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Minutes of the regular meeting of the West Truckee Meadows/Verdi Township

Citizen Advisory Board held on March 17, 2025, at 5:30 P.M.

Verdi Community Library & Nature Study, 270 Bridge St, Verdi, NV 89439

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

Present- Mac Rossi, Cameron Kramlich, Barbara Fenne, Robert Laurie

Absent- Carly Brochard

A quorum was established.

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** –
2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS OF** November 20, 2023, March 26, 2024, and May 20, 2024

**A motion was made to approve the minutes for the Verdi CAB meetings of** November 20, 2023, March 26, 2024, and May 20, 2024. Barbara Fenne seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

1. **PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES –**

**Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District**Joe Schum from Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue provided a public safety update for the Verdi area, reporting 47 calls in January and 28 in February, though February’s numbers may be slightly undercounted due to a CAD outage. There were no fires during this period, with the majority of calls being EMS-related, including 27 medical calls and 3 motor vehicle accidents. One gas leak was reported, along with 15 good intent calls. The area averages 35 to 45 calls per month, some of which include auto-aid responses to Reno for improved service. Staffing remains full, with recent academy graduates now in the field and several promotions following a battalion chief retirement. Recruitment is underway to fill anticipated fall vacancies. Residents are reminded to remain alert for potential mudslides in burn scar areas and to check and replace smoke detector batteries, especially if detectors are over 10 years old.

Cameron Kramlich asked whether replacing his home’s heating oil tank with a cistern for fire prevention would be useful to Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue and if there’s a recommended size. Joe Schum responded that cisterns are generally difficult for the fire department to use due to special hookup requirements, location challenges, and maintenance issues, which can sometimes damage equipment. He recommended contacting the Fire Prevention Division for guidance on building codes and noted that cisterns may affect homeowners insurance. In Verdi, fire crews typically rely on water tenders, portable pumps, and access to the canal or river.

Washoe County Sheriff’s Office

Sergeant Cook from the Sheriff's Office reported an increase in vehicle burglaries at trailheads as the weather warms up and reminded residents not to leave valuables in their cars. He also encouraged safe driving and advised against drinking and driving during St. Patrick’s Day.

Cameron Kramlich asked about a recent early morning incident on New Highway 50 that involved bright, flashing lights visible from a mile away, and whether there’s a standard protocol for how long such lights are used. Sergeant Cook responded that while he wasn’t aware of the specific incident, flashing lights are typically left on to alert drivers of a traffic hazard or law enforcement presence and to ensure the safety of officers, stopped vehicles, and any individuals in the roadway.

1. **COUNTY MANAGER ERIC BROWN UPDATE -**

Washoe County Manager Eric Brown delivered a comprehensive annual update to the West Truckee Meadows/Verdi CAB, covering key accomplishments, fiscal outlook, and strategic priorities for the year ahead. He explained that this annual outreach aligns with the County’s performance review and strategic planning process, which is updated yearly based on commissioner direction and community input. The top three priorities set by the Board of County Commissioners are services for seniors, behavioral health, and infrastructure. Brown noted the County’s strong financial standing, with a structurally balanced budget, an improved bond rating from Moody’s, successful collective bargaining agreements for all employee associations (each now four years in length), and a clean audit. However, he acknowledged slowing sales tax revenues and increasing expenses as fiscal headwinds, prompting greater emphasis on expense control. He highlighted recent achievements in housing and behavioral health, including the completion of the Cares Campus shelter, development of 50 supportive housing units funded by $20 million in state aid, expansion of the Crossroads recovery program to include families, and the upcoming Washoe Behavioral Health Center at the former West Hills Hospital. Brown emphasized a growing focus on supportive housing rather than new shelters, along with continued investments in mental health infrastructure, such as implementing the Sequential Intercept Model for treatment of justice-involved individuals. On the innovation front, he shared successes in conducting three elections in 2024 by expanding the Registrar of Voters’ office from six to nearly 20 staff, adopting a new statewide election management system (“NOVA”), and appointing Andrew McDonald as the new registrar. The County also launched new tools like Open Checkbook for fiscal transparency, Development Hub for tracking local projects, eComment for public participation, and Wordly, an AI-powered live translation service improving accessibility. Brown reaffirmed that the Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) are here to stay, though there may be changes to boundaries or structure. He also shared updates on the regional computer-aided dispatch system set for completion in September, which will unify emergency response across jurisdictions and encourage operational harmony between agencies. Washoe County is also coordinating with the state and private providers on a $48 million broadband expansion across underserved areas, with providers including AT&T, Sky Fiber, and Amazon. Looking ahead, the County will focus on emergency evacuation planning, FEMA floodplain updates, leveraging opioid settlement funds for substance use treatment, and exploring revenue-generating partnerships, such as downtown redevelopment involving county-owned properties. Brown concluded with a commitment to continued transparency and innovation while addressing regional challenges in infrastructure, housing, public health, and emergency preparedness.

Barbara Fenne raised concerns about fire risk in Mogul and surrounding areas due to overgrown brush on properties owned by HOAs and developers, such as Toll Brothers. She emphasized the difficulty in determining responsibility for maintaining these lands, which has contributed to insurance challenges for residents in high-risk zones. She also highlighted the lack of sufficient evacuation routes in newer developments, warning that two exits are not enough for densely populated areas, especially during emergencies. County Manager Eric Brown acknowledged the issue, noted that responsibility lies with property owners, and committed to following up with Truckee Meadows Fire and Planning staff. He assured that fire risk is a growing focus for planning and development teams and that these concerns are not being ignored.

Cameron Kramlich expressed concern about a major new development in Verdi that appears to have only one road in and out, which could pose a serious safety risk during a fire or other emergency. He suggested that an evacuation route be added and asked whether a development meeting had been held. County Manager Eric Brown responded that he was not aware of a meeting but would look into it and work to ensure community members like Cameron are connected when such meetings take place.

Mac Rossi praised Washoe County’s development review process, implemented two years ago, which requires all relevant parties to come to an agreement before a project moves forward. He noted it’s an effective program and expressed disappointment that the City of Reno hasn’t fully adopted a similar approach, despite some initial efforts.

Robert Laurie also expressed his appreciation for Manager Eric Brown.

Mac Rossi highlighted his own positive experiences with county programs, including the Leadership Academy and a ride-along and dispatch observation with the Sheriff’s Office. He expressed support for the county’s work on senior services and behavioral health, particularly efforts at the West Hills facility, and asked how opioid settlement funds are being used. Manager Brown explained that the funds are being distributed based on an action plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners, with RFPs issued to nonprofits and treatment providers. An update on the progress of these funded initiatives will be shared this summer. Rossi also raised a broader question about whether national debates around programs from the President’s administration are influencing or complicating county diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Brown clarified that Washoe County is not pursuing controversial DEI initiatives but is focused on compliance with federal and state laws—such as ADA accessibility, Title VI language access, and other legally mandated services. Tools like Wordly, which provide language translation, fall under these legal requirements. Brown emphasized that the county has not changed hiring practices to include affirmative action policies. Rossi concluded by encouraging broader outreach to HOAs and communities to raise awareness about CABs and other engagement opportunities, suggesting that more proactive communication could help connect residents with valuable county resources.

1. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RTC) UPCOMING PROJECTS -**

Paul Nelson from RTC presented a comprehensive update on regional transportation services, projects, and future plans. He began by explaining RTC’s structure, highlighting its board and three core functions: transportation planning, roadway construction, and public transit operations. He reviewed RTC Ride’s growing ridership, with nearly 5.7 million trips in the past year—60% of which are work-related—and emphasized their fully sustainable fleet, including electric and hybrid buses. He detailed their microtransit “FlexRide” service zones, which include areas like Somersett, offering curb-to-curb service in lower-density areas. Nelson also shared details on programs like the Senior Taxi Bucks and Vanpool initiatives, which improve transportation options for seniors, veterans, and commuters. RTC is moving toward a more cashless system, incorporating tap-to-pay and mobile ticketing, and upgrading software to integrate FlexRide and paratransit more efficiently. Planning efforts include the updated 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and the Neighborhood Network Plan, which identifies pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements across 12 neighborhoods. Key completed and upcoming projects include resurfacing Somerset Parkway, replacing the aging Arlington Avenue Bridge (starting May 5), and future replacements of the Sierra Street and Keystone Avenue bridges. Other initiatives involve road preservation, pedestrian safety improvements, and roundabouts at Stoker Avenue and Summit Ridge. Nelson also introduced the "Biggest Little Bike Network," a plan to enhance bike and scooter infrastructure across key downtown corridors. On the regional front, RTC is evaluating alternate routes and even rail service to alleviate congestion between Sparks and the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, with options including a toll road currently under legislative study. He concluded with a budget overview: $253 million in projected revenues (primarily from fuel and sales tax) and $294 million in planned expenditures, funded in part by reserves. Spending priorities include new road projects, transit operations, multimodal preservation, and infrastructure to support growth.

Barbara Fenne raised a safety concern about a hazardous drop-off near the creek at Silver Ranch Road and 4th Street, which is part of a school bus route and frequently used bike path. She described the area’s steep hill, blind curve, and proximity to train tracks, noting at least one serious accident has already occurred. She asked what it would take to install 50 feet of guardrail to prevent further incidents. Paul Nelson responded that he wasn’t sure whether the area fell under RTC, NDOT, or County jurisdiction but offered to follow up directly. He explained that RTC typically works with local partners to identify and implement safety improvements and said this location might qualify for such a program once it’s formally evaluated.

Cameron Kramlich expressed concern about a dangerous intersection near a freeway off-ramp that makes biking feel extremely unsafe, describing it as one of the scariest places he's ridden. He also asked whether RTC is planning for alternative revenue sources as electric vehicle (EV) use rises and fuel tax revenues decline, and whether future bus service might extend to places like Mt. Rose or Incline Village. Paul Nelson acknowledged the intersection concern and shared that RTC had previously piloted a route to Mt. Rose/Incline, but low ridership and steep terrain made it unfeasible. Regarding funding, he said RTC is actively exploring alternatives, including a proposed flat registration fee for EVs to mirror the average fuel tax paid by traditional vehicles. He noted it's a politically sensitive topic and dependent on potential legislation and the Governor’s support.

Barbara Fenne raised concerns about the incomplete bike trail system near Rainbow and Silver Ranch Road. She noted that while parts of the trail are newly built and well-designed, there are significant gaps—especially around the newer developments in Mogul—where the trail simply ends. Paul Nelson agreed that it is particularly hazardous intersection near 4th Street and I-80 where cyclists must navigate a steep hill and cross a freeway off-ramp with fast-moving traffic, calling it a "suicide intersection”.

Bob Laurie asked about RTC’s role in reviewing proposed development projects—specifically whether developers are required to consult with RTC for compatibility with long-range transportation plans, and whether RTC communicates concerns to the approving agency. RTC responded that while they don’t have the authority to approve or deny development projects, they serve in a supportive and advisory capacity to local planning departments. When a project is proposed, RTC reviews it for compatibility with their long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), particularly looking at how the development could impact roadways and traffic patterns. They may also review traffic studies and provide technical input to help local agencies make informed decisions.

Addie asked about the status of a proposed project to realign the Gold Ranch overpass with Tree Lease Lane and add a roundabout, and wanted to know who residents could contact for updates. RTC responded that they were not familiar with the project, as it likely falls under NDOT’s jurisdiction rather than RTC's. They suggested visiting the NDOT website to find information about the broader bridge replacement project along I-80, which may include this realignment.

Mac Rossi expressed appreciation to RTC for their persistence and collaboration on long-standing projects he's advocated for, including improvements at Keystone and McCarran and a bus stop on 7th Street, which he noted took years but are finally being completed. He also jokingly suggested blocking electric vehicles from using county roads unless they pay road taxes, pointing out the unfairness of traditional vehicle owners bearing the cost of road maintenance. RTC thanked him for his engagement and clarified the timing of an upcoming meeting.

Bob Laurie complimented the resurfacing project in the Sierra Canyon area of Somerset, calling it well-executed with minimal confusion and giving high praise to the contractor, rating the work at least an A-minus. RTC staff thanked him and acknowledged it as a successful project.

1. **BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS’REQUESTS/DISCUSSION –**

Barbara Fenne raised concerns about ongoing construction at the curve on 4th Street near Silver Ranch Road, where large equipment has moved in to build a booster station to serve the Sunset Bluffs subdivision. She noted the area may be hazardous for drivers and sought clarification on which agency is responsible, suggesting it might be the County.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT -**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.