

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

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

FEBRUARY 16, 2021

PRESENT:

**Bob Lucey, Chair**  
**Vaughn Hartung, Vice Chair**  
**Kitty Jung, Commissioner (via telephone)**  
**Alexis Hill, Commissioner**  
**Jeanne Herman, Commissioner**  
  
**Janis Galassini, County Clerk**  
**Eric Brown, County Manager**  
**Nathan Edwards, Deputy District Attorney (via Zoom)**

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:00 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Chambers of the 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:

**21-0115      AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.**

Ms. Carol Burns referenced the Master Plan dated December 24, 2018 and expressed concern about weed abatement and litter accumulating in ditches in Sun Valley. She asked that these issues receive attention.

Ms. Melanie Sutton read a quote by Ben Franklin and alleged mask requirements were dividing people. She expressed frustration about closures, masks, and Commissioners having side conversations. She demanded a hearing without a mask requirement.

Mr. Nicholas St. Jon reviewed some of the COVID-19 (C19) treatments administered by a doctor in Detroit, which he believed should be implemented by the Health District. He claimed the Food and Drug Administration made the doctor take down his published results. He requested an agenda item to review five specific C19 protocols.

Ms. Cindy Martinez went over the results of her research into campaign contributions for each Commissioner. She expressed concern about people getting elected based on gender, the desire to vaccinate children before opening schools, and coronavirus restrictions. She requested a hearing about the C19 response.

Mr. James Benthin reviewed his handout, a copy of which was distributed to the Board and placed on file by County Clerk Jan Galassini. He stated the C19 shot did not contain a viral component to trigger an immune reaction and did not reduce

transmission. He asked for a hearing to discuss treatments and lockdown procedures.

Mrs. Cassidy Pocock spoke about the treatment potential of Ivermectin, adding she wished to see this treatment added to those being used in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. She mentioned the drug was well-studied, having been used in humans for more than 30 years. She requested an agenda item to discuss implementing five specific C19 protocols.

Ms. Galassini indicated emails from Ms. Elise Weatherly and several Republican Women's Clubs were received and would be placed on the record.

Via the Zoom app, Ms. Annemarie Grant applauded public commenters for calling out inappropriate behavior. She spoke about the Washoe County Sheriff's Office's presentation to the Nevada Legislature and urged members of the public air their grievances to the Legislature as well. She expressed frustration about the way she was greeted when she visited the jail and a lack of response to emails. She played audio of her brother at the jail.

Mr. Dan Purdy, via Zoom, alleged a Sheriff's Office presenter lied to the Legislature about police officer deaths. He expressed concern about sheriffs drinking in their cars and the Commissioners being beholden to their political donors. He encouraged the public to vote any Commissioners they were unhappy with out of office.

Mr. Charles Stockford praised the County for cleaning up Quartz Lane but said conditions were now back to how they were before the cleanup. He requested Code Enforcement visit the area, saying a motor home was recently hit by a truck and cars without engines were sitting on the street. He wanted something to be done about it.

**21-0116**      **AGENDA ITEM 4** Commissioners'/County Manager's announcements, reports and updates to include boards and commissions updates, requests for information or topics for future agendas.

Commissioner Herman repeated a prior request about placing a Washoe County 2nd Amendment Sanctuary resolution on an agenda as several Nevada counties had already done so. Regarding the public comment heard at this meeting, she requested an agenda item to discuss the implementation of some COVID-19 (C19) protocols. She stated she wanted the County to be opened and businesses be allowed to recover what they lost over the prior ten months. She asked why a completed conditional letter of map revision for the Prado North development was never completed. Regarding speeding concerns from communities in Lemmon Valley and Verdi, she indicated she was willing to donate discretionary funds for signs and speed bumps once she knew the price. She wondered why all emails were not read into the record, saying she felt they should be.

Vice Chair Hartung mentioned a previous discussion he had with Manager Brown about assembling a forum of State decision makers to discuss C19 treatments. He thought it would be a way for everyone's voices to be heard. He wished to receive an update

from the Sheriff's Office about ditch cleanup, noting it had been done by inmate work crews in the past. He emphasized the issue of speeding in Spanish Springs, saying he was trying to obtain funding for speed bumps and other safety measures.

Chair Lucey reminded everyone in Chambers this was a business meeting and masks were required in Chambers.

Commissioner Jung asked County Manager Eric Brown to follow up with Ms. Carol Burns and Mr. Charles Stockford regarding their public comments. She requested an update in writing about the County's and residents' responsibilities as it pertained to the current weed abatement policy. She asked Mr. Brown to come up with permanent solutions for Quartz Lane.

Chair Lucey noted Governor Steve Sisolak passed a directive the prior week increasing statewide occupancy levels from 25 to up to 50 percent as of February 15. Additionally, the authority for C19 response would be transitioned back to local authorities 45 days after that. He mentioned the County would continue to work with the State to open businesses in the community. Of the 6,000 businesses in the unincorporated County, only 2,000 were actual storefronts or retail locations; the rest were home businesses. There were an additional 35,000 businesses in Reno and Sparks. He acknowledged the frustration of public commenters but underscored he could not change mask mandates. He added many businesses wanted their customers to wear masks to protect all patrons. Until things were changed at the State level, the County could not affect the type of change some people wanted. He hoped to have a better understanding by May 1 or sooner, adding the Health District would update the Board about vaccinations later in the meeting. He reiterated Commissioner Jung's requests about Quartz Lane and ditch cleaning.

**21-0117**      **AGENDA ITEM 5** Appearance by District Health Officer Kevin Dick and Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro to provide an update on vaccination distribution within Washoe County and an overview of vaccination prioritization lanes and groups as established by the State of Nevada COVID-19 Vaccine Playbook Version 3. (All Commission Districts.)

District Health Officer Kevin Dick conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: COVID-19 Vaccination; How COVID-19 Vaccines Work; COVID-19 Vaccine; Vaccine Allocation and Distribution; Initial Distribution Approach; Tier 1; Revised Guidance; Standardized Criteria for Prioritization; Prioritization Lanes; Points of Dispensing (POD); and Vaccine Dispensed.

Mr. Dick stated the first two vaccines were developed rapidly, went through a review process by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and had a 95 percent efficacy rate. These would be key to getting back to normal society. He admitted the vaccine would take a while to roll out and masks and social distancing still needed to be employed in the interim. Even people who were vaccinated could become infected given the number of different exposure situations they could encounter. He explained these vaccines did not

contain the complete virus, so it did not cause the infection. Instead, they replicated a spike protein which, because it did not belong there, would cause the body to develop the antibodies to attack it. He mentioned the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was more challenging because it required an ultra-cold freezer.

Mr. Dick noted the Washoe County Health District (WCHD) had limited information about the amount of vaccine that would be available in the future. They had the capacity to distribute more vaccine than they currently were, though they experienced a 23 percent increase in the number of vaccines they received the prior week versus the week before that. The shortage of vaccines caused the WCHD to take into account the ethics of who should get vaccinated. He reviewed the Tier 1 distribution plan as it had been determined based on the initial Nevada COVID-19 (C19) Vaccination Playbook. Noting the current playbook was the third version, he said the Advisory Group on Immunization Practices recommended prioritizing older populations and frontline essential workers; those changes were implemented in January 2021. Individuals who experienced unavoidable contact with people exposed to C19 were prioritized, as were those who had sustained contact with them. People whose jobs contributed to the overall safety of the community were also prioritized.

Mr. Dick said the Livestock Events Center (LEC) immunization site was currently vaccinating the frontline/essential workforce, as well as prioritizing members of the general population over 70 years old. As an example of balancing these two prioritization lanes, he commented more of the 70-year-old demographic started receiving vaccines once the majority of K-12 teachers received theirs. He indicated they were currently vaccinating frontline staff in community support services. He listed the agencies who helped at the LEC, saying around 335 people per hour were being served there. Among the community partners who provided strike teams were local fire agencies and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority, the latter of which were providing vaccines to homebound citizens. Noting a lag in State vaccination reporting, he provided more current statistics than what appeared in the presentation: to date, the WCHD administered 36,462 vaccines, including 13,446 second doses.

Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro continued the presentation via the Zoom app by reviewing slides with the following titles: Ethical considerations set by the State (2 slides); WC Specifics; Frequently Asked Questions; and Questions. He remarked roughly 66 percent of the C19 deaths in Washoe County happened to individuals who were 70 years or older. He felt the WCHD did a good job of reaching out to people in the different groups of frontline workers listed in the Prioritization Lanes slide. Given the difficulty in establishing how many people fell into that group, he estimated it could take a couple more weeks before moving on to essential public transportation workers. He thought it was important not to jump ahead to other groups since there was a shortage of vaccines. He mentioned that a questionnaire distributed to County employees would be used to determine who could work from home and who had no choice but to get vaccinated. Additionally, Human Resources staff worked with him to categorize the County workforce to meet the standards set by the State with the goal of vaccinating those who were most at

risk of infection due to the nature of their work. This was being done by all local jurisdictions to ensure that WCHD partners were not receiving preferential treatment.

Mr. Solaro indicated [www.covid19washoevaccine.com](http://www.covid19washoevaccine.com) showed which groups were currently being vaccinated, though this was difficult without knowing the exact number of employees who belonged in each category across all County businesses and because of the vaccine shortage. He stated masks and social distancing would need to continue even after people were vaccinated to offer the best protection.

Commissioner Hill praised Mr. Dick's staff for helping her answer her constituents' questions. She asked whether there was a concern about seniors in the community not having access to the vaccines. Mr. Dick remarked seniors could get on a waitlist for vaccines either through the website or the call center at 775-328-2427. More than 6,000 seniors received invitations to schedule their vaccines and staff was contacting more than 2,000 seniors by phone. He said part of the messaging encouraged citizens to look out for people over 70 who needed help with the process.

Vice Chair Hartung expressed concern that school bus drivers had been inoculated but public transport bus drivers had not. Mr. Dick responded the WCHD had already started vaccinating some of those drivers because many provided services to elderly, homeless, and disabled populations. He thanked the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for providing a bus to keep seniors who had just received their vaccinations warm.

Commissioner Jung requested an update from the RTC regarding how it carried out federal directives since they utilized federal funds.

Chair Lucey asked whether testing was still being performed at vaccination sites, to which Mr. Dick replied the LEC was used to conduct testing three times a week. He was uncertain whether Renown was testing, but Walgreens pharmacies were. People were not signing up for testing like they had in the past. He noted the LEC facility was used both for testing and vaccine distribution, but one or two of the lanes were dedicated to testing. Chair Lucey inquired about how third-party vaccine vendors received vaccines. Mr. Dick responded they received their vaccine allocation through the State, though Walmart received vaccines the prior week directly from the federal government. He confirmed Chair Lucey's assertion that around 45,000 vaccines had been distributed in Washoe County from third parties. The State would provide updated numbers the following day, though it had experienced difficulty extracting demographic information. The Chair agreed that information would be useful when discussing vaccine equity.

Chair Lucey asked whether Washoe County's C19 website provided links to third-party provider websites. Mr. Dick stated the WCHD was focused on identifying zip codes associated with disadvantaged populations when reaching out to schedule elderly citizens for vaccines. He mentioned the seniors tab on the website provided contact information and links to all vaccine locations. Replying to Chair Lucey's inquiry about a breakdown of vaccine distribution, Mr. Dick said the WCHD varied from a 60/40

breakdown to an even split; the bigger focus was to ensure vaccines were moving through both lanes.

Commissioner Hill commended Mr. Solaro and his team for being transparent in their plans to vaccinate County staff so as to be equitable with vaccines. Chair Lucey addressed the consternation in the media about elected officials getting vaccinated early by saying nobody on the dais had received a vaccine yet and Commissioners would wait until more vulnerable members of the community received theirs first.

County Clerk Jan Galassini noted the PowerPoint presentation was available on the County website.

There was no public comment or action taken on this item.

**21-0118**      **AGENDA ITEM 6** Appearance by Library Director Jeff Scott to provide an update on Washoe County library activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Library Director Jeff Scott conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Library Closure March 2020; Physical Services Plan April 2020; Library Core Services May 2020; Safety Protocols May 2020; Grab and Go Services June 2020; 2020 Accomplishments; 2021 Plans; and 2021 Needs.

Mr. Scott confirmed libraries closed in March of 2020 in accordance with guidance from the Governor and the County. He said the County provided him with cloud-based programs like Office 365 and Teams, which enabled Library staff to share information and make decisions. They determined virtual events were safe and would allow for the continuity of service. Virtual story times allowed for an increase in participation and publishers relaxed copyright requirements, enabling Library staff to read stories online. Additionally, reference staff used Teams to answer questions from citizens. He indicated virtual book checkouts increased 200 percent in March and April. He spoke about a program where any child enrolled in Infinite Campus would automatically receive a digital library card and receive updates about library services. The Library department worked with libraries in other counties to establish digital library cards.

Mr. Scott remarked it was difficult to make an initial plan because guidance and information were updated frequently. He noted the Library's budget was cut 40 percent during the recession and had not yet been restored. As such, many services were automated over the prior few years. He stated staffs of three employees needed to manage anywhere from an 8,000 square foot building to a 60,000 square foot building without the libraries becoming a community spread point. Roughly one-third of Library staff was listed as vulnerable due to age or pre-existing conditions. Because of this concern and issues prior to COVID-19 (C19), his priority was on a reopening that was safe for staff and the public.

Mr. Scott discussed some of the challenges of enforcing safety protocols in the libraries with limited staff. The easiest way for libraries to provide service was by allowing access to books, initially with grab-and-go and drive-through services, and later with walkup services. He indicated an Institute of Museum and Library Services study focused on how long C19 remained on books. It found trace amounts of C19 remained for up to five days, so returned books were quarantined for that amount of time. He said drive-through windows opened in June at the South Valleys and Northwest Reno facilities, which continued to be the busiest locations. The grab-and-go system allowed people to enter libraries while wearing masks; bandanas and masks were made available at all locations. This limited exposure due to mask compliance and social distancing modeled the type of behavior that would be needed when libraries fully reopened. He indicated 20,000 holds on books were placed when the libraries opened in January 2021, and the libraries experienced about four times the number of book checkouts after reopening than during a typical full day. After two weeks, things began reverting to normal. He said 58 percent of voters voted at libraries, with the Spanish Springs Library leading the way by handling 11,000 voters; the South Valleys Library was third.

Mr. Scott stated libraries were again closed in November in response to the Governor's order. This was also when staff members started encountering more C19 exposures and there was a lag in testing. While there was only one C19 diagnosis among Library staff, he noted, most of the disruption came from quarantining as a result of potential exposures. He told a story about a school district in Rhode Island which faced a similar situation. He felt the decision to go virtual was the right one, and it opened up the opportunity for 36 members of Library staff to help the Washoe County Health District (WCHD) with C19 tracing; there had only been nine contract tracers before this. He explained how additional tracers increased the operational ability for the Washoe County School District (WCSD). He believed this helped drive down the C19 numbers in the community.

Mr. Scott said the Jail Library Services Grant was used to provide library services for the detention center with cooperation from the recently hired detention center library aide. The initial cost was \$10,000, with an additional \$2,000 allocated to sustain the collection. He praised his staff for their work and creative thinking over the prior year. He explained one third of his staff was working with the WCHD, one third was helping with virtual services, and the remainder was concentrating on grab-and-go services. He spoke about a plan to allow children to browse books at the Incline Village Library. He expressed optimism that libraries could fully reopen sometime during the year.

Chair Lucey thanked and praised Library staff for their willingness to help with contract tracing. He wondered about the April reopening date given the Governor's recent move to increase building capacity to 50 percent and asked whether a tiered opening plan would be utilized. Mr. Scott pointed out the old reopening plan was no longer valid, and the new plan would address those concerns. The first step would be to increase hold pickup hours, followed by expanding computer internet access and browsing services. Chair Lucey expected the need for contact tracers to decrease and that, along with automated handling, should allow more staff in the libraries. He inquired about potentially

providing library services for the families at Our Place. Mr. Scott replied they hoped to install a library there and he would speak with Human Services Director Amber Howell.

Citing emails he received from citizens frustrated with long lines, Vice Chair Hartung expressed his desire for libraries to open soon while maintaining drive-through services for those who did not wish to enter. Mr. Scott indicated wait times had decreased since the hold list had been addressed. Vice Chair Hartung mentioned he saw long lines at the Spanish Springs Library, which Mr. Scott admitted likely occurred during the third week of reopening. A third day had been added to the Spanish Springs Library, which he thought would help.

County Manager Eric Brown lauded Mr. Scott and his team, saying their support greatly helped enable the reopening of WCSD schools. The Manager noted the Library department embraced technology as a way of providing services under difficult conditions, adding that Tech Services supported the libraries. He acknowledged the difficulty Mr. Scott faced in freezing 11 positions during the pandemic

Commissioner Hill stated libraries were an amazing resource in the community and she could not wait for them to reopen. She hoped to receive federal funds for local governments and encouraged Mr. Scott to consider other methods of touch-free infrastructure.

Commissioner Jung pointed out Chair Lucey was instrumental in garnering enthusiasm for people to change positions in order for schools to reopen, thus allowing adults to pursue their personal economic development. She praised librarians, saying they possessed the vital skill of reading through data to efficiently conduct contract tracing. Without this, schools might not have been able to open. She remarked Mr. Brown and Chair Lucey recognized things were prohibitive without schools and commended them for focusing on this. She praised Mr. Scott for his leadership and the weekly updates he sent to the Commissioners. She acknowledged the Library Board of Trustees for reviewing the data and best practices to keep everyone safe.

County Clerk Jan Galassini noted the PowerPoint presentation was available on the County website.

There was no public comment or action taken on this item.

#### **DONATIONS – AGENDA ITEMS 7A1 THROUGH 8E**

**21-0119**      **AGENDA ITEM 7A1**      Recommendation to accept donations of [\$3,386.57] from various businesses, organizations and individuals for Regional Parks and Open Space programs and facilities; and direct the Comptroller’s Office to make the appropriate budget amendments. Community Services. (All Commission Districts.)

**21-0120**      **AGENDA ITEM 7A2**      Recommendation to accept a donation in the

amount of [\$372,800.00] from the Vera Silberstein Gift Trust for improvements to Bowers Mansion; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the appropriate budget amendments. Community Services. (All Commission Districts.)

- 21-0121**      **AGENDA ITEM 7B1** Recommendation to: (1) acknowledge various items donated totaling an estimated market value of [\$26,760.00]; (2) accept a donation from Nevada Retina Associates to Washoe County Human Services Agency in support of children in foster care in the amount of [\$3,500.00]; (3) accept donations from various donors to Washoe County Human Services Agency to support welfare activities in the amount of [\$11,327.90] retroactive for the period November 21, 2020 through January 20, 2021; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments. Human Services Agency. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0122**      **AGENDA ITEM 7B2** Recommendation to: (1) acknowledge various items donated totaling an estimated market value of [\$4,619.16]; and (2) accept donations to the Human Services Agency - Senior Services Fund to support operations of the Washoe County Senior Centers in the amount of [\$4,570.00] retroactive for the period November 21, 2020 through January 20, 2021; and direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments. Human Services Agency. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0123**      **AGENDA ITEM 7C1** Recommendation to accept a donation of two K9 Storm vests carriers and ballistic panels for K9s valued at [\$6,258.00] from Washoe County K9 Partners, to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0124**      **AGENDA ITEM 7C2** Recommendation to accept a donation of a K-9 dog valued at [\$9,000.00] from Washoe County K9 Partners, to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office K-9 Unit. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts.)

On the call for public comment and via the Zoom app, Ms. Annemarie Grant expressed reservation about police dogs, making note of lawsuits that had to be paid as a result of police dog attacks. She thought police officers could not always control the dogs, and she opposed receipt of this donation.

Chair Lucey thanked all donors because these donations were helpful to the continued service in the community.

On motion by Vice Chair Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Items 7A1 through 7C2 be accepted.

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – 8A THROUGH 8E**

- 21-0125**      **8A** Acknowledge the communications and reports received by the Clerk on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, including the following categories: Monthly Statements/Reports. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0126**      **8B** Recommendation to 1) approve roll change requests, pursuant to NRS 361.765 and/or NRS 361.768, for errors discovered on the 2016/2017, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 secured and unsecured tax rolls 2) authorize Chair to execute the changes described in Exhibits A and B and 3) direct the Washoe County Treasurer to correct the error(s). [Cumulative amount of decrease to all taxing entities \$37,552.64]. Assessor. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0127**      **8C** Recommendation to approve budget amendments totaling an increase of [\$4,950.00] in both revenue and expense to the FY21 Burning Man Project Donation account and direct the Comptroller's office to make the appropriate budget amendments. Health District. (All Commission Districts.)
- 21-0128**      **8D** Recommendation to approve Commission District Special Fund disbursement in the amount of [\$10,000] for Fiscal Year 2020-2021; District 2 Commissioner Bob Lucey recommends a [\$10,000] grant to the Washoe County Roads Fund to support a portion of the purchase of one cattle/horse guard to be installed in Hidden Valley, specifically on E. Hidden Valley/Desert Way to assist in keeping feral horses out of the neighborhood and off of the Washoe County roadways; approve Resolution necessary for same; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget appropriation transfers. Manager's Office. (Commission District 2.)
- 21-0129**      **8E** Discussion and possible approval of a settlement of claim number 2021123 involving Washoe County and Joseph Eberle for an amount not to exceed [\$35,000], for car rental fees, storage fees and vehicle replacement. Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)

On the call for public comment and via the Zoom app, Ms. Annemarie Grant expressed concern that Agenda Item 8E was on the Consent Agenda and that taxpayers needed to pay for it. She opposed the item.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Vice Chair Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 8A through 8E be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 8A through 8E are attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

**21-0130**      **AGENDA ITEM 9** Recommended that the Board of County Commissioners acknowledge and accept the first Regional Animal Services Advisory Board Periodic Report as presented for FY 17/18 and FY 18/19. Animal Services. (All Commission Districts.).

Via the Zoom app, Regional Animal Services (RAS) Director Shyanne Schull noted Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr was present to speak as Chair of the Animal Services Advisory Board. Ms. Schull conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Animal Services Advisory Board (ASAB); Quarterly Meetings; Animals Impounded by WCRAS; Animal Outcomes; Animals Returned to Owner; Returned to Owner in Field; Field Service Calls; Progressive and Positive Efforts; WCRAS Budget (2 slides); Strategic Objectives; Trap-Neuter-Return Cat Program; Washoe County Code Updates; 2021 Legislative Priorities (2 slides); Dog Parker; Recommendations to County Commissioners; and Long Term Goals.

Ms. Schull explained the ASAB was formed in 2016 by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to allow for community involvement, provide for open dialogue with the BCC, explore recommendations and goals, and create a forum for updates relative to animal services. Occasionally the ASAB would make recommendations and request special projects and research. She noted Animals Services took in stray and lost animals, animals seized for cruelty, and those pending investigation; on average they took in 13,000 animals annually. She pointed out RAS typically returned over 40 percent of living animals to their homes, significantly higher than the national average. As such, many agencies reached out to RAS to learn the key elements of their return home program. She stated an interlocal agreement with the Nevada Humane Society (NHS) allowed RAS to transfer any animals not returned to their owners within a five-day waiting period to the NHS for adoption. RAS worked with more than 50 other rescue groups for animals not taken by the NHS. She added animals classified as dead were generally sick or injured when impounded, though some were pronounced dead upon birth.

Ms. Schull credited the free microchip program, approved by the BCC in 2012, for helping return animals to their homes quickly. Since 2013, RAS implanted 30,000 microchips and she considered the program to be very successful. One statistic they reviewed monthly was the number of animals returned home without impounding them in the shelter. She noted RAS fielded more than 30,000 service calls a year; in addition to the reasons listed on the slide, calls were for law enforcement and fire department requests. Recent efforts to improve the strategy for cruelty case reports and the relationship with regional law enforcement partners resulted in an increase in the number of cruelty cases handled and civil penalties issued. 50 citations were issued in 2015, but 353 were issued in 2019.

Ms. Schull stated RAS was implementing proactive measures to ensure the animals it serviced received the best care. She played a brief video of staff preparing edible enrichment for the animals and shared a story about a regional effort to rescue several deer who fell into a canal.

Ms. Schull indicated the RAS fund was one of Washoe County's special revenue funds, and it was primarily funded by property taxes. She noted the NHS shared costs with RAS by cohabitating in the same building. The budget had increased by around five percent in 2018 due to the collection of additional property taxes and better dog license compliance; 2019 saw an increase of 12 percent. She said expenditures increased by eight percent in 2018, though RAS was still under budget by \$700,000. Expenditures increased by seven percent in 2019, but RAS was still under budget by over \$700,000 that year.

Ms. Schull mentioned the RAS strategic objectives were put in place in 2015. She provided examples of actions taken and programs developed by RAS to fulfill each of its four strategic objectives. In response to a prior request by the ASAB, RAS worked with NHS on a program to spay and neuter, vaccinate, microchip, and release stray and feral cats back into the community. She noted a presentation on the success of the program had been given to the ASAB. She said RAS identified the Washoe County Code section regarding dangerous dogs as one which needed revision since it had not been updated since 2016. Areas regarding enforcement were needed and she hoped amendments would come to the Board in 2021.

Ms. Schull explained dog parkers were temperature-controlled enclosures placed outside businesses which could be utilized by patrons. The RAS put together explanatory letters for each prospective jurisdiction to consider implementation of this program, though no dog parkers had been put into use yet. She spoke about the benefits of utilizing social media to provide timely information and build trust within the community. Many organizations in the animal welfare industry used social media platforms to help with adoptions and reunifications. She conveyed the ASAB's recommendation for RAS to have its own social media platform to share this useful information.

Councilmember Duerr thanked the Board for the opportunity to present, praising Ms. Schull and her staff for their engagement and Commissioner Jung for her ideas. She indicated she had been Chair since the inception of the ASAB and emphasized the high return and adoption rate, which was among the highest in the country. She noted a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic in missing and abused animals, but an increase in the severity of abuse. She commended RAS for addressing serious issues like hoarding, animal rescue, and power outages. She emphasized the hope to pass clarifying legislation and requested help from the Board. Lastly, she asked for the Board's support regarding social media, suggesting giving RAS more freedom to announce events via social media platforms. She lauded the Washoe County employees who worked with RAS.

Commissioner Hill asked whether bill draft requests (BDRs) had been drafted on the items which were legislative priorities. Ms. Schull said BDR language had been drafted but RAS was still seeking sponsors for those BDRs. Government Affairs Liaison Jamie Rodriguez also worked on it. Councilmember Duerr added this type of issue would normally have been submitted by Washoe County, but they made the decision not to draft bills this year. Regarding social media, Commissioner Hill stressed the importance of establishing a strong relationship with RAS so constituents knew exactly where their tax dollars were spent.

Vice Chair Hartung praised Ms. Schull's attentiveness, both in response to concerns he had as well as those of the Cities of Reno and Sparks. Chair Lucey thanked Ms. Schull and Councilmember Duerr for the presentation.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Herman, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be accepted.

**21-0131**      **AGENDA ITEM 10** Recommendation and possible action to create a Commissioner Engagement Program in the Office of the County Manager which will be overseen by the Communications Director, and which will facilitate and administer a commissioner-citizen engagement process utilizing two tracks, Commissioner Outreach and the Community Advisory Boards, both working in unison for balanced and complete community engagement; request and possible action to fund the Program in FY22 with an estimated program budget of \$372,000 to cover personnel, technology and program costs, a portion of which will be offset with revenues already established in the Office of the County Manager. Manager's Office. (All Commission Districts.)

County Manager Eric Brown introduced Communications Director Nancy Leuenhagen and Digital Communications Supervisor Tammy Cummings. It was noted that Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro was available on the Zoom app.

Ms. Leuenhagen conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Proposal for Commissioner Support Program; Commission Support Program; Commissioner Support – Two Tracks (2 slides); Program Implementation – Track 1; Sample “Menu” of Engagement Activities; Phase I Program Costs – FY 22; and Next Steps.

Ms. Leuenhagen opined the Commissioner Support Program (CSP) would strengthen relationships with Commissioners' communities and stakeholders. She noted a committee co-chaired by Ms. Cummings worked for several months to prepare the recommendations for this item.

Ms. Cummings said the purpose of the CSP was to support the Commissioners in their efforts to understand and implement effective quality of life enhancements. She acknowledged that each Commissioner district had unique and diverse geographic, development, and service needs, and no single solution for outreach would work. Mr. Solaro added Track 2 would work with Track 1, providing options for each Commissioner to focus their community engagement the way they wanted.

Ms. Cummings stated one question this sought to address was how to understand and respond to the needs of the silent majority. She brought up the discovery of technology that would prioritize extensive open data to understand residents' priorities

and make data-driven decisions. Ms. Leuenhagen noted the program would require \$372,000 in new funding for two new staff members and new technology. Like they did with the Washoe 311 program, they would gather feedback from each Commissioner about what was working in each of their districts.

Commissioner Herman commented reductions in the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) program were the reason she became a Commissioner. She inquired about whether monthly meetings would occur, whether they would still be named citizen advisory boards, and how significant the changes would be. Ms. Leuenhagen said the CSP would work with the Community Services Department (CSD) to provide a bridge with the CABs, which she believed would remain intact. Mr. Solaro felt the program would give each Commissioner a menu of options about how best to work with their community. He indicated what occurred at those meetings and how often they were held would be driven by the Commissioner and the specific district. He acknowledged the historical problem of financing the needs of each individual Commissioner, which was why CABs began to focus more on development. This program would provide an opportunity to understand how each Commissioner wanted to communicate with their districts. He thought it was important that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) ask the Manager to fund the program so staff could gather input to make good decisions.

Commissioner Herman thought this program would be more complicated and expensive than the prior system. Ms. Leuenhagen said staff's current support was lacking in district-specific and technological areas. For example, the district newsletter did not have the ability to incorporate specific jurisdictional messaging, which she hoped to begin with this program.

Vice Chair Hartung asked whether the Commissioners would need to vote on policies, rules, and regulations. Mr. Solaro replied policy issues regarding CABs would need to come back to the Board for discussion. He commented CABs were limited by Open Meeting Law (OML), so all policies would need to be captured in bylaws. Vice Chair Hartung wanted a discussion about a policy prohibiting Commissioners from appointing family members or residents of their houses.

Commissioner Hill remarked Incline Village was home to many jurisdictions, and the community often expressed concern about not knowing what Washoe County was doing. She opined the CAB should continue to allow the community to weigh in on development. Additionally, the program would allow greater interaction with the community, which she felt had been missing. She felt the County could do a better job of talking to and including the community in the decision-making process.

Regarding Vice Chair Hartung's concern about appointing relatives, Commissioner Herman said the specific issue was spurred by a shortage of members and it had been an emergency to fill the seat. The person agreed to come on the CAB only until the seat was filled. Chair Lucey said the issue could be discussed when they worked on policies.

Chair Lucey said he was a private business owner and citizen when he became a Commissioner, and he often felt there was no efficacy in the CAB program. The South Valleys/Washoe Valley CAB specifically did not get information back to the Planning Commission or the BCC in a timely manner. He felt CABs became a forum for public participation, but their concerns were never validated through the deciding bodies. He noted he initially supported the decision to limit the focus of CABs to development, but he found it was not the right decision. He agreed with Commissioner Herman this was where citizen involvement began.

Chair Lucey acknowledged every district faced different geographic challenges and had different community needs. He thought this program would not destroy CABs but instead give them the autonomy to serve their constituents while including additional outreach. He welcomed future discussions about crafting policy and establishing the BCC's goals for CABs, while allowing them to make informed decisions based on citizen input. He recognized there might be many iterations in this program, but it was worth investing the time and effort.

Vice Chair Hartung said he was on a CAB in the 1990s when CABs were the first step in the development process. CAB meetings morphed into community meetings with attendance by the Sheriff's Office and the fire department, but that was not the original intent of CABs. He noted CAB members used to go through an extensive training program overseen by the CSD. He felt the training was essential because current CAB members were not as savvy about things such as meeting management as the ones who received training. He wanted to consider how to train community members to engage in the process in an equitable way.

Commissioner Jung thanked staff for providing multiple tools for Commissioners to use to personalize their approach to interacting with their constituents. She concurred there was no single solution that would work with all constituents. She praised the program as creative and equitable, and thanked Ms. Cummings for recognizing the need for an investment in outreach. The Commissioner opined the program would help Commissioners predict emerging issues rather than reacting to them. She appreciated that the BCC had been heard.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Carol Burns said she was an original member of the Sun Valley CAB, and the CAB originally addressed minor constituent problems and not just major development projects. She thought the BCC was able to help many people that way. She expressed concern about people not being able to attend BCC meetings and a failure to let people know about CAB meetings.

Mr. Patrick Shea, Chair of the North Valleys CAB, said he had not been contacted by the development committee. He noted many CABs felt they were not part of the process and there was a perception that nothing happened after CABs received feedback from the community. He opined his CAB did not receive information until the issues with Swan Lake occurred. He appreciated the County's plan to increase engagement.

Via Zoom, Ms. Judith Miller, Chair of the Incline Village/Crystal Bay CAB, recalled CABs were limited to development issues around 2014. She thought attendance would increase if topics other than development were covered and meetings were advertised. She wanted the community to have adequate opportunities to ask questions and hoped the BCC would continue Zoom meetings even after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Via Zoom, Ms. Pamela Roberts agreed with comments made about CABs being able to discuss a wider range of topics and CAB members receiving more training. She thought Track 1 was promising but expressed concern about residents not having the same access to information as developers. She noted CABs gathered district-related feedback, but all five BCC Commissioners voted on development, not just the impacted district's Commissioner. She wished to see changes to CAB appointment policy.

Via Zoom, Ms. Maeve Ambrose, Chair of the Warm Springs Rural CAB, thanked the Commissioners for listening to constituents about the CAB format. She requested that CABs be able to discuss non-development items and have more control over their agendas. She wanted to see the ability for more public input as the program evolved, training for CAB members, and further discussion about CAB member appointment policy.

Chair Lucey summarized the BCC wanted to improve the outreach process while maintaining the effective aspects. He looked forward to seeing two-way communication.

Commissioner Herman reminded the Board that former Assistant District Attorney Paul Lipparelli used to teach classes on OML. She encouraged communications staff to meet with her to discuss ideas about her district, which she felt could save the County money.

Vice Chair Hartung said he had no issues with different agencies at CAB meetings but cautioned that open agendas increased the risk of OML violations. He suggested scheduling CAB meetings to discuss development issues, followed immediately by community meetings where no deliberation would occur. Chair Lucey said those types of suggestions could be discussed when the topic of CAB policy returned to the BCC; he hoped for interaction and input from CAB Chairs. He reminded the Commissioners this item pertained to the CSP.

Commissioner Hill moved to accept the recommendations with a caveat that staff bring back the topic of bylaws and policies so the BCC could make recommendations for how CABs would function in the new fiscal year, a motion seconded by Commissioner Herman.

Deputy District Attorney Nate Edwards summarized the motion would be to create the CSP as laid out in the staff report, but he wanted to ensure the motion did not take positions on overhauling the CAB system; the latter could be made as direction to staff.

Commissioner Hill rescinded her original motion.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Vice Chair Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that a Commissioner Engagement Program be created in the Office of the County Manager, overseen by the Communications Director, to facilitate and administer a commissioner-citizen engagement process utilizing two tracks, Commissioner Outreach and the Community Advisory Boards, both working in unison for balanced and complete community engagement. Further, it was ordered that the program be funded in Fiscal Year 22 with an estimated program budget of \$372,000 to cover personnel, technology, and program costs.

**21-0132**      **AGENDA ITEM 11** Discussion and direction to staff and possible action concerning a vacancy on the Reno Justice Court created by the retirement of the Honorable Peter J. Sferrazza. Possible options include directing staff to return with suggestions and cost estimates on a process to appoint an individual to serve until the 2022 election, an election procedure to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term, or to leave the seat open until a new Justice of the Peace is elected in 2022 and seated in 2023. Manager's Office. (All Commission Districts.)

Via the Zoom app, Assistant County Manager Kate Thomas indicated staff sought direction on the vacant Justice of the Peace position. Staff received a letter from Chief Judge Ryan Sullivan in November informing them that Justice Sferrazza's final day would be November 30. In that letter, an offer was made to hold that seat until a new judge would be elected in 2022. She reviewed the Board's options: approve a resolution to hold a mail-in election at a cost of over \$400,000; have staff bring forth a process to appoint an individual to fill the vacant term, with the understanding that staff estimated a savings of \$19,000 each month the seat remained vacant; or leave the position open until January 3, 2023 following the 2022 election, resulting in a savings of \$494,000. She reminded the Board of a similar situation in 2014-2015, when the Board elected to keep the retired judge's seat vacant.

Vice Chair Hartung recalled leaving the seat open in 2014 because the savings was over \$1 million. At that time, Chief Judge Scott Pearson noted a willingness to absorb the case load and pass the savings on. This was similar to Chief Judge Sullivan's recommendation now, which would result in \$500,000 in savings. The Vice Chair supported leaving the position open until the election.

Chair Lucey stated he met with Chief Judge Sullivan. The Chair felt the decision in 2015 was the wise choice and Chief Judge Sullivan felt confident the current case load could be maintained. He agreed it was smart to allow judges to conduct their business in the way they felt best.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Chair Lucey, seconded by Vice Chair Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that the Justice of the Peace position be left open until seated in 2023 following the 2022 election, with an estimated savings of salary and benefits for 26 months.

**21-0133**      **AGENDA ITEM 12** Discussion and direction to staff regarding legislation or legislative issues proposed by legislators, by Washoe County, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, or by other entities permitted by the Nevada State Legislature to submit bill draft requests, or such legislative issues as may be deemed by the Chair or the Board to be of critical significance to Washoe County. Manager's Office. (All Commission Districts.)

County Manager Eric Brown indicated there had not been any change to what was reviewed the prior week. Chair Lucey noted he and Commissioner Hill were a part of those meetings and confirmed there were no changes of note. He spoke about a presentation he, Assistant County Manager Kate Thomas, and Government Affairs Liaison Jamie Rodriguez made to the Assembly Government Affairs Board about the County's process. Aspects of the presentation pertaining to the COVID-19 response, homelessness, and the budget were well-received.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Hartung, seconded by Commissioner Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 12 be accepted.

**21-0134**      **AGENDA ITEM 13** Public Comment.

Via the Zoom app, Annemarie Grant, sister of Thomas Purdy who died in police custody, expressed frustration about Chair Lucey's decision to no longer read public comments into the record. She felt this change was specifically intended to stifle her and her brother's ability to speak. She played audio of her brother in the jail.

**21-0135**      **AGENDA ITEM 14** Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Hill asked for a future agenda item for a discussion about Citizen Advisory Board policies and bylaws.

Vice Chair Hartung spoke about a regional homelessness team made up of representatives from Washoe County, the Cities of Reno and Sparks, social workers, and interns from the University of Reno, Nevada (UNR). He thought it would be beneficial to find an office location for them since they came from multiple agencies, suggesting they could have a modular building on the UNR campus.

Commissioner Jung wanted discussion with the County Manager or a future agenda item to address potential conflicts of interest with elected officials having family

members working at the County. She also wanted discussion on the policy about cooling-off periods after people left office. Chair Lucey agreed further discussion was needed on a number of the issues brought up during this meeting.

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**1:43 p.m.** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

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**BOB LUCEY**, Chair  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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**JANIS GALASSINI**, County Clerk and  
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:*  
*Derek Sonderfan, Deputy County Clerk*