

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

FRIDAY

1:00 P.M.

JULY 22, 2022

CONCURRENT MEETING

PRESENT:

Vaughn Hartung, Chair, via Zoom
Alexis Hill, Vice Chair, via Zoom
Bob Lucey, Commissioner, via Zoom
Kitty Jung, Commissioner, via Zoom
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner, via Zoom

Janis Galassini, County Clerk
Eric Brown, County Manager, via Zoom
Mary Kandaras, Chief Deputy District Attorney, via Zoom

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 1:08 p.m. with the Reno and Sparks City Councils in concurrent session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, and via the Zoom app. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

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Chair Hartung stated that because it was a concurrent meeting there were many attendees from each of the jurisdictions. He requested everyone keep their comments to three minutes and said he would set a timer to ensure the meeting stayed on track. He pointed out that with the exception of one agenda item their purpose was not to come up with solutions, it was to provide direction to staff.

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22-0583 AGENDA ITEM 4 Approval of the Agenda.

On the call for public comment, Reno City Councilmember Jenny Brekhus said she did not realize the meeting was entirely virtual. She asserted it was not identified as a virtual meeting on any of the agendas she had received, and it was not mentioned in her briefing. She commented that Chambers was full of attendees, so it did not appear to be an entirely virtual meeting. She stated she was very COVID-conscious and wore a mask in public meetings and public buildings. She thought there should be an option to attend the concurrent meeting in person, noting when she was fulfilling her official duties she wanted to be in Chambers to see the members of the public in person. She believed the County and City Managers could control the occupancy levels and that elected officials should attend meetings in person. She observed she would go home so she could participate

fully and said she would likely miss Agenda Item 5 regarding the renaming of the Washoe County Health District. She wondered about the absence of the term “Board” or “Commission” in the renaming.

The Reno City Council voted to approve the agenda.

The Sparks City Council voted to approve the agenda.

For the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

22-0584 **AGENDA ITEM 5** Presentation, discussion, approval, and direction on the proposed name change of the Washoe County Health District to “Northern Nevada Public Health” with the tag line, “Serving Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County” through an amendment of the interlocal agreement between Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County.

Washoe County District Health Officer Kevin Dick provided background information on the proposed name change of the Health District. He shared that during the concurrent meeting in January of 2021, members of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the Reno and Sparks City Councils expressed an interest in a name change for the Health District. He noted the elected officials felt the Health District needed autonomy and individuality from Washoe County. He agreed that was appropriate since the district served everyone in the County and was established under an interlocal agreement between the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks. He noted the district was governed by a District Board of Health (DBH) made up of elected officials from the County and the Cities, as well as their appointees and an appointed physician. The DBH also recommended a name change, and in September of 2021 staff from the Health District presented strategies to that board regarding pursuing a possible name change. Mr. Dick and his staff received direction to work with a firm as well as members of the public to bring back options and recommendations to the DBH. He observed that the district worked with the Reno-based Estipona Group, noting the group was chosen for its experience in brand development and strategy. In May, after months of outreach to the community, the Estipona Group presented its recommendation to the DBH to change the name of the Health District to “Northern Nevada Public Health” with the tagline “Serving Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County.” The recommendation was unanimously approved by the DBH.

Mr. Dick introduced Nicole Dion, Account Director, and Kyle Brice, Vice President of Strategy, from the Estipona Group. Ms. Dion conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Process; Name Options; Research Methods | Focus Groups; Focus Group Participants; Focus Group Participants | Select Industries & Organizations; Focus Group Results | Name Preference; Research Method | Google Survey; Google Survey Results | Question 1; Google Survey Results | Question 2; Google Survey Results | Question 3; Google Survey Results | Question 4; Google Survey Results | Question 5;

Anecdotal | Northern Nevada Public Health; Anecdotal | Washoe Regional Public Health; Estipona Group Recommendation.

Ms. Dion observed over the last eight months the Estipona Group had worked with the naming committee which was comprised of Reno City Councilmember Oscar Delgado, District Health Officer Kevin Dick, and Health District Public Information Officer Scott Oxarart. Together they developed an exhaustive list of name options and conducted three rounds of review and revision. The top five options were then presented via surveys and focus groups, and the final recommendation was presented to the DBH in May. She listed the top five name options: Northwestern Nevada Public Health, Truckee Meadows Public Health, Northern Nevada Public Health, Public Health of Western Nevada, and Washoe Regional Public Health.

Ms. Dion spoke about the research methods used, noting there were 5 focus groups with a total of 31 participants. Two of the groups were considered internal, with one being made up of Health District staff, and one with Joint Information Center (JIC) members. Three of the focus groups were considered external as they were made up of members of the public. Two of those groups were conducted in English and one was conducted in Spanish. She stated all the focus group participants were Washoe County residents, and each focus group had between five and ten participants. The one exception, she informed, was the JIC focus group, which was comprised of City of Reno Director of Communications Rebecca Venis, City of Sparks Community Relations Manager Julie Duedel, and Washoe County Media and Communications Manager Bethany Drysdale. She expressed appreciation for the participation of the three professionals from the County and the Cities, noting they brought a lot of experience communicating with the public and elected officials. Regarding the slide listing select industries and organizations that participated in the focus groups, she informed it was a sample and not an exhaustive list of those that participated. She pointed out that industries were listed on the left side of the slide and organizations were listed on the right.

Before the focus groups met, Ms. Dion said, the participants were asked to rank the name options on a scale of one to five without having any discussion with or receiving any background information from the Estipona Group. She said those results were indicated on the graph in blue. Participants were surveyed again after the focus group met, and those results were shown in red. She pointed out that before the focus group met, Washoe Regional Public Health, Northern Nevada Public Health, and Truckee Meadows Public Health were mostly neck-and-neck. After the focus group met, Washoe Regional Public Health was the winner with Truckee Meadows Public Health in second place. She observed the Estipona Group chose to move away from the Truckee Meadows name primarily because members of the focus group conducted in Spanish provided unanimous feedback that non-English speakers may confuse the Truckee Meadows language with Truckee, California.

Mr. Brice informed that in addition to the focus groups, the Estipona Group also conducted a statewide survey made up of five questions. The survey received a total of 349 respondents, with 48 percent being male and 52 percent being female. He noted they

also tried to ensure every age demographic was included. The Estipona Group used a Google survey, which allowed them to conduct the survey anonymously and avoid any biases. He listed the survey questions: which of the below organizations do you believe has the most authority over public health in Reno/Sparks; which organization name best represents the mission of protecting public health and safety; which organization do you feel is the least impactful at protecting public health and safety; which of the below organizations do you believe is responsible for public health and safety in rural communities like Gerlach; if the Washoe County Health District were to change their name, which name do you like BEST to represent the organization's mission? He asserted that after the focus groups and the survey, Washoe Regional Public Health and Northern Nevada Public Health were the top two choices.

Mr. Brice observed that the Estipona Group then looked at anecdotal information based on the focus group participation. He spoke about the pros and cons of the name Northern Nevada Public Health. He stated it was inclusive of all the areas the Health District served and many considered Washoe to be northern, Clark southern, and everything else rural. The biggest con, he said, was that it implied the Health District served all of Northern Nevada which it did not. Washoe Regional Public Health, he noted, was a nod to Washoe County without saying it. He listed several cons the Estipona Group identified regarding this name option: they did not believe the name was differentiated enough from Washoe County, it could be considered redundant, there could be potential appropriation of indigenous language, and it sounded like a hospital or clinic. The Estipona Group's final recommendation for the name change was Northern Nevada Public Health with the tagline "Serving Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County." They felt it put the organization toe-to-toe with the Southern Nevada Health District and was a great way to separate the organization from the other three regional organizations which was the original goal. He reminded the recommended name change received unanimous consent from the DBH.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Cliff Low asked the BCC and the City Councils to pause and not rubber stamp the name change of the Health District. He thought the consultants had done a fine job but felt there was an elephant in the room that was not being addressed. He said he did not have an issue with changing the name of the Health District, but he wondered about the selection of the name. He displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He remarked there was another organization in the area called the Northern Nevada Health System, and he thought changing the name of the Health District to Northern Nevada Public Health would cause confusion. He noted the Northern Nevada Health System was a for-profit corporation and a subsidiary of a corporation in Pennsylvania. He opined that unless the Northern Nevada Health System was changing its name there would be confusion and the BCC and the City Councils would regret this decision and would have to revisit the name change in the future.

Reno City Councilmember Oscar Delgado thought the Estipona Group had done an excellent job summarizing the process and conducting outreach. He reiterated the proposed name change had been discussed and approved by the DBH. He believed the name distinguished the Health District from Southern Nevada and acknowledged that there

were essentially three Nevadas: Washoe, Clark, and rural. He believed the tagline “Serving Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County” brought things home. He expressed support for the Estipona Group and the recommendation.

Commissioner Lucey congratulated Councilmember Delgado and District Health Officer Dick. He believed they had done a great, thorough job and he acknowledged that it was a long and arduous process. He asserted the DBH had a multitude of discussions regarding the name change and he supported the recommendation.

Reno City Councilmember Bonnie Weber said she supported the name change but wondered why the word “District” was not kept in the name. Mr. Brice responded that the previous rebrand from the Washoe County Health Department to the Washoe County Health District was never successful and created public confusion. He shared that it was an internal decision not to include “District” in the new name.

Sparks City Councilmember Kristopher Dahir expressed appreciation for the public comment. He did not think the Northern Nevada Health System owned the term “Northern Nevada” and he supported the name change. He believed it would represent the region well.

The Reno City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

The Sparks City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

For the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved. The Amendment to the Interlocal Contract for same is attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

22-0585 **AGENDA ITEM 6** Discussion and possible acceptance of the principles guiding the intent and desired outcome of the regional collaboration opportunities for Fire, EMS, and Dispatch services including but not limited to enhanced protocols for the dispatch of emergency services using 911 system based on factors such as deployment of nearest resources to emergency calls and other collaborative opportunities in matters related thereto.

Washoe County Manager Eric Brown said staff was asking the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the City Councils of Reno and Sparks to consider coordinating efforts to regionalize delivery of dispatch, emergency medical services (EMS), and fire services across the three jurisdictions and stakeholder agencies to improve outcomes. Staff also sought direction and an agreement to form a regional workgroup that would include stakeholders involved in delivering dispatch, EMS, and fire services. He noted the discussion would not be about how to regionalize services but an agreement to move forward with a better approach that included the relevant stakeholders. He said this

item was just the first step in an affirmation from the jurisdictions about pursuing regionalization.

Sparks City Manager Neil Krutz conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He reviewed slides with the following titles: Principles and Project Outcome; The Current 911 System (2 slides).

Mr. Krutz indicated the current 911 system was inefficient and not as effective as it should be. He said the existing multiple computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems did not allow for adequate information sharing or resource deployment based on the needs of the caller. He noted multiple fire agencies existed within each geographic boundary which led to some impairment in figuring out who could arrive at an incident the quickest. He said the agency boundaries created challenges, and resources from multiple agencies were often committed and then cancelled which resulted in some inefficiency. He mentioned that 81 percent of emergency calls received by the City of Sparks in 2021 were EMS calls, and of those, 43 percent were cancelled either en route or on the scene. He said the data provided an example of how resources were committed when they were not needed and could be available for other calls. He believed the goals were to reduce the calls that needed to be transferred to other agencies and reduce the number of pieces of equipment sent out. He knew everyone approached the issue with good intent but there was much room for improvement. He said the current system was based on ownership of the process rather than the experience of the 911 call. He observed each jurisdiction did its best to take care of its residents while being responsive to others in the community. He said redirecting or refocusing efforts to deliver the best possible outcome for the person calling 911 would allow the right resources to get in place in a timely manner. He noted that a timely manner varied depending on the severity of the need. He reiterated the issue needed to be considered from the perspective of the person who made the call.

Reno Assistant City Manager JW Hodge continued the presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Regionalized Issues; Regionalizing the 911 Process; Establishing Guiding Principles for Regionalization Efforts; Initial Measurements of Success; Recommended Motion.

Mr. Hodge said the purpose of this item was to seek direction and acceptance of a set of principles designed to guide regional stakeholders to improve the complex dispatch of the emergency response system. Every agency in the region strove to provide high-quality responses to their citizens, typically within their own geographic boundaries and within the limitations of multiple dispatch and radio systems. He observed that distinguishing the lines between boundaries and the need for coordinated response became more critical as the region continued to grow. He said the technology infrastructure required to meet demands forced the jurisdictions to look beyond their own agencies and develop a system of capable response that took into consideration the resources needed, available, and closest to the emergency. He indicated the principles presented in this item had been drafted to identify the issue and define how the region would measure success. He noted the intent was to provide a foundation for a stakeholder group to improve the

system by identifying areas of opportunity, developing plans to implement change, and measuring the impact of those changes on the region.

Mr. Hodge indicated the impetus for the change was to build a system around the caller experience. He said the system should be designed and implemented to put the caller first by providing a direct connection to appropriate resources, limiting the number of transfers between dispatch centers, and improving the access to information and resources. He indicated the system would work through shared infrastructure, vital technology, and coordinating a response that utilized appropriate resources based on the needs and the location of the caller. He said looking at the ideal system from the perspective of the caller rather than the individual systems allowed for the identification of opportunities for improvement. He stated improving technology, collaboration, and coordination efforts were imperative to building a proactive emergency response network capable of meeting the community's needs.

Mr. Hodge reviewed the four guiding principles which were intended to set the foundation for the successful development and execution of the project: operations, organization, governance, and funding. Operations focused on infrastructure and systems needed to support a regionalized approach to answering and responding to fire and EMS calls, including staffing, deployment, and resource allocation. Organization would set the boundaries for what services would be provided and how they would be deployed. He noted the design of organization was a critical part of how the system would operate through a collaborative approach. Governance would start with current practices and setting the direction of how the improved system would be guided, how policies would be set, and how jurisdictional representation would be incorporated into the core of the system. Finally, funding would ensure the system would be developed to meet the outlined needs sustainably through an appropriate funding source that would take jurisdictional impacts and improved efficiencies into account.

Mr. Hodge said measuring success was the last component of the guiding principles. He stated that setting foundational metrics was an important component, including the length of time between when a call was made and when an appropriate resource responded. He indicated focusing on sending the right resource to each call was the second critical component for future success. He said that reviewing, adjusting, and setting new metrics was vital to the long-term success of the project and the implementation of any changes identified by the working group and the jurisdictions. He asserted a regional answer was required because individual fixes, fragmented systems, and one-off processes would not continue to support the growing needs of the region. He provided a recommended motion.

Chair Hartung asked whether Manager Brown had anything to add to the presentation. Manager Brown reiterated the goal of the discussion was to affirm this was the direction the three jurisdictions were willing to take. The funding and governance would need to be addressed at a later time by the stakeholders.

Commissioner Lucey thanked the people who participated in the preliminary discussion over the last few months. He acknowledged the Cities of Reno and Sparks, REMSA, Sparks Mayor Ed Lawson, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve, the County and City Managers, and the fire chiefs who discussed opportunities for unifying the emergency response in the region. He said the intent of every jurisdiction had always been to provide the best emergency response for every citizen in the County whether they lived in one of the Cities or the unincorporated areas. He believed the objective of the elected officials was to provide the basic foundation to address the concerns of the growing region. He thought the time to address the issue was with the current elected officials. He observed the upcoming legislative session would provide opportunities to make some changes into a reality without having to wait for the 2025 legislative session. He thanked Reno City Councilmember and District Board of Health Chair Oscar Delgado for his participation in discussions about this issue.

Chair Hartung expressed support for this plan noting that regional dispatch made sense. He looked forward to what staff would present in the future including information about redundancies and whether dispatch would be located at the Emergency Operations Center while maintaining the dispatch centers in the Cities of Reno and Sparks.

Sparks City Councilmember Kristopher Dahir noted this issue had been under discussion by Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH), formerly the Washoe County Health District, and the three jurisdictions. He expressed support for the continuation of this conversation and the jurisdictions continuing to work together to keep the whole community safe.

Reno City Councilmember Devon Reese thanked everyone who put time into developing this project which he thought would benefit the safety of the community. He asked for acknowledgment that there were a couple of smaller communities that may not have been included in the discussion, noting Incline Village had its own fire department and Gerlach had its own fire agency. He wanted to ensure both communities would be involved going forward. He knew a number of different local labor groups were in Chambers and asked that those groups be included in the conversation at a high level. He believed the discussion needed to include those who performed the work and that they would have meaningful input into the decisions made by the jurisdictions. He thought the different labor groups should be formally requested to provide insight on this issue so the policy could be aligned with technical requirements. He mentioned an accident in which a car drove through a Great Clips storefront stating he wanted the public to understand they could be impacted profoundly in an emergency.

Reno City Mayor Hillary Schieve thanked everyone for participating in the discussion which she believed was monumental. She observed many people might not know the history of the separation of fire agencies about ten years prior and how the jurisdictions arrived at the current state. She said having to unwind prior damage was an unfortunate circumstance. She thought the current interest in repairing many existing deficiencies was very fortunate. She urged the working group to include timelines in the plan because time was important when dealing with life safety matters. She agreed with

Councilmember Reese's statement about the many groups of individuals who needed to take part in this discussion. She commended everyone for establishing the relationships needed for this project. She indicated her long-standing concern about this issue and thought many citizens would feel reassured by knowing a good structure was in place. She thanked everyone for working regionally to address this issue. She reiterated the need for establishing clear timeframes for this project.

Reno City Councilmember Jenny Brekhuis expressed concern about the direction of this item. She asked whether this item was a path for reconsolidation. She mentioned the change in REMSA's contract which occurred six or seven years ago. She thought the prior decision was for a five-year evaluation of REMSA's performance. She observed the City of Reno generated the most emergency calls and experienced the most growth in the region resulting in increased need. She asked whether staff could speak about REMSA's performance, how it was measured, and the previous direction on monitoring REMSA's ability to meet its contractual obligations with the NNPH.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr thought the plan was brilliant, long overdue, and a great way to start a larger conversation about regionalization. She said she liked the guiding principles of the plan. She thought an end goal needed to be defined. She recommended the end goal be some type of consolidated dispatch to address the issues that were identified by the County and City Managers. She suggested the stakeholder group work with a facilitator and with an end goal in mind. She was not excited about having the outcome be a study; she wanted the stakeholder group to work on solving each of the issues that would stand in the way of regionalized dispatch. She acknowledged Councilmember Reese's statements and suggested a focus on process improvement. She asserted that process improvement needed to include those who were closest to the recipients of services. She said that method of addressing issues relied on input from individuals who were part of the response force.

Sparks City Councilmember Dian VanderWell acknowledged previous comments and stressed the need to have both labor groups and management involved in these discussions. She agreed with Councilmember Duerr's assertion about including individuals who were closest to the customer in discussions to ensure residents received the best possible service when they called emergency dispatch.

Councilmember Delgado expressed excitement about these discussions. He said the District Board of Health (DBH) had participated in conversations with REMSA to understand the issues and was working with them as they continued to provide excellent service in the community. He acknowledged some instability with respect to the growing number of issues in the community. He said the idea had always been to seek opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the emergency response to every citizen whether they lived in the Cities of Reno and Sparks or the County. He thanked everyone who participated in discussions for this item.

Reno City Councilmember Neoma Jardon recalled prior years during which the jurisdictions were unable to cooperate on this issue. She commended the leaders who

collaborated to reach this point. She acknowledged Mayor Schieve, Commissioner Lucey, Councilmember Delgado, and Chair Hartung for their efforts in championing this project. She noted that constituents did not care about which jurisdictions responded to a call, they only cared about who could arrive the fastest. She thanked everyone for working together on this issue.

Reno City Councilmember Bonnie Weber said this conversation had been needed for some time. She recalled discussions about this issue in prior years which changed the system. She observed the primary goal was to serve the constituents. She believed this project was necessary. She thanked everyone who participated in this project and hoped to make progress on making this community a better place for everyone.

Sparks City Mayor Pro Tempore Charlene Bybee thanked the County and City Managers for their collaboration and for providing the guiding principles which outlined the goals of this project. She asserted the focus needed to be on residents regardless of where they lived. She knew the jurisdictions could do better by working together as a region. She said this project presented the opportunity to improve efficiencies. She observed that technology had improved in the past decades and would continue to improve. She thought being able to adjust to the needs of the community, the available technology, and personnel was important.

Commissioner Jung expressed appreciation for the positive cooperative spirit. She noted improving efficiencies in response time and reduced call transfers contributed to saving lives which she thought needed to be a guiding principle. She mentioned the current atmosphere in the community and with the elected officials was very different from what she had experienced in the past 15 years. She wanted to continue in that direction which focused on collaboration and cooperation. She expressed pride in the community and thanked everyone for working on improving services.

Commissioner Lucey responded to Councilmember Reese's concern about the construct of the stakeholder group by explaining the goal would be to establish a collective of everyone involved in providing services. He said the fire managers, fire chiefs, union leaders, rural and Incline Village representatives, the NNPH, police, and the Sheriff's Department were all included in the discussions from the start. He acknowledged everyone who participated in the discussions. With regards to Councilmember Brekhus' comments, he acknowledged the attempts to readjust fire protection services in 2016. He noted he had studies prepared in 2011 and 2014 regarding these issues. He explained the intent was to develop a regional effort to approach fire protection and EMS. He said the plan was not necessarily to reinvigorate consolidation, rather it was to identify ways to improve efficiencies and improve service to the public. He agreed with Councilmember Duerr's comments about the need for a clear timeline, noting a phased approach had been proposed. He stated Councilmember Delgado's involvement with the DBH was paramount to the project. He agreed with Commissioner Jung's statements about the culture of the community. He asserted the culture of the community needed to focus on life-saving efforts for the entire region.

Councilmember Duerr wanted to ensure dispatchers were included in the stakeholder group because they had firsthand experience with dispatch. She asked that constituents and first responders also be included in the group. She requested clarification on facilitating versus consulting.

Chair Hartung believed the goal of the meeting was to determine how the jurisdictions felt about regional dispatch. If the jurisdictions were interested in this, then they would address a path forward.

Mr. Krutz thought asking a specific question about consolidation, regionalization, or going to a single dispatch was premature. He believed the first question should be regarding what solutions would make improvements to the system and lead to better outcomes. He asserted the working group needed to be established and questions about a single dispatch should be asked within the working group.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Denise Callen stated she was the Director of the Mountaingate Reno Homeowners Association (HOA). She informed that the area within the HOA was 3 minutes away from the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) station on Arrowcreek, 5 minutes from the TMFPD station on Foothill, 6 minutes from the Reno Fire Department (RFD) station on Steamboat, and 14 minutes from the next closest RFD station if the one on Steamboat happened to be too busy. She shared she was a Reno native and knew there had been service agreements in the past. She expressed concern that homeowners within the HOA were seeing increased response times because of disagreements over who would be dispatched, and she did not think that served the community. She spoke about the incident at Great Clips and asserted it was an example of a lack of communication and a lack of working together. She informed she had the pleasure of working with retired TMFPD Deputy Fire Chief Alex Kukulius who helped write the petition that was sent to the jurisdictions in support of dispatch of the closest agency. She believed people did not care which agency showed up in an emergency, just that it was the fastest agency. She urged the jurisdictions to adopt the closest resource response model to ensure the safety of the community.

Mr. William T. Steward thought seeing people face to face was better and that meetings should be held in person in the future. He believed this problem needed to be solved since it was regarding life safety. He said when someone called 911, they wanted an agency to arrive as soon as possible. He asserted that the Commissioners and Councilmembers were elected to help provide safety to the citizens they had sworn to serve. He urged the jurisdictions to take the working group seriously and to allow citizens to be involved. He believed that for things to move forward the jurisdictions and the agencies needed to work together. He shared he had attended meetings in the past where the leaders did not agree. He stated he had seen instances where an agency could not respond to a call across the street because the address was not in that agency's jurisdiction. He reiterated the need for the jurisdictions to work together and solve this problem.

Mr. Jerry Frederick commended the BCC and the City Councils for taking on this issue and believed it took a lot of courage. He asked that if the jurisdictions were

going to do this that they do it right. He urged the jurisdictions to take the best principles and practices of each of the agencies and use those as benchmarks.

Mr. Cliff Low observed much of the discussion on Agenda Item 6 blended with Agenda Item 7, which dealt with the working group and who would take part in that group. He emphasized some of Councilmember Duerr's comments about who would be in the working group. He referenced comments made by Councilmembers Reese and Weber regarding constituent involvement and how the public was affected. He spoke about Webster's definition of "stakeholders." He said the agenda items listed stakeholders from fire, EMS, law enforcement, and dispatch. He referenced a document from the TMFPD which talked about a committee consisting of County and City Managers, fire chiefs, REMSA representatives, labor organizations, and hospital representatives. He thought the working group needed to have representatives who had the public's interest in mind. He opined there should be multiple members who were just constituents who had no other loyalties or the need to think about other parties. He agreed all the listed groups and their families and loved ones were potential customers and users of fire and EMS; however, he urged the jurisdictions to include members of the general public who were knowledgeable and were only concerned that people like them were best served by the outcome.

Chair Hartung reminded that the working group discussion was Agenda Item 7, and the current agenda item was the acceptance of the guiding principles.

Mr. Mike Pilcher shared that he was the President of the Northern Nevada Central Labor Council and sat on the executive board of the Nevada State American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). He said his affiliates were represented through dispatch, Operating Engineers Local 3, and the Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada (PFFN). He expressed support for Item 7 as a first step and thought it was important to put a stakeholder group together. He was encouraged that the jurisdictions wanted employee organization representatives involved. He thought employee organization leaders were essential and were able to explain what was going on. He asserted that no public-safety answering point (PSAP) call center, radio system, ambulance, CAD system, or fire engine had ever saved a life; the workforce saved lives. He observed the workforce dealt with workload stress, overload, burnout, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) daily. He said the workforce asked two questions: what was best for the organization and what was best for the community. He opined the workforce did not have loyalty to itself, it swore an oath to the community. He informed when he was involved in this conversation in the 90s it took six years. He believed perseverance, patience, acceptance, inclusion, and unity would be important. He said the region was one of the fastest growing per capita in the nation. He reiterated his support of Item 7.

County Clerk Jan Galassini stated an email was received from Mr. Mitchell Hammond, which was placed on file.

Chair Hartung reminded everyone this was Agenda Item 6 regarding the guiding principles. He asked Chief Deputy District Attorney Mary Kandaras for guidelines

for the BCC's motion. Attorney Kandaras thought it would be appropriate to follow the language on the agenda. Chair Hartung wondered if a motion needed to be made on this item. Attorney Kandaras and Manager Brown responded yes.

The Sparks City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

The Reno City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

Councilmember Brekhus stated she would not support the motion because she felt there should be a principle to include a faithful commemoration of the past guidance in history on this issue. She explained the REMSA contract was going to expire at some point and would be up for review, and she believed an evaluation could occur. She said the region had struggled with this issue for many years and she did not think the region should rebuild the wheel. She pointed out that the County had entered into its own contract with REMSA for dispatch. She wondered if the goal was a path to consolidation, noting she was not supportive of that idea and thought the jurisdictions needed to look into geographic joint powers agreements in areas where there is a need, like Verdi. She did not think the principles went through the different geographic considerations that could occur.

Mayor Schieve thought this was a long time coming and the jurisdictions needed to start somewhere and needed to start now. She noted they began working in this direction before the COVID-19 pandemic, but then the pandemic shifted things. She said the public needed to know the dispatch systems were different among all three jurisdictions which made things challenging. She reiterated that the jurisdictions needed to work together regionally and needed to take action now.

Commissioner Herman urged the jurisdictions not to rush things and to be careful with how they tackled this issue. She believed they needed to take all the advice they could get. She felt the TMFPD was handling the County's services well. She voiced concern about the rural areas. She mentioned the process to obtain fire and EMS services for Gerlach, noting she did not want to see other rural areas have to fight for these services. She reiterated that the issue was important, but the jurisdictions needed to go about things the right way.

On motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be accepted.

22-0586 **AGENDA ITEM 7** Discussion and possible direction to the managers to establish and lead a regional working group comprised of stakeholders from fire, emergency medical services (EMS), law enforcement, and dispatch to identify and contract with a consultant to study the current fire and EMS response system and make recommendations on the development of a high quality, efficient, and cost effective service for the region including potential governance, funding, and deployment of resources. This item is intended to begin creation of the framework for the project in item 6 and related matters set above.

Reno Assistant City Manager JW Hodge noted there was crossover between Agenda Items 6 and 7. He asserted the discussion needed to begin with the mission and then move on to how the mission would be accomplished. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He reviewed slides with the following titles: Working Group Guidance; Create a Management-Led Working Group to Oversee and Inform Regionalization; Impartial Consulting Firm Will Provide Timeline, Expectations, & Best Practices; Recommended Motion.

Mr. Hodge stated the Managers of Washoe County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks were seeking direction from the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the City Councils to form a regional working group to kick off the work to improve the dispatch, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) response system. He informed that the working group would be led by the Managers. The intent of the group was to bring the Managers and the stakeholders together to identify and recommend changes to the current system that would improve the caller experience, overall efficiency, and address the growing needs of the region. He thought some of the public comments were very much in line with what the jurisdictions wanted to accomplish with the working group. He reiterated that the goal was to bring groups of people together who did the work every day and were able to make the changes to build a system that made the most sense for the caller, the person receiving care, and the region. He shared that the list of stakeholders the Managers put together included jurisdictional fire chiefs, police chiefs, dispatch leaders, labor leaders, subject matter experts, and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). He opined everyone at the table would be key to finding the solution. He asserted the members of the working group would help identify areas of opportunity based on real-world issues that occurred every day in the region. They would help guide the efforts to utilize the principles that were approved in Agenda Item 6 to find the best possible solutions to present back to the jurisdictions for consideration and possible implementation.

One of the first major tasks of the working group, Mr. Hodge observed, would be the consideration and seeking out of an independent, impartial facilitator to help identify a path to improve the regional system. The members of the group would help identify what support was needed from the facilitator by developing a more detailed scope of work based on their expertise, understanding of the region, and a better understanding of the issues brought up during the meeting. He asserted that understanding the needs would inform the decision on what facilitator or resource could provide the tools and recommendations required to develop an implementation plan. The intent of the plan was to outline the coordination and support needed to implement a new regional process and regional solutions. The group, the Managers, and the facilitator would also be responsible for providing timely updates to the jurisdictions to ensure everyone was aware of the progress being made and planning for the next steps. Pending approval of this item, he said, the Managers were prepared to schedule the first working group within the next few weeks to make sure things started immediately and the timeline was set. He clarified that the Managers were not seeking to conduct another study. It was an opportunity to take everyday experiences and utilize the knowledge, skills, and expertise of the region's leaders and subject matter experts, in collaboration with the impartial facilitator, to build an implementation plan for the future of emergency response in the region.

Mr. Hodge reiterated that under Agenda Item 7, the Managers were seeking direction from the BCC and the City Councils to establish a working group that would use the guiding principles from Agenda Item 6 to identify and make recommendations on possible paths to improve collaboration and regionalization opportunities related to dispatch, fire, and EMS. He thanked the BCC and the City Councils for their time and noted that he, the Managers, and their regional colleagues in Chambers were available to answer questions.

Chair Hartung reminded the BCC and the City Councils that there was overlap between Agenda Items 6 and 7 and he wanted to make sure they stayed on track.

Commissioner Lucey shared that over the years many committees of stakeholders had been put together to discuss regional efforts. He said the individuals outlined in Mr. Hodge's presentation covered most of the key stakeholders, but he wanted to ensure discussion was held regarding possible participation of members of the public, rural and Incline Village leadership, Northern Nevada Public Health (formerly the Health District), unincorporated areas, and tribal leadership. He asked that the stakeholders have a timeline to report back to the jurisdictions as soon as possible following the first meeting, and that future timelines be established as well.

Reno City Councilmember Naomi Duerr supported the recommendations made by Commissioner Lucey to expand the working group to include members of the public and to establish timelines for reporting back to the jurisdictions. She thanked Mr. Hodge for the language change from "consultant" to "facilitator." She liked the idea of a facilitator to help execute the vision of the jurisdictions.

Sparks City Councilmember Kristopher Dahir stated he ran his election on this issue eight years ago and again six years ago. He opined the jurisdictions were not rushing the issue but were actually behind. He asserted it was about saving lives and he thought the right people were in place and it was the right time. He liked Commissioner Lucey's recommendation to allow constituents to be involved. He reiterated that they were not rushing. He said REMSA employees were heroes and they had done great things. He believed the structure of the system was what needed to be touched on. He asserted now was the time for action.

Reno City Mayor Hillary Schieve reminded the jurisdictions that the airport needed to be included as a stakeholder. She agreed with Councilmember Dahir that they were behind on the issue, and she encouraged the BCC and the City Councils to take action for the community to become a safer place. She asserted they had to stop with the politics, and it had to be about the people. She believed they had the ability to work together and the power to make it happen. She urged the jurisdictions to stay dedicated to the mission. She observed that if someone's family member was in a life-or-death situation and had to call 911, it would not matter which agency responded, only that the life was saved. She reiterated that addressing this issue was long overdue. She acknowledged the jurisdictions

had a tumultuous relationship in the past, but she believed they could all work together now.

Reno City Councilmember Jenny Brekhus informed she would not support the formation of a working group. She said Reno was the largest jurisdiction and she thought it needed to be in and of itself. She shared that in the last five or so years Reno had approved huge amounts of outlying development where it was stretched with its coverage. She thought Reno needed to follow the Master Plan that adopted service levels. She agreed Reno was behind on the issue, but she opined the maps and building permits were moving and would not hold for this long exercise. She believed houses would be built and people would be vulnerable. She posited that Reno needed to consider one geographic quadrant at a time and understand what the service levels were. She did not think regionalization was the best approach and felt Reno should work geographically, area by area. She said Reno could assist Washoe County in unincorporated areas if needed. She thought the jurisdictions needed models of how to work in specific neighborhoods and Reno had a lot of work to do at home.

Commissioner Herman voiced concern about consolidation without having the communication aspect completed first. She wondered if the jurisdictions were rushing. She said she had heard concerns from constituents about not being able to attend meetings or the members of the BCC not attending meetings in person. She wanted the public to be involved and wondered if the working group meetings could be public meetings.

Reno City Councilmember Devon Reese said he was honored to serve with everyone on the BCC and the City Councils and he appreciated the spirit of collaboration. He understood the relationship between the three jurisdictions had not always been a positive one, and he was thankful that everyone currently serving was willing to do the work. He echoed the comments made by Councilmember Dahir and Mayor Schieve, noting he often heard from constituents that the government moved too slowly. He stated the public could not wait for the elected officials to have these conversations; people's lives were at stake. He asserted the jurisdictions needed to find solutions that were practical and would meet the needs of the people living in the area. He did not think any individual jurisdiction should have to go it alone. He said when people called EMS, they expected a response and they wanted the fastest and most qualified unit to respond. He supported the establishment of the working group and thanked his colleagues who would be voting in support as well.

Sparks City Mayor Pro Tempore Charlene Bybee agreed now was the time to tackle this issue. She stated as the region continued to grow, public safety was the number one priority and responsibility. She urged for the efficient and timely formation of the working group. She agreed the government moved too slowly. She thought the jurisdictions needed to move quickly and prioritize because the issue involved people's lives. She encouraged the jurisdictions to coordinate for the benefit, safety, and health of the community.

Reno City Councilmember Neoma Jardon opined there was a way to be urgent without rushing. She said there was immense urgency to the issue because it was a life safety issue; it could cost someone their life if the jurisdictions moved at a slow pace. Once the working group was formed, she wondered if it would do its initial work and then report back to the jurisdictions regarding the next steps and timelines in the reporting process.

Chair Hartung summarized the questions posed by Commissioner Herman and Councilmember Jardon regarding the makeup of the working group, the reporting process, and the timeline.

Councilmember Duerr agreed with Councilmember Jardon that it was important to move quickly on this issue. She reiterated the need for a facilitator to work with the group to fix any broken parts to the best of their ability. She noted bigger issues could be brought back to the jurisdictions for discussion.

Chair Hartung asked Commissioner Herman if he had summarized her question. Commissioner Herman said she wanted to know if the working group meetings would be open to the public.

Washoe County Manager Eric Brown stated that in the interest of expediency, the Managers had not planned to make the working group meetings open to the public. He said the meetings could be opened to the public if that was what the jurisdictions wanted. He informed the Managers had provided a list of the stakeholder agencies that would be invited to participate, and it did include the airport, Incline Village, and the tribal organizations. He asserted the working group could include members of the public, noting several individuals had reached out to him regarding this issue that he felt would be great participants. He stated the working group would be quick but would not rush or take inappropriate actions. He understood it was an issue the region had been dealing with for decades and it needed to be addressed expeditiously. He recommended the working group present during another concurrent meeting or make presentations to the jurisdictions on a 90-day timeframe regarding its efforts.

Mr. Hodge believed the intent of the working group would be to bring a timeline back to the jurisdictions. Regarding the question posed by Councilmember Jardon, he stated one of the first presentations would include a proposed timeline and the next steps. This would occur after the working group was able to meet and identify the key things that needed to be worked on and how to move forward.

Manager Brown observed comments had been made during the meeting about consolidation. He pointed out the goal of the working group was regionalization, not consolidation. The documents and the proposed motion, he stated, were regarding the exploration of regional solutions.

Chair Hartung expressed support for the direction things were headed. He reiterated this had been an issue for a long time and he did not want the jurisdictions to

hurry too much but they did need to move forward. He agreed with the previous comments that people only cared that someone showed up in an emergency, not who showed up. He cautioned that the working group should not be too large, or it could become unruly. He suggested the group should be comprised of the core stakeholders. He looked forward to hearing back from the working group after its formation. He wondered if the Managers would present to their respective boards first and then schedule a concurrent meeting. He noted he would like to have an update from Manager Brown during a BCC meeting. The BCC would give direction to Manager Brown, and he would take that back to the working group. Then a concurrent meeting could be scheduled. Commissioner Jung agreed with Chair Hartung's suggestion; she did not think a concurrent meeting needed to take place for every action.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Cliff Low said he was encouraged by the comments made by a number of elected officials regarding the inclusion of the public. He observed that most, if not all, of the interested parties that were mentioned to be added to the working group were covered by the proposed motion, with the exception of the public. He asked that whichever governing body started the process modify the motion to add representation by the general public. He offered a couple of platitudes. He stated perfection was the enemy of progress. He said there rarely seemed to be enough time to get it right, but there always seemed to be enough time to do it over. He hoped the BCC and the City Councils would keep those things in mind.

Mr. William T. Steward shared the term "paralysis by analysis," noting it was something everyone had probably heard before. He asserted the problem needed to be solved as quickly as possible. He said a lot of great conversation had occurred during the meeting and he agreed with many of the comments about involving the public in the working group. He thought the working group meetings should be open to the public, stating there should be more transparency in government. He opined the people were looking for the truth and wanted to make sure things were done honestly. He agreed with the comment made by Mayor Schieve that it was not about politics, it was about the people. He said people wanted trained professionals to show up in an emergency. He believed the government owed it to public safety workers to provide the best resources for them to do their jobs effectively. He supported regionalization, not consolidation, noting the jurisdictions needed to work together for earthquakes, floods, fires, and disasters. He urged the jurisdictions to come together for the common good of the people and to do it quickly.

Mr. Mike Pilcher was called but declined to speak.

Mayor Schieve expressed appreciation for all the comments. She reminded everyone that public notice had to be given for meetings so there was noticing time. She believed the jurisdictions were transparent but thought communication throughout the process was not as great as it could be because different people obtained their information in different ways. She wanted to make sure the jurisdictions were doing everything possible to include the public in the conversation.

Councilmember Brekhus informed she would vote no on this item for the reasons she stated previously. She believed the working group meetings should be open to the public and elected officials and subject to the Open Meeting Law.

Councilmember Duerr understood there were pros and cons to opening the meetings to the public. She wondered what would constitute a violation of the Open Meeting Law in this case. She expressed concern about the language “consultant to study” in the proposed motion. She suggested that it be replaced with “facilitator to initiate” or “facilitator to achieve.” She believed that would get more to the action piece of the item. She asked that the Reno City Council receive periodic updates. She wanted to ensure the motion reflected that it was a process, with a facilitator, to achieve the goal of improved dispatch service.

Councilmember Jardon asked about the sequential nature of the priorities. She wondered if the priority was to deal with dispatch first. Mr. Hodge thought that was correct. He noted regionalization should begin with dispatch. The jurisdictions needed to understand where things were and how the systems worked together, and how to better find efficiencies to meet the needs of the community. He asserted the working group would set the priorities, and he assumed the first priority would be to address how to dispatch and respond to calls. Councilmember Jardon thanked Mr. Hodge for his response. She opined nothing was being done in secret behind closed doors. She said things would not get done without people working outside of public meetings. She believed the jurisdictions were moving as expeditiously as possible to help save lives. Mayor Schieve thanked Councilmember Jardon for her comments.

The Reno City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

Mayor Pro Tempore Bybee wondered if the Sparks City Council wanted to add the general public to the stakeholder list in the recommended motion. Sparks City Attorney Wes Duncan said the phrase “but not limited to” could be added after “stakeholders from.” To stay consistent with what the three jurisdictions had talked about, he said, the Sparks City Council could add the public to the motion, adopt it, and put it back out to the other jurisdictions and see if they wanted to adopt the revised motion. Mayor Pro Tempore Bybee asked Sparks City Manager Neil Krutz for his input. Mr. Krutz did not believe the County and City Managers were contemplating adding the public to the working group as a direct representative; the public was represented by the elected officials. He encouraged the Sparks City Council to approve something similar to the recommended motion.

Sparks City Councilmember Paul Anderson did not think the public needed to be added to the working group but noted the jurisdictions did want the public to be involved in the process. He understood the working group would communicate to each of the jurisdictions in a public format which he believed would be the perfect time to involve the public. He opined each of the elected officials would be willing to have conversations with the public regarding this issue. Mr. Krutz and Mayor Pro Tempore Bybee agreed with the comments made by Councilmember Anderson. Mayor Pro Tempore Bybee asserted all

three jurisdictions would be given the ability to conduct outreach in their individual jurisdictions.

The Sparks City Council voted on and passed a motion for this item.

Chair Hartung asked Manager Brown about guidelines, a time schedule, and the makeup of the working group. Manager Brown responded that the Managers as a team would appoint the facilitator. He agreed with comments made by the elected officials that enough studies had been conducted in the region and it was time for action. He informed that if approved, the Managers would move forward and appoint a facilitator and convene the stakeholder group identified in the meeting materials. Updates on the group's progress would be provided to the individual jurisdictions within 90 days. He believed there was enough energy around the issue that there would be exchanges of information with each of the individual jurisdictions in advance of the 90 days. He shared he had been in touch with hospital chief executive officers, REMSA, and others about this item. He noted members of the general public could send input about this issue to his attention.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Mary Kandaras shared the item was written to allow some flexibility for the working group to move forward and make recommendations. She said there was a chance some of the work the group did would be subject to the Open Meeting Law. She advised the motion made by the Reno City Council was appropriate. She asserted if the meetings needed to be governed by the Open Meeting Law they could be, and the motion language allowed the working group to come back to each jurisdiction or present at a concurrent meeting and seek recommendations. She recommended the BCC move forward with the same motion made by the City Councils of Reno and Sparks.

Commissioner Lucey suggested public comments be submitted via email to the County and City Clerks, and the County and City Managers, who would then provide the input to the working group. He agreed with the comments made by Manager Brown and Attorney Kandaras that this was meant to be flexible in nature to allow for identifying and addressing needs going forward. He observed change would not happen overnight; it would be a phased and tiered approach. He opined the Managers and the executive committee formed out of the working group would understand the challenges and ensure prioritization. He believed they would allow the public and other significant stakeholders to take part in the process when appropriate.

Commissioner Jung expressed pride in the region and the heavy lifting done by each of the jurisdictions. She agreed with Councilmember Jardon that nothing would get done if everything had to be done in public meetings.

Chair Hartung stated he was confident the Managers could put together a good mix of people for the working group. He looked forward to receiving updates.

For the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7 be approved.

22-0587 **AGENDA ITEM 8** Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Lucey thanked all his colleagues and thought the meeting was monumental. He thanked staff and the County and City Managers for their work. He commended his colleagues for working together and believed it would make a huge difference in so many lives, in emergency response, and economic development within the region. He looked forward to watching things unfold over the coming months and years.

22-0588 **AGENDA ITEM 9** Public Comment.

Mr. Cliff Low was called but declined to speak.

Mr. William T. Steward thanked the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the City Councils of Reno and Sparks for approving Agenda Items 6 and 7. He thought the three jurisdictions came together to figure out how to solve problems and that there was great discourse and conversation during the meeting. He expressed appreciation for first responders, noting they solved problems every day. He hoped the BCC and the City Councils would provide resources and lay the foundation for the future of emergency medical services, public safety, and law enforcement. He asserted time was of the essence and the jurisdictions needed to act now and do so judiciously. He urged the jurisdictions to learn from past reports but not to get caught in the weeds. He believed having public input was imperative and members of the community needed to know what was going on in local government. He opined more people would have been in Chambers if they had known about the meeting, noting there were many avenues to get the word out. He wondered how things would carry on to the next group of elected officials. He wanted the bar to continue being raised, and not just for public safety but for other issues such as roads and affordable housing. He commended the BCC and the City Councils for being servants of the people and looked forward to the future with hopeful optimism.

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Chair Hartung thanked staff and the members of the Board of County Commissioners and the City Councils for their hard work.

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3:47 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

VAUGHN HARTUNG, Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared by:
Lauren Morris & Carolina Stickle, Deputy County Clerks*