

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

TUESDAY

12:30 P.M.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

PRESENT:

**Bob Larkin, Chairman**  
**Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairman**  
**Jim Galloway, Commissioner**  
**Kitty Jung, Commissioner**

**Amy Harvey, County Clerk**  
**Katy Simon, County Manager**  
**Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel**

ABSENT:

**David Humke, Commissioner**

The Board convened in special session at 12:37 p.m. in the Health Department Conference Rooms A and B, Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

Katy Simon, County Manager, stated the Chairman and Board of County Commissioners intend that their proceedings should demonstrate the highest levels of decorum, civic responsibility, efficiency and mutual respect between citizens and their government. The Board respects the right of citizens to present differing opinions and views, even criticism, but our democracy cannot function effectively in an environment of personal attacks, slander, threats of violence, and willful disruption. To that end, the Nevada Open Meeting Law provides the authority for the Chair of a public body to maintain the decorum and to declare a recess if needed to remove any person who is disrupting the meeting, and notice is hereby provided of the intent of this body to preserve the decorum and remove anyone who disrupts the proceedings.

**08-993            AGENDA ITEM 3**

**Agenda Subject: “Approval of the agenda for the Board of County Commissioners’ special meeting of September 16, 2008.”**

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Humke absent, Chairman Larkin ordered that the agenda for the September 16, 2008 special meeting be approved.

**08-994            AGENDA ITEM 4**

**Agenda Subject: “Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to two minutes per person and may pertain to matters on and off the Commission agenda. The Commission will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to two minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission as a whole.”**

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**08-995            AGENDA ITEM 5**

**Agenda Subject: “Overview and discussion of the Specialty Courts of the Second Judicial District Court: to include, Adult Drug Court/Diversion Court, Mental Health Court, Felony DUI Court, Family Drug Court and Juvenile Drug Court; and, possible direction to staff. (All Commission Districts.)”**

Chief Judge Connie Steinheimer remarked the judges were thankful to the Board for their support because the innovation of the Specialty Courts were unique. She reviewed the funding sources and said there was approximately \$768,000 last year in the budget from AB29, which was from assessments placed on misdemeanors. Judge Steinheimer stated the courts had been successful in collecting client fees, which went back into the system. She shared that the Specialty Courts were continually receiving national recognition and were a training site for the National Judicial College. She noted that Senior Judge Archie Blake was the only judge to receive a PhD in Judicial Studies with an emphasis in Specialty Courts.

Judge Steinheimer introduced Senior Judge Peter Breen, Judge Francis Doherty, Master Buffy Dreiling and Master Victoria VanMeter who conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk, highlighting the Specialty Courts of the Second Judicial District Court including Family Drug Court, Adult Drug Court/Diversion Court, Mental Health Court, Felony DUI Court and Juvenile Drug Court.

Judge Breen explained the divisions of the Criminal Specialty Courts including Adult Drug Court, Diversion Court, Prison Re-Entry Court, Mental Health Court and Felony DUI Court. He said it had been proved that Drug Court was the most successful way in dealing with addicts within the Criminal Justice System to reduce the burden on local services. He explained the essence of the Drug Court Program was counseling, testing to verify abstinence from drugs, life skills, accountability, sanctions and incentives, all centralized in the hands of a judge who had the power to take immediate action to change behavior. Judge Breen commented statistics showed that if nothing was done within five years to address an addiction, 80 percent of most offenders would reoffend.

Commissioner Galloway asked if those statistics were national. Judge Breen explained all of the statistics shown were from the National Drug Court Institute, except the statistics concerning the local drug court. Commissioner Galloway asked if the cases involved other things besides alcohol and, were alcohol addictions processed the same. Judge Breen replied the initial assessment for Drug Court was for controlled substances; however, some people could be placed into Diversion Court if their problem was alcohol then possibly be sent to Adult Drug Court. He explained upon successful graduation of Diversion Court the charges would be dismissed and the record sealed.

Chairman Larkin asked how many people had been through the Adult Drug program since 1993. Judge Breen stated to find the exact number he would need to do some research, but felt it was approximately 3,500 participants. Judge Breen introduced several members of the Adult Drug Court and Mental Health Court teams including members from the Alternate Public Defender's Office, Bristlecone Family Resources, Case Management Services, State Parole and Probation, PreTrial Services, Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services and the Specialty Courts staff.

Judge Breen stated in 2001 the Life Skills program was developed to offer clients financial management, employment development and education. He introduced several graduates from the Adult Drug Court and Mental Health programs who spoke on the positive impact the Specialty Courts had on their lives and their family life.

Family Court Judge Francis Doherty remarked there were not many judges who had the vision to see beyond the walls of the courtroom and go into the community to reach people who needed the most help. She stated Judge Breen was one of those individuals and commended him for the outstanding work and devotion he brought to the Specialty Courts.

Judge Doherty introduced Master Buffy Dreiling who discussed the distinctions between Family Drug Court and Adult Drug Court and said there were two Family Drug Court programs; STEP 2, a mothers-only program, and Bristlecone Family Resources. Master Dreiling explained the Mentor Mom program assisted with recruitment and retention of Family Drug Court participants through support, assistance and information. She said the Foster Grandparent program offered support services, GED preparation, family mentoring, assistance in securing spiritual resources and assistance in accessing community resources. Kitty Rowe, Foster Grandparent, reported on the "Cow Bus" that traveled throughout the community to provide free preschool activities for children ages three to five. She said that women in the Drug Court program needed a person who was not part of the system and would befriend them and give them a sense of direction and purpose.

Master Dreiling indicated TRU VISTA was a community partner that contributed support services, provided funding for families and children, had access to a scholarship fund to provide support for special activities for children such as summer programs, field trips, sports uniforms, etc., and had access to funds for critical family needs such as food, clothing, diapers, furniture, dental care, glasses and payment for rent.

Tina Ovara, Mentor Mom, stated she was a Family Drug Court graduate and explained how the Drug Court helped her and her family with life skills. She was grateful for the opportunity to give back to the program.

Master Dreiling concluded by stating the challenges of the Family Drug Court were affordable housing, access to mental health treatment, employment opportunities and transportation. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak about the program and stated she was proud of the entire Drug Court team.

Master Victoria VanMeter, Juvenile Drug Court, highlighted the Juvenile Drug Court's goals and objectives and said the population of the Juvenile Drug Court ranged in ages from 14 to 17. She said the Juvenile Drug Court team consisted of the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Quest Counseling, Probation Officers, PreTrial Services, a Juvenile Services Psychologist and a School District representative. Master VanMeter said the Juvenile Drug Court worked to keep children from becoming incarcerated and from possibly entering the adult system. She said the Drug Court team learned that juveniles in the Juvenile Drug Court were not small adults, but that there were biochemical distinctions between adults and juveniles that made an adolescent engage in significantly riskier behaviors with their chemical use and in obtaining those chemicals. She said another key difference between Juvenile and Adult Drug Court was that parent(s) and the entire family had to be involved to achieve stability in the home or the juvenile could possibly not be successful in the program.

Master VanMeter explained the Program components were a nine-month program using multi-dimensional family therapy in four phases with a minimum of six hours of weekly counseling. It also involved weekly court appearances, numerous drug/alcohol testing and daily school attendance. She noted the challenges of the Juvenile Drug Court were insufficient inpatient treatment options, co-occurring disorders, increased gang involvement, affordable housing and transportation. Master VanMeter remarked 87 percent of the graduates had not committed future crimes.

Urena Cortez Lopez, Juvenile Drug Court participant, said the program helped her get her life back on track, made her closer to her family and brought her family together. She stated she was thankful for the opportunity and was confident she would graduate from the program.

Commissioner Galloway asked for clarification concerning multi-dimensional family counseling. Master VanMeter replied the counseling consisted of parents, the participant and siblings. Commissioner Galloway asked what the motivation was for the participants and was their probation conditional on their participation. Master VanMeter explained the participants were already on probation and added the motivation was that the Drug Court cared about the participants and offered structure and confidence.

Commissioner Galloway asked if there would be a gang intervention program. Master VanMeter replied successful graduates who reentered an environment where gangs were prevalent sometimes became re-involved. She said, unfortunately, it was realized that Juvenile Drug Court would not work for the gang-related juveniles.

On behalf of the Second Judicial District Court, Judge Steinheimer thanked the Board for their time and support.

Chairman Larkin thanked the Courts and participants and said this was how communication issues were bridged and he looked forward to having the Juvenile Drug Court return and perhaps discuss the gang component. He requested the number of participants who had been through the Adult Drug Court since its inception and, if there was information regarding a national longitudinal study that tracked individuals from inception to years after the program. Judge Breen replied the subject had arisen and added the safe point was five years. Judge Steinheimer believed that the requested information could be compiled from 2000 forward.

\* \* \* \* \*

**3:00 p.m.** There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Jung, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Humke absent, Chairman Larkin ordered that the meeting be adjourned.

---

**ROBERT LARKIN**, Chairman  
Washoe County Commission

**ATTEST:**

---

**AMY HARVEY**, County Clerk  
and Clerk of the Board of  
County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:  
Stacy Gonzales, Deputy County Clerk*