment on.
2. **CAB MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ REQUESTS**

Pam Roberts announced her resignation from the Warm Springs Rural Citizen Advisory Board (CAB), effective at the end of the meeting, as she has sold her home in Warm Springs and is in escrow. Although she will remain in District 5, she will no longer reside in the Warm Springs area. Pam expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve the community, shared her appreciation for the people she's worked with, and noted she plans to return to the area occasionally to visit friends and enjoy outdoor activities. She also plans to notify Larry and Commissioner Herman via email.

Larry Chesney announced that **Marshall Todd** will also be resigning from the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) due to a new work schedule that conflicts with meeting times. With Pam Roberts also stepping down, the CAB will now have **two vacancies**. He encouraged **community members** interested in serving to submit applications, noting that **Jan** has already applied. Larry expressed uncertainty about how meetings will proceed with only three remaining members until replacements are appointed. He also noted that the **county is currently revising the CAB ordinance**, which may change how CABs operate and what they will be called. The final structure is pending a **second reading** by the County Commission. Larry asked residents active on **Palomino Valley’s Facebook and Nextdoor pages** to help spread the word about the open positions and requested that Casey McDonald share a **link to the CAB application page** in any outreach. He emphasized that no special qualifications are needed—just a commitment to the community.

Pamela Roberts expressed concern about proposed changes to the CAB ordinance that would limit advisory boards to discussing only issues within the county’s jurisdiction. She argued that this should still allow CABs to place development proposals—like the Palomino Farms subdivision—on their agendas for community discussion, even if they don’t have decision-making authority. She emphasized the importance of allowing residents to raise concerns on topics such as water impacts, flood mitigation, and contamination (e.g., nitrates and arsenic) resulting from new housing developments. Roberts noted that while the Planning Commission typically makes sound decisions, those decisions are often overturned by the County Commission, which may prioritize revenue over community input. She concluded by thanking Commissioner Jeanne Herman for her consistent advocacy in preserving the rural character of the area.

Hugh Ezelle suggested adding relevant **Neighborhood Development Hub items** to each CAB meeting agenda so residents can easily see and discuss local proposals without needing to visit the online Hub separately. Larry Chesney responded that while it’s a good idea, the CAB already reviews Hub items during meetings. He recommended that Hugh—and others—subscribe to the **county’s email notification system**, which allows users to receive updates specific to their district (such as District 5). Hugh clarified he’s only interested in local developments, not other areas, and emphasized that including Hub items directly on the agenda would make them more visible and accessible to the community. Hugh Ezelle addressed concerns about the proposed Palomino Farms subdivision, stating that while some residents may oppose new development, it’s important to understand that the area was planned for higher-density housing over 30 years ago. The landowners have long held the right to build, and these plans have been embedded in the area and master plans for decades. He emphasized that the development is inevitable and cannot be stopped. Instead of resisting it entirely, Hugh urged the community to focus on **influencing how** the development happens—such as **advocating for better access routes** (e.g., using the highway instead of Whiskey Springs Road for regular access) to minimize local impact. He encouraged residents to shift from opposing growth to helping shape it in ways that best protect their quality of life.

George Boyd agreed that the Palomino Farms development is inevitable but stressed that the **developer should be required to upgrade Whiskey Springs Road to county standards**. He explained that the current road—maintained by the GID (General Improvement District)—won’t withstand the heavy construction traffic (like concrete and steel trucks) or the increased vehicle use after the homes are built. He suggested that the upgraded road should then be **donated to the county** to relieve the GID of maintenance responsibilities. Hugh Ezelle responded positively, calling George’s input a **constructive suggestion**. He emphasized that these kinds of practical, solutions-oriented comments—focused on how development happens, not whether it happens—are exactly what the community needs to influence future outcomes.

Pam Roberts agreed with Hugh’s point and expressed more concerns with the development process. Larry Chesney reminded the CAB that they need to stary on the topic of “Board Member Announcements” and that they would be free to discuss this after the CAB.

Kevin Cook asked if that topic could be added to the following agenda for discussion.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Commissioner Jeanne Herman emphasized her strong support for restoring the full role of Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) in the development process. She acknowledged that her advocacy has likely “bruised some tail feathers,” but she’s been fighting hard to ensure community voices are heard. She warned that reducing CAB meetings to less than monthly risks cutting them out of the development review process entirely, as different projects move on varying timelines. Monthly meetings, she argued, are essential for CABs to stay relevant and regain influence—particularly on issues like land use and development. Herman called on residents and board members to support more frequent meetings and help push back against county efforts that, in her view, have tried to minimize CAB involvement. She ended by noting that this is a collective effort and urged community members to join her in advocating for stronger CAB engagement. Members asked

Pam Roberts pointed out that she believes that the CAB has no say over CAB topics as it is left up to Washoe County staff. She expressed frustration with trying to get things on the agenda. Larry Chesney responded that he and Casey went over 5 topics and after being stonewalled by other possible presenters, they were finally able to get RFA to present.

Hugh Ezelle commented that he understands commissioner Herman’s point about going monthly as it is hard to respond to a development meeting when the CAB meets monthly.

Larry Chesney commented that they only get a good turn out when they have a controversial topic.

A citizen asked if the CAB could host a special meeting before the next CAB to discuss the Palomino Farms Tentative Subdivision development. It was answered that they could do that, but that sort of meeting has already taken place. Larry Chesney clarified that they want a meeting not governed by Open Meeting Law but pointed out that there is a slim chance for the Developers to show up to one of those. In addition, Chesney stated that it would need to be set up by the community and not the County.

Hugh Ezelle emphasized that while CAB meetings are important for discussion, the **most effective way for residents to influence county decisions** is by submitting comments through the **Neighborhood Development Hub**. He stated that the **county pays more attention to written public input submitted through the Hub** than to comments made during CAB meetings, noting that even CAB meeting minutes often go unread by the County Commission. He urged community members to use the Hub to ensure their voices are officially heard.

Larry Chesney reminded the CAB again that they are in violation of open meeting law and requested the meeting to adjourn.  **ADJOURNMENT -** The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.