

**COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

MONDAY

9:00 A.M.

MAY 13, 2024

PRESENT:

Alexis Hill, Chair
Kathleen Taylor, Vice Chair

Ed Lawson, Member
Devon Reese, Member
Kristopher Dahir, Member
Mike Clark, Member

Janis Galassini, County Clerk
Herbert Kaplan, Deputy District Attorney

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 9:05 a.m. in the Washoe County 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, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

24-003C AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Mr. David Nyberg announced that he worked with St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Reno. He said his mission was to work with groups of people who no one else wanted to work with. He posited that everyone could agree that the Cares Campus was a successful step forward and an improvement from the Community Assistance Center (CAC) on Record Street. He commended the community's homelessness situation compared to other cities, but he feared the effects of inadequate planning. He believed an essential next step would be to classify between two groups – those who were chronically homeless and those who were transiting through homelessness. He thought this would create better success rates in the area. He felt that the latter group should be enabled to break free of the theft, aggression, and other stressors that occurred in shelters and on the streets. He worked each day with people who were either unhoused or on the verge of being unhoused. He commended Homeless Services Case Manager Supervisor Trudy Myers and her team for their work despite its challenges. He asserted that they were following policy, and he posited the region had to have a policy that recognized the difference between the two groups he mentioned. He proposed the creation of a second-level shelter for newly employed and non-chronically unhoused individuals. He suggested finding innovative ways to fund its implementation. He said Camp Stead, formerly used by the Nevada Army National Guard, struck him as a useful property. He recommended that teams be assembled to rehabilitate the property in exchange for housing and small amounts of money.

Ms. Susan Meuschke said she was a resident of Washoe County District 5 and an advocate for seniors. She reminded that one of the largest and fastest-growing

segments of the unhoused population was seniors. She believed being a part of the baby boomer generation was partly to blame for this. She noted it was possible that seniors lost their homes due to divorce or a spouse's death and could, therefore, no longer maintain their homes or afford rent in the community. She stated there were many newly unhoused seniors. She thought it was important to remember that the senior population had unique issues surrounding transportation and healthcare that impacted their ability to access housing.

Mr. Paul White announced that a public debate would occur regarding the area's homelessness issue. He explained that the debaters would include a respected voice from the Cares Campus and the group Education Crusade, who would co-sponsor the event. He hoped everyone connected to the topic of homelessness would attend. He said it would be an opportunity to examine the Cares Campus's claims and record of success. Education Crusade, who had 50 years of experience, would present a diametrically opposed perspective. Education Crusade thought the homelessness problem was completely misdiagnosed, and that the region's direction would only bring continually worsening results. He informed that the event would be widely promoted, and he believed it would benefit the community with truth, honesty, facts, and sincere opinions.

Ms. Frankie Sue Del Papa thanked the Members for their service and time spent addressing homelessness. She shared a story about encountering a gentleman at a fundraiser who sought work to help pay his rent. He needed \$40 to avoid eviction. Her group gave him the money, and she called his housing organization to ensure he would not be evicted. She said more work had to be done in addition to all that had been accomplished. She asserted that there should be solutions for people to keep their housing and not be evicted for \$40. She recently visited the Eddy House and reported that she was both heartbroken and gratified at the work performed there. The Eddy House's Chief Executive Officer, Trevor Macaluso, informed her that the youth homeless rate had increased by 40 percent. Since the Eddy House only served people ages 18 to 24, she questioned how 17-year-olds received help. She declared that more had to be done, and she disclosed that she was inspired to donate to a local housing authority. She opined that the court system should be involved in the conversations and perhaps create a separate task force. She stated it was heartbreaking to see so many tents on Fourth Street. She remarked that private citizens should do as much as they could, and additional entities had to become involved.

Reverend Clare Novak read from a document, copies of which were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk.

Erewyn, no last name given, read from a document, copies of which were placed on file with the Clerk.

24-004C **AGENDA ITEM 4** Approval of minutes of the September 11, 2023 meeting.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Member Reese, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

24-005C **AGENDA ITEM 5** Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services overview presentation of Division, current initiatives, and needs. Dana Searcy, Washoe County.

Ms. Dana Searcy, Division Director of Housing and Homeless Services, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services (4 slides); The mission of the Housing and Homeless Services Division; Washoe County Housing & Homeless Services, Regional Governance and Coordination; Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services Regional Priorities; Northern Nevada Continuum of Care; Built for Zero, Washoe County; Built for Zero, Washoe County, Foundational Work; Washoe County Housing & Homeless Services, Shelter and Services; Shelter and Services – Model; Our Place (2 slides); Nevada Cares Campus; Cares Campus; Cares Campus Construction Timeline; Shelter and Services – Campus Updates; Shelter Outcomes; Shelter and Services – Outcomes; Client Information Snapshot; Partnerships With Service Providers; Local Trends (3 slides); Washoe County Housing & Homeless Services, Housing Support; Housing Initiatives; Challenges Needing Support.

Ms. Searcy explained her presentation would focus on the work being done throughout Washoe County regarding homeless services, not just at the Cares Campus. She said the County brought many resources together throughout the past eight months. She noted that the Housing and Homeless Services (HHS) Division had transitioned to the Human Services Agency (HSA), so the Cares Campus, Our Place, and all regional work and housing efforts were grouped together with one set of staff. She stated homelessness was a very complex system that intersected with behavioral health and medical health, as well as law enforcement and the criminal justice system. She and her team ensured that all the system's components could operate coherently to execute the direction and structure set for the region. Meaningful progress could only be witnessed through that effort.

Ms. Searcy explained that homelessness services had three main sections: regional governance and coordination, shelter and services, and housing initiatives.

Ms. Searcy advised that the diagram shown on the slide titled Washoe County Housing and Homeless Services Regional Priorities was shared many times and displayed how the area operated. She said that to house the area's most vulnerable people, Washoe County was extremely focused on emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, and providing housing for those at 30 percent of the area median income (AMI) or below.

Ms. Searcy explained that the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care (CoC) performed the six actions listed on the slide titled Northern Nevada Continuum of Care, although its work surpassed the scope of those items. She noted that the County's Built for

Zero (BFZ) initiative was grouped under the CoC umbrella, as were all its new initiatives, such as Tenancy Support and lived experience boards. She clarified the CoC was a regional governance committee comprised of many different nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

Ms. Searcy reported that over 105 communities participated in BFZ nationwide. She said that during initial conversations, a lot of focus was put on establishing a by-name list and integrated collaborative group. She discussed a commitment to measure success community-wide instead of program-by-program. She stated the County was focused on the housing supply to ensure that the limited resources supporting housing were strategically utilized.

Ms. Searcy pointed out that the County's two big shelters were Our Place and the Cares Campus, and both intended to reduce barriers. She stated support at those facilities encompassed more than providing a bed or meal. It included on-site services like behavioral health, medical care, and employment support.

Ms. Searcy referred to the slide titled Cares Campus Construction Timeline and mentioned that Phase 3 of construction was near completion. She shared that a ribbon-cutting ceremony would be performed at the Welcome Center around August 1, to which the Members would be invited. She noted that construction for accessible space supportive housing would begin in approximately one to two months and was scheduled to open in 2026.

Ms. Searcy reported that a contract amendment would be presented to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on May 28. The amendment would include a 5 percent cost-of-living increase for frontline staff whose wages had not increased for multiple years. It would also enable staff additions that allowed for more beds and proper staffing ratios. Businesses around the Cares Campus had expressed a need for support, which would be addressed by the contract amendment.

Ms. Searcy informed that 30 overflow cots were added at Cares Campus and 25 at Our Place. These amounts were adjusted throughout the winter based on evolving needs. She said they announced a two-week phase-down for the winter overflow the prior week. The winter overflow beds had closed on April 1 for the past two years, but they wanted to see what transpired when the date was extended. No one had vacated the overflow beds yet, primarily because they were in the only area of the Cares Campus that was not under construction. Prior to making the announcement, they were able to identify 140 additional beds in the region through work with partners. She acknowledged the beds had some barriers attached, but they were able to accommodate any individuals who desired assistance with finding a bed.

Ms. Searcy reported that coordination with law enforcement, the justice system, and hospitals and institutions was increasing. She and her team had been meeting with County departments, the court system, the Public Defender's (PD) Office, the

Alternate Public Defender's (APD) Office, and law enforcement to enable better coordination between the jail, courts, facilities, health system, and hospitals.

Ms. Searcy explained that the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) did not currently contain an item to track people's whereabouts prior to entering the region's homeless system. She noted that general questions were asked to inform diversion efforts, such as inquiries about where someone spent the previous night and how long they had been unhoused. She said that specific questions would be added to address people who were new to the area so they could more fully understand trends. Through observations and conversations with staff, there was no identifiable pattern of a large influx of new people to the region. They did witness a lot of movement within the State since the community offered services not found in other areas of the State. She informed that they would continue to address that topic as more information became available. She mentioned that a clothing closet would be added at the Cares Campus within the next few months.

Ms. Searcy said the data presented on the slide titled Shelter and Services – Outcomes and the slide titled Client Information Snapshot were a combination of information from the Cares Campus and Our Place. Ms. Searcy stated it was imperative to notice what was happening to the area's senior population.

Ms. Searcy discussed the information on the slide titled Local Trends and said the Point in Time (PIT) Count was released the prior week. She mentioned that the public often discussed a 50 percent decrease in homelessness. She clarified that there was a 50 percent decrease in unsheltered homelessness. This was represented by the gray portion of the bar graphs displayed on the graph titled PIT Count Sheltered and Unsheltered 2019-2024. She was often asked about the variability of the data. She explained that the PIT Count was performed once per year at the end of January and was mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She said the PIT Count's purpose was to determine how many resources were sent to the region.

Ms. Searcy pointed out that the region's by-name list, also known as the active count, had been discussed for four years. It was a method for understanding trends more fully on a day-to-day basis. It identified where solutions should be quickly applied or where methods should be altered. It also allowed her team to understand information on a personal level since every individual had unique needs. She announced that quality data was achieved in the fall of 2023. Prior to that, the data varied because new programs were being added, and old data was being cleaned up. She stated that a positive trend could be seen with the current data. The numbers had improved, but the information was very new and delicate, so it was being observed carefully.

Ms. Searcy referenced the graph titled Monthly Inflow & Outflow on the slide titled Local Trends. She said the graph was displayed four years prior, but the data was inaccurate since quality data had not been achieved at that time. The quality data currently in place informed them of how many people entered or exited homelessness each month and provided more insight into emerging trends. The pink squares at the bottom of the graph indicated that more people entered homelessness than were housed. She

explained it was a concerning new trend for which there were no definitive explanations yet. She mentioned that COVID-19 (C19) era support was ending, and many unhoused people, both living in the streets and appearing at the shelters, stated they just recently lost their jobs or received an eviction notice. She said these were new trends and would be closely followed.

Ms. Searcy spoke about Washoe County's housing initiatives. She informed that the Emergency Rental Assistance initiative was targeted at individuals at the Cares Campus and Our Place. She said the Affordable Housing Trust Fund contained approximately \$2 million and was funded by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC). She and her team were almost ready to submit two projects to the BCC in hopes they could be funded through that initiative. One of the projects focused on seniors, and both projects targeted units for citizens in very low income brackets. She explained that the Tenancy Support initiative involved a case manager who followed up with newly housed individuals to support them through any arising issues. Examples included landlord complications or annual benefit paperwork renewals. She noted that the Corporation for Supportive Housing's (CSH) Southwest Director, Ms. Brooke Page, would present information about an assessment of the region's supportive housing needs.

Ms. Searcy discussed the slide titled Challenges Needing Support and declared the information was not new but had not previously been assembled on one list. She asserted that housing was the region's consistent challenge and that the area needed as much of it as possible, specifically in low and very low income brackets of 30 percent AMI and below. She noted that staff were needed for the Tenancy Support initiative, which had produced great results. She said they were beginning to identify specific housing needs related to behavioral health, disabilities, and assisted living.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Searcy for her presentation and commended her for providing explanations about the numbers, as she thought there was misinformation in the community. She clarified that the Board never claimed homelessness was reduced by 50 percent. She acknowledged that she previously stated homelessness had been reduced on the streets and along the Truckee River due to the Cares Campus. She said this illustrated that people were receiving emergency help and the next step, as Ms. Searcy pointed out, was more housing.

Chair Hill noted that Washoe County was the only BFZ area in the State, which meant it had the lowest barriers for people to receive emergency shelter. She said she had anecdotally seen other Nevada counties send unhoused people to Washoe County, a topic that was being explored regionally. She disclosed that County Manager Eric Brown would engage in discussions about the County's desire to help other regions, and she noted that other areas had to pay their fair share. She observed that C19 relief funds had ended, which led to people getting evicted. She stated how impactful Tenancy Support was. She believed it was important to figure out how to provide more vouchers that prevented evictions.

Vice Chair Taylor expressed gratitude for the region's collective efforts. She inquired how many beds the emergency overflow would be reduced to. Ms. Searcy advised that they would be reduced to zero. Vice Chair Taylor questioned where those people would go. Ms. Searcy responded that the emergency overflow shelter was a separate building. It was only staffed from 8:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. and had no case managers. It was truly for emergency overflow when additional capacity was needed due to extreme weather. Vice Chair Taylor asked how many individuals currently used the overflow service, as well as how many individuals used it in April. Ms. Searcy advised that the service was used in April. She noted that other beds throughout the community had opened because the weather had gotten warmer. She believed the reason for the current overflow shelter use was because it was the nicest space at the Cares Campus and the only space not under construction. About 90 percent of the Cares Campus was under construction and was difficult to navigate, which would occur for three months until the whole site opened. She shared that people utilizing the overflow shelter were being connected with case managers to explore other options, either at the Cares Campus or elsewhere in the community.

Vice Chair Taylor observed a recent increase in unhoused individuals in downtown Reno, specifically within the past ten days. Ms. Searcy appreciated the observation and shared that she and her team had also been made aware of the increase. At the time they received reports of the increase, the number of beds at the Cares Campus had not been reduced, nor had their use decreased. Vice Chair Taylor wondered if there would be more unsheltered individuals once the emergency overflow beds were reduced. Ms. Searcy believed that was a choice. She explained that anyone who wished to stay at the Cares Campus would be assisted with securing a spot there. Vice Chair Taylor confirmed that any individuals who wanted to remain at the Cares Campus would be helped with finding a place. Ms. Searcy agreed.

Vice Chair Taylor asked how the forthcoming contract amendments would impact businesses near the Cares Campus, as she received many reports of issues there. Ms. Searcy advised that the contract included a 24-hour per day staff presence in and around the Cares Campus from Line Drive to Threlkel Street and on 4th Street. She mentioned there were receiving courtyards in two locations. Staff would also be present during day and swing shifts to focus on the business area east of Wells Avenue, where the Downtown Reno Business Improvement District (BID) ended. Vice Chair Taylor inquired if it would be like the Downtown Reno Partnership's Ambassadors. Ms. Searcy said it was not an extension of the Ambassadors program, but the functions would be similar. She clarified the new program would be launched as a pilot to support engagement, help connect people with services, and provide support for nearby businesses. She advised that the program would be overseen by the Karma Box Project (KBP), and she noted that KBP Founder and Executive Director Grant Denton was very familiar with the businesses in the area. Vice Chair Taylor stated her biggest concern was ensuring people received resources after the emergency overflow was discontinued.

Vice Chair Taylor mentioned housing initiatives and asked if Ms. Searcy's team worked with individuals who chose never to receive housing. She noted that she had worked with such people, and she questioned if a zero-barrier location existed for them to

utilize instead of parks, sidewalks, or businesses. Ms. Searcy responded that the Cares Campus's Safe Camp was the area's current lowest-barrier shelter and was designed specifically to support individuals who were uncomfortable entering congregate care. She explained that KBP operated the Safe Camp. She said obtaining shelter was a personal choice, and there were options for people who made that choice.

Chair Hill explained that the Cares Campus's Resource Center was the result of a regional fundraising effort and had received significant contributions from the Pennington Family Foundation. The Resource Center was envisioned as a place where people could shower and receive mail. She stated it was never meant to be a full-time shelter, which was understood even when they were working with donors. She said it was meant for winter overflow capacity so that an additional costly tent could be avoided. Ms. Searcy affirmed that was correct and mentioned diversion efforts. Chair Hill commented that people who were close to losing their homes could obtain assistance at the Resource Center.

Member Reese mentioned that the region's differing jurisdictions sometimes overlapped or encountered issues when working together. He commended Washoe County for taking the lead role regarding homelessness and said its work had substantively changed lives for the region's most vulnerable within the past five years. He pointed out that related partners near the Cares Campus provided offerings and that facilities such as the Village on Sage Street, Hope Springs, and Hi-Way 40 were opportunities to exit shelters and enter more permanent housing. He noted that Northern Nevada HOPES (HOPES) recently opened a new clinic that he anticipated would have a transformational impact.

Member Reese discussed the slide titled Cares Campus Construction Timeline and confirmed that the construction phase that commenced in Spring 2024 was for 50 permanent supportive housing units, which Ms. Searcy affirmed. Member Reese asked if additional construction phases were planned beyond the four phases and what the campus's capacity was to provide additional resources. Ms. Searcy explained that the yellow section depicted additional housing that included 50 supportive housing units and 70 low-income units targeted at 50 percent AMI and below. After all the current construction was completed, only approximately one vacant acre west of the Safe Camp would remain. Member Reese inquired about the 70 units. Ms. Searcy said they were part of the agreement with Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI), whose project was unfolding in two phases. The first phase included 50 units of supportive housing and would open in the first half of 2026. ASI was currently working on the funding package for the second phase. Its lease agreement with Washoe County stipulated the second phase would be completed by 2029.

Member Reese spoke about the slide titled Shelter and Services—Outcomes and confirmed that the difference between unique clients served and individuals placed in permanent housing was approximately 2,900. He inquired about the status of those individuals. He asserted that the community had to focus on its successes and areas of improvement. He was concerned about those 2,900 people and others who the system did

not currently count. He asked how to interpret the slide. Ms. Searcy advised there were two groups. One group included resolutions and exits from homelessness. This included self-resolving exits and positive placements out of the shelter, like transitions to CrossRoads, another sobriety or treatment facility, and transitional housing. The second group included those who did not have an available housing option, and those numbers were very high. She specified that she previously spoke about this group that needed supportive housing, assisted living, or behavioral health housing. Because the shelter had the lowest barrier in the region, a lot of people were sheltered, but some had very high needs. In many cases, the housing to provide appropriate support did not exist or existed in a limited fashion.

Member Reese inquired about the statistic regarding a 50 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness. He thought the concept could be potentially confusing to people who used differing terminology and he asked for clarification. He questioned if the decrease in unsheltered homelessness meant that individuals who previously lived on the streets had entered services within the shelter. Ms. Searcy said that was correct. Member Reese clarified that the decrease in unsheltered homelessness did not refer to exits into permanent housing placements, which Ms. Searcy affirmed.

Member Reese shared that he chose his words carefully to help people understand the collective goal. He asked Ms. Searcy to identify the positive information depicted in the slides titled Local Trends. Ms. Searcy advised that the PIT Count revealed a relatively stable total count of homeless individuals over the past four years. She reminded that the PIT Count was a once-per-year snapshot that was impacted by varying situations. For example, the weather was very cold in 2023, so many people were in shelters. It was unseasonably warm in 2024, so many people left shelters, increasing the number of unsheltered people. Overall, the total number had not changed much. Between the increased shelter built at the Cares Campus and Our Place, regional capacity had tripled since the original Record Street homeless shelter counts. She advised that they saw the desired and expected pattern of unsheltered individuals being able to obtain shelter if they chose to.

Ms. Searcy reported that the quality data mark was hit the prior year in September or October. The data before that was relatively accurate, but they did not have assurance it was completely accurate. Over 95 percent of the region's housing providers now entered information into HMIS, allowing staff to observe trends more closely. She and her team were careful to report accurately, and they did not claim to see a significant decrease in homelessness. She shared that they attempted to pare data to simplify the amount of potential confusion, not to decrease transparency. The by-name list revealed trends and one month of data calculated the number of individuals who touched the homeless system in the past 90 days. She clarified it did not represent how many people were in the system per day, but how many had touched the system within the past 90 days. She stated that the ability to monitor inflow and outflow was a game changer at the systems level. Approximately 500 people were placed into permanent housing options, but more were falling into homelessness. This issue was related to housing, expensive rents, and identifying diversion support.

Member Reese observed that Ms. Searcy performed critical work every day, and human suffering was witnessed in the community every day which made it easy to claim that programs were not working. He noted Ms. Searcy's advice was to stay on course and that the region was making progress. He discussed the slide titled Challenges Needing Support and said very few entities wanted to develop for 30 percent AMI and below. Presentations were given to the Reno City Council the prior week targeting this issue. He shared that the City of Reno established density bonuses for 30 percent AMI and below, layered financing, and reductions in sewer and building credits. Despite those measures, Reno could not find willing developers, making it seem like an unattainable goal. He said they were working with available tools, and he asked if the County had insight on how to target that specific subgroup. Ms. Searcy replied a lot was being done and that significant progress was just beginning to become evident. She highlighted that Our Place and the Cares Campus only opened four and three years prior, respectively. It took four years to raise the percentage of programs that entered data into HMIS from 40 percent to 95 percent by convincing them of the benefits. There was additional strain related to the housing market and the end of C19 resources that had to be navigated, but these challenges did not mean the process was not working. There were positive numbers for individuals entering permanent housing options, and she commended the various jurisdictions and teams for their creativity and progress.

Ms. Searcy said other regions frequently visited the area, and ten states had inquired about the community's successful progress. The response given in those situations conveyed that the area's elected officials were united in how resources were used to develop and support. She requested that the course not be altered because the work was not done yet, and she mentioned the lists she presented that specified where support was needed. She explained that the first goal had been to provide enough shelter. That was accomplished, so the current question was how to establish housing options for all who needed them. She assured the solutions were not easy and that, in most cases, programs could not build supportive housing units without community support. The County dedicated \$2 million to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which supported projects targeted to 30 percent AMI and below. The County also dedicated staff, like case managers, to help the programs pencil. She noted that three acres of the Cares Campus were dedicated to permanent supportive housing options, which supported the vision of the three regional jurisdictions. She indicated the program would not be viable without the County's lease with ASI, and she informed that Ms. Page would speak about permanent supportive housing. Assembly Bill 310 (AB310) was being regionally tracked in hopes that it could inject funds into the area. She asserted that the subject was very serious and expensive. The County had purchased the West Hills Behavioral Health Hospital facility and was exploring its potential behavioral health treatment options. Post-treatment housing would need to be discussed.

Member Dahir asked how to provide care for individuals who should not be at the Cares Campus due to factors like age or health. He posited that if those individuals were placed elsewhere, there would no longer be a 2,900-person gap of individuals without permanent housing, as previously mentioned by Member Reese. He was concerned about that group and questioned if there were possible solutions for it. Ms. Searcy advised it was

important to continue to support the Cares Campus staff and case managers, whose jobs were to assess individuals, identify the most appropriate resources, and efficiently move people out of shelters. She stated that it took time to develop relationships, establish benefits, and connect people with appropriate resources. She discussed that housing solutions were more complex than just providing rental assistance for three months because when that assistance ended, people could cycle back into homelessness. She said they wanted to ensure each housing placement was sustainable and that the allotted resources made sense so people could thrive. Member Dahir was concerned about a large portion of people at the Cares Campus and posited that solutions for them should be prioritized.

Member Dahir commended the list of collaborating entities but said he did not see many churches on it. He asked if another list contained churches. Ms. Searcy replied that it did not and advised that memorandums of understanding (MOU) with HOPES and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) were underway. She informed that the faith-based community was next on the list for collaboration and that staff were consistently communicating with the faith-based community. The state of the Cares Campus had not supported onsite volunteers due to a lack of meeting rooms and activity areas, an issue they had been rectifying. She reported that the new Welcome Center was a game changer because many services occurred there. It had areas for case managers and therapists, training rooms, and spaces where groups, such as faith-based groups, could help with meals and other services onsite.

Chair Hill pointed out that permanent supportive housing was pushed for inclusion at the Cares Campus. It would be built in 2025 and was intended for the group Member Dahir referred to. She stated it was unacceptable that individuals who could not take care of themselves lived in an emergency shelter because they had nowhere else to go. She said Washoe County was accomplishing what it could. She explained that the State had allocated funds from the Home Means Nevada Initiative (HMNI) because permanent supportive housing was expensive to build. She stated that Commissioner Garcia was communicating with a legislature subcommittee regarding behavioral health in the State. She posited that the State and federal governments had to provide more support and safe housing for individuals who could not work. She acknowledged that Ms. Searcy and her team were also working toward that.

Member Clark asked how recidivism was measured at the Cares Campus. Ms. Searcy explained that it was measured by determining whether an individual returned to the homelessness system, not just the Cares Campus, within six months of being housed. She specified that HMIS measured the entire community and that 40 agencies reported to HMIS. Someone was counted as returning to the homeless system if they touched a system or received a service from any of the reporting agencies. Member Clark inquired if Washoe County and HUD used the same method to measure recidivism. Ms. Searcy asked Homeless Services Coordinator Catrina Peters to answer Member Clark's question. Ms. Peters said that the terminology and definitions used by Washoe County were aligned exactly with HUD. HUD also outlined how Washoe County defined exits to permanent housing and returns to homelessness. She reiterated that recidivism was measured community-wide, not just determined by returns to specific programs.

Member Clark asked how many people attained successful housing with their own income and without government support. Ms. Searcy did not have that information and stated she would obtain it. Member Clark questioned if permanent supportive housing supported people indefinitely. Ms. Searcy advised that it was intended to be permanent, and there were certain criteria. To be eligible, someone had to be considered chronically homeless and have a disability. Case managers worked to establish support, monitor progress, and assess. If that type of support was no longer needed, the individual would transition out of supporting housing and into a separate type of housing. Member Clark inquired about the separate type of housing. Ms. Searcy informed that it usually entailed fewer services. She clarified that permanent supportive housing was meant to be permanent because it targeted individuals who would need support for the rest of their lives. In some instances, permanent supportive housing was no longer needed if people were stabilized and certain services, like medical and behavioral health, could be provided in the home. She specified that did not happen very often. Member Clark requested that data be provided in the future regarding the number of potential transitions out of permanent supportive housing.

Member Clark asked if people who received assistance with permanent supportive housing were required to be sober. Ms. Searcy responded there was not a sobriety requirement. She said there were 152 individuals in the community queue waiting for permanent supportive housing. Everyone received the same assessment and was added to the Continuum of Care (CoC) housing list. She stated that Ms. Peters was an authority on data and policy. Ms. Peters advised that sobriety was not mandatory as part of a low-barrier model. She noted that Ms. Page would discuss permanent supportive housing and its benefits and overall cost savings to the community. People still received harm reduction support as needed in a low-barrier model. The permanent supportive housing model included active engagement with people struggling with substance use to connect them with services and treatment. Member Clark observed there were no requirements for those individuals to engage in the recommended programs. Ms. Peters affirmed that the requirement would be considered a high-barrier model. A low-barrier model would be utilized for the 50 units of permanent supportive housing due to its demonstrated effectiveness and community cost savings.

Member Clark observed that Washoe County owned the Cares Campus, which was surrounded by the City of Reno. He stated that the facility's impact on Reno's citizens had to be considered, as occurrences at the Cares Campus affected others' quality of life. He posited that a lot of focus was given to the Cares Campus's guests, and more attention had to be given to the surrounding business owners. He shared that he spoke to many of the business owners about the Cares Campus and filmed interviews with them. He proposed that portable restrooms be implemented outside the Cares Campus and cleaned daily. He mentioned restrooms and trash pickup and stated he was concerned about contamination in the Truckee River. He suggested a discount on restroom cleaning services was possible. He recommended restrooms, dumpsters, and cameras be strategically placed, with potential help from the City of Reno. He said a security command post could be

implemented and tasked to report to the City of Reno Police Department to protect business owners, customers, and clients.

Member Clark talked to many people who lived at the Cares Campus because he was in the area nearly every day. He was told about the abundance of drugs and weapons in the campus. He said the chain link fence surrounding the property was easy to slip a weapon through. He was curious if the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) could provide drug-sniffing detection dogs to patrol the area. He inquired if the WCSO could also perform sporadic metal-detecting sweeps to search for weapons that were hidden or buried in dirt. He spoke about housing and estimated that the County had 500 to 600 parking spots near the Reno-Sparks Livestock Events Center. He suggested that the County allow people to park there from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. and that portable showers and restrooms be provided. He said this arrangement would keep people out of public areas and give them a safe place to sleep. He noted it might also be useful during temperate seasons.

Member Clark commended the news publication *This Is Reno* for asking valuable questions and providing important information. He mentioned it was currently performing public records requests regarding the Cares Campus, a subject he was also concerned about. He posited the region should not broadcast unclear information because it could mislead other communities, such as Anchorage, Alaska, to falsely view the region as solving homelessness. He believed that the region should not encourage other communities to copy it until it had a better handle on the situation.

Member Clark stated that the Cares Campus impacted property values on 4th Street, which would be a continuous issue and could result in future revenue losses for the City of Reno. He observed that a large population of seniors lived at the Cares Campus. He posited that senior activities should take place at the Cares Campus instead of transporting seniors to other locations like senior centers.

Member Clark commended Reno and Sparks Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ann Silver for beginning a series of classes that helped approximately 30 people find careers. He noted that some careers paid up to \$60 per hour. He advised that the Cities and County should contact Ms. Silver to help provide willing individuals with job opportunities.

Member Clark was surprised there were no meeting attendees from the Cares Campus, and he questioned if notice of the meeting had been given there. He thought members of the homeless community and businesses surrounding the Cares Campus should serve on the Board. He stated the Board had good intentions but did not have lived experience. He believed individuals with lived experience had insight that could enrich the elected officials' comprehension of the issues.

Member Clark believed the Board should meet more frequently. He thought it should conduct monthly meetings until the situation was better controlled. He stated it was a very prevalent community topic, and consistent meetings would demonstrate to the

public that the region was serious about solving the issue. He felt residents from the Cares Campus should be invited to future meetings.

Vice Chair Taylor appreciated Member Clark's comments and shared that she was also concerned about the businesses surrounding the Cares Campus. She disclosed that she spoke with experts about adding restrooms and trash cans to the area. Those experts advised that restrooms and trash receptacles were not viable solutions for several reasons. She believed an opportunity to discuss consolidated tax (c-tax) resources and distribution existed when examining the City of Reno's responsibilities. She noted that she was very supportive of enforcement on 4th Street.

Vice Chair Taylor confirmed with Ms. Searcy that unhoused people who desired assistance would be provided with support. She remarked that a small percentage of people lived on the streets and did not want services, which caused challenges for businesses and people who tried to use public spaces. She questioned if the solution was a law enforcement tactic and she asked if alternative solutions or locations for those people existed. She mentioned the suggestions for a zero-barrier camping location or parking lot and asked if those options were being analyzed. Ms. Searcy explained that a pilot program for safe parking was being explored. The pilot was not intended for the group Vice Chair Taylor referred to, but for those who preferred to sleep in their vehicles rather than a shelter if they lost housing and needed a short time to recoup. She noted that successful models had established rules. If people were given restrooms and showers with no structure, it typically did not work out and created new issues. She suggested that the topic be further explored at the next meeting. She reminded that no individual could be forced into anything, which is why the issue had to be addressed regionally. Vice Chair Taylor thanked Ms. Searcy for her and her team's work and commended the difference they made in four years.

Member Reese observed a collective desire to discuss many subjects due to the time elapsed since the last meeting. He thought the Board should meet more often and asserted that it was an advisory body and did not take affirmative votes. He was willing to meet as often as necessary to make productive advancements in the crisis. He understood it was challenging and took time, and he commended Ms. Searcy's team for being in the field doing the work. He did not see issues with expanding the Board. He said it related to the concept of an advisory board, so they were just having a community conversation. He believed it appeared odd when those the Board served were not present. He stated the Cares Campus had a significant negative impact on its surrounding businesses. He believed shared policing, not over-policing, was necessary. He thought the WCSO, Reno Police Department, and Sparks Police could potentially share responsibility. Budgets and jurisdictional cooperation would have to be considered.

Member Reese discussed safe parking and said the community needed it. He stated the community explored the concept throughout the years, and he pointed out that Safe Camp was a hybrid model because it allowed people to live in a private space. He had considered the Reno-Sparks Livestock Events Center for safe parking. He mentioned that problems arose, such as how to pay for and staff it, provide showers, and ensure it was

safe for people. He noted that it hosted events, sometimes for months, and he was unsure of how its staff would receive the suggestion. He observed that the Board had diverse political ideologies, but the human crisis did not regard political affiliation, only human suffering. He said the Board's goal was to make good choices for the community. He thought it had done this, and he stated the community accomplished more when it worked together.

Chair Hill asked Ms. Searcy to expand on the methods used to ensure individuals with lived experience served in community groups and in policy making. She noted that the Board did not create policy and that best practices and national standards were utilized to create policy. Ms. Searcy reported that individuals with lived experience were present at all levels in the organizations that operated shelters. She pointed out that many staff members and leaders in organizations such as the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE), Volunteers of America (VOA), and KBP also had lived experience. A lived experience committee was established earlier in the year as part of a request for proposal (RFP) process with the CoC. The committee evaluated the Cares Campus, Our Place, and other programs prior to making recommendations. It was also part of the ranking and rating process used to determine how HUD funding was used and which regional programs received funding. She offered to provide additional information in the future. Chair Hill thanked Ms. Searcy because she felt it was important that people knew how seriously the County considered lived experience.

Member Clark said he was not interested in the situation's politics, only in helping people survive. He had friends in various areas of California where safe parking was utilized. He clarified the intent for safe parking was to target individuals who still had jobs but had lost their housing. It was meant to provide a place to sleep and avoid problems. He posited there were viable solutions for portable showers, and he noted that his ideas were not original but were implemented in other communities. He stated Ms. Searcy and her staff did an excellent job. He meant to provide additional positive solutions, and he understood if any suggestions were deemed unviable. He requested statistics that explained the viability of bathrooms and trash receptacles placed on 4th Street. He opined those amenities were always wise where large numbers of people existed. He was curious if there were studies about the practicality of those services. If they were determined to be impractical, he would no longer suggest them.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Searcy and her team for the challenging work they did. She stated that the Board was excited to continue to support them and to work on permanent housing solutions.

24-006C **AGENDA ITEM 6** Washoe County Permanent Supportive Housing Needs Assessment presentation. The presentation will provide an overview of supportive housing needs in Washoe County. Brooke Page, Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH).

Southwest Director of the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Ms. Brooke Page, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following

titles: Washoe County Supportive Housing Needs Assessment and Business Case; CSH Introductions; About CSH; What We Do; Planning Process; Supportive Housing Overview; Why Supportive Housing; Why Affordable Housing; Root Causes of Homelessness; What Is Quality Supportive Housing; Supportive Housing is for People Who; Key Components of Supportive Housing; Washoe County Needs Assessment; Executive Summary; Partner Engagement; Total Unmet Need for Permanent Housing; Summary of the Cost to Address the Need; The Business Case for Permanent Housing; Rebalancing the System.

Ms. Page stated her presentation would focus on supportive housing. She explained that CSH was commissioned by the Northern Nevada Continuum of Care (CoC) Leadership Council to identify the number of people who needed supportive housing interventions and determine its business case. She specified the business case for supportive housing included factors such as costs and processes, information that was provided in CSH's report.

Ms. Page shared that she was a Nevada native who was passionate about supportive housing. Although CSH was a national organization, she participated in various conversations at the State level. She said the community had profound and intentional conversations and this was not found in many other regions. She said it was important to identify best practices and effective resource investing. CSH operated for 30 years and had 15 national chapters. CSH helped communities identify their need for supportive housing, and its lines of business helped communities identify how to maximize their existing resources. This was accomplished through various methods, such as training and education. She announced that CSH was also a community development financial institution (CDFI) and would love to pair its financial tools with local and State sources to build needed housing. She mentioned an earlier comment regarding the challenge of finding developers willing to do supportive housing, and she said it was owed to a lack of dedicated fund sources, which she would discuss.

Ms. Page explained that the data in the presentation was from 2023, but it was still timely and provided insight into how to turn information into action. Data from 2023 was used to develop the needs assessment, which included recommendations. CSH was working with the community to develop an action plan that addressed short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. Managing that plan would be critical and would involve accountability to make sure needs were addressed.

Ms. Page said supportive housing was an evidence-based intervention that helped address complex issues for 30 years. She pointed out the 2024 fair market rent in Washoe County on the slide titled Why Supportive Housing. She distinguished that market rate and fair market rate were different. There was a shortage of approximately 91,000 units of extremely low-income (ELI) housing in Nevada, which were critical to build. She informed that people who paid more than 30 percent of their household income for rent were considered rent-burdened. There was an affordability issue, and homelessness and housing could not be addressed without discussing stagnant wages and the rising cost of living in the community. She spoke about the root causes of homelessness and said people

would fall into homelessness if wages did not keep up with the rising cost of rent. She declared that services were a vital component of supportive housing and that it was imperative to identify racist housing practices. She mentioned that high-barrier housing required people to make three to four times the rent or required them to be without felonies or background issues. She questioned how people with those issues would ever find a home and stated those practices disproportionately impacted a subset of people. She noted that data demonstrated there were racial disparities in the community. She explained that during planning body meetings, CSH noticed community members would dispute certain housing developments being built in their backyards. She explained that not-in-my-backyard (NIMBYism) mindsets were detrimental to building much-needed multifamily developments.

Ms. Page stated supportive housing was affordable housing because it allowed people to spend less than 30 percent of their household income on housing. Households were also wrapped in whole person care (WPC) services. She pointed out prior discussions regarding higher levels of care or intervention and said appropriate services existed in the WPC model. Ideally, tenancy support involved a ratio of case managers to cases of less than one to fifteen. This allowed case managers to provide access to services and stable housing and it differed from resident services and brokerage case management models. This type of tenancy support was progressive and engaging, and it built trust and relationships. The supportive housing model was intended for multiple groups, specifically those who needed supportive and wraparound services. Examples included individuals who were chronically homeless, people exiting institutional settings such as jails and psychiatric facilities, and those who had intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Ms. Page explained the Washoe County needs assessment was a robust process that involved 18 community-based organizations. The process included contributors with lived experience who conveyed their perspectives on stable housing, and this was reflected in the report's high-level information. She reported it would take an estimated \$300 million one-time capital cost to build the area's needed housing and \$50 million per year to maintain stable housing. The region had a 94 percent stabilization rate of supportive housing, and she felt it was important to capitalize on this successful intervention. Results of the needs assessment showed that in Washoe County, 652 affordable homes had to be built, and rental assistance had to be provided for 3,814 households in need of wraparound support. She communicated that the data conveyed additional perspectives. For example, some of the community's landlords utilized tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) to help keep people stably housed. She said this type of scattered-site housing model was an important component of supportive housing.

Ms. Page displayed a slide titled Total Unmet Need for Permanent Housing and discussed permanent supportive housing (PSH), rapid rehousing (RRH), and diversion (DIV). RRH meant residents needed a housing intervention quickly, and appropriate support would allow this group to receive rental assistance for a shorter period. She highlighted DIV's importance, which involved problem-solving to keep people housed.

Ms. Page reviewed the slide titled The Business Case for Permanent Housing. She stated the Cares Campus was well-utilized and appropriate interventions for emergency housing were in place. The slide demonstrated it was far more cost effective to provide a person with an apartment and wrap them in services than allow them to cycle through other systems. She suggested the community invest resources where it was cost-effective and where the return on investment enabled increased health and incomes. She asserted that supportive housing provided many benefits and was the most effective type of intervention.

Ms. Page reviewed CSH's regional recommendations on the slide titled Rebalancing the System. She said the action planning body would work on transforming the information into action.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Page and commended her work. She asked Ms. Searcy how Washoe County and other partners would utilize the data and inquired how the information would be prioritized. Ms. Searcy said her team worked with the information every day and it was a vital resource for the CoC. She hoped the information would be available sooner for use during Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meetings. For example, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund specifically assisted with the supportive housing Ms. Page spoke about. Additionally, the County wanted to lease three acres to a developer, and the needs assessment would help convey to the BCC why that agreement would be useful and cost-effective. A gauge that demonstrated the community's needs and associated costs was desired to guide conversations moving forward. She stated the information shaped their work every day.

Chair Hill asked Ms. Page how other communities utilized their reports to remain focused, and she stated that \$300 million felt overwhelming. Ms. Page advised that this type of information was used in pipeline work groups throughout the Country. She mentioned a bond measure that was passed in Dallas, Texas, for \$1.25 billion, some of which addressed housing. The community now had the knowledge of how many units it needed and the timeline to develop those units, as well as other pertinent information that would help the community track its housing needs.

Member Dahir opined that the numbers in the report were daunting, and the region had work to do, which would be accomplished one step at a time. He thanked Ms. Page for her presentation. Chair Hill stated awareness of the community's real housing need was valuable.

Member Lawson acknowledged the need for supportive housing. He said the City of Sparks's report would explain how it paid \$2.7 million for 0.95 acres in downtown Sparks, to be utilized for subsidized housing. He opined that \$300 million was a surmountable cost to help 3,500 families. He stated the three jurisdictions were almost out of land, and he asked where they could look to produce \$300 million. Ms. Page advised that they had to ask if current resources were being maximized and identify the gap. She recommended that the jurisdictions identify resource opportunities at the State and local levels, as well as consider philanthropic and other untapped funding sources. She shared

that the community's pipeline work group was tasked with identifying recommendations that pursued all funding the area was entitled to. She noted there were other types of fund sources to be explored, and it was critical to identify the community's current and needed resources.

Member Reese asked for clarification regarding the \$300 million figure because it appeared in two places. First, it appeared as the amount spent to date on homeless and sheltering services within the past five years. It also appeared in CSH's assessment. He noted that some community members thought too much money was spent on the issue to the detriment of other groups like seniors. He confirmed that Washoe County ordered the needs assessment to provide a roadmap for future endeavors. Chair Hill affirmed and said it was intended to provide the entire region with an understanding of the community's needs since they were not being met.

Member Reese mentioned Ms. Page's response to Member Lawson's inquiry about identifying funding sources. He clarified that the community had to think critically about the federal government and State's roles in obtaining funding. He affirmed the \$300 million did not have to come solely from one jurisdiction but involved a concerted effort, as posited by CSH. Ms. Page asserted that was correct and said there were three critical legs on the supportive housing stool. One was capital dollars to build the housing, which was the \$300 million figure. She mentioned that many housing financing tools existed and that the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) was one of the largest funding sources to develop affordable housing. She said the community had to identify how to uniquely leverage those tools to reach its goal.

Member Reese commended the needs assessment. He questioned how the community compared to other communities Ms. Page worked with and asked if she could provide a rating. Ms. Page stated the community was on course and did very well compared to other communities. It was willing to engage in conversations and develop reports that provided data for informed decision-making. Many communities were not taking those actions. Because it was putting itself in a position to make informed decisions, the community received a B plus. Its next step was to utilize the data to inform future actions. Member Reese confirmed that CSH was hired by Washoe County to perform the needs assessment. She assured that was correct and said the next step was to develop an action plan with community stakeholders. The stakeholders would explore what was realistic for Washoe County and develop short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals.

Member Reese observed that the region had to utilize additional tools. He mentioned the bond issuance in Dallas and discussed Washoe County's Government Services Tax (GST). He confirmed those were examples of tools the community had to use to address its identified needs. Ms. Page said CSH wanted to help the community identify all its financing options. It could provide examples and best practices since it had spent time in other communities. She affirmed the community had to discover its unique best methods to create a plan. Member Reese said it had done so at various times in the past and mentioned the County's WC-1 bond. He stated the region was stretched thin, and certain tax structures were regressive. The community was struggling because property tax was

declining, depreciation occurred, and more help was needed from federal and State partners. He thought this was important to recognize and he acknowledged the needs assessment posited that the region had to chart a different path.

Vice Chair Taylor thanked Ms. Page for the information and asked if the Reno Housing Authority (RHA) worked as a stakeholder with the community's pipeline work group. Ms. Page answered that the group worked with the Northern Nevada CoC Leadership Council. Vice Chair Taylor pointed out that CSH's executive summary stated the community was short 650 homes. She summarized that even if the area could secure more funding and vouchers, those resources could not place people in homes because there were not enough homes. She asked what the community could do to increase its housing inventory. She inquired if incentives, housing density bonuses, entitlement barriers, or work with affordable housing builders would be effective methods. Ms. Page said that Vice Chair Taylor's suggestions appeared in the report's recommendations. She explained that other communities developed a joint notice of funding availability (NOFA) that streamlined the financing process and sparked innovation in other communities. Priorities were targeted from a funder's perspective, and specifics were communicated to the developer community. These included the service population, type of housing, and land or resources that were available.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Page and said she was excited to continue working with her.

24-007C **AGENDA ITEM 7** City of Sparks presentation of recent housing efforts including but not limited to the acquisition of property through Home Means Nevada Initiative (HMNI) and rental assistance. Amy Jones, City of Sparks.

City of Sparks Housing Specialist Amy Jones conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Home Means Nevada Initiative (HMNI); Declaration of Restrictive Covenants Running with the Land; 2026 I St (031-184-08) Vicinity Map; 306 10TH St Vicinity Map; Emergency Rental Assistance (2 slides); Households Served Area Median Income; Households Served Total Household Members; Program Expenditures; Rental Assistance Client Distribution Map; Emergency Rental Assistance FY2024-2025.

Ms. Jones said she would provide an update on the City of Sparks's housing effort since her last Board presentation in September 2023. She stated Sparks was awarded \$2,871,000 in Home Means Nevada Initiative (HMNI) funding to purchase vacant parcels throughout the city for affordable housing. Sparks purchased two parcels located at 2026 I Street and 306 10th Street. The city would issue Requests for Proposal (RFP) soliciting affordable housing projects for each site before it made the final project selection. The deed would be restricted through a Declaration of Restrictive Covenants. This would require the units to serve households that earned 60 percent or below the Area Median Income (AMI) and required a 50-year affordability period.

Ms. Jones displayed a map of 2026 I Street and oriented the Board to the site's location. She reported the parcel was 0.207 acres, and city staff estimated that 12 to 14 units could be built. She said the RFP would be advertised in the upcoming week.

Ms. Jones displayed a map of 306 10th Street and noted that Member Lawson referenced the site earlier in the meeting. She oriented the Board to the site's location and explained it was just under one acre. Research on similarly sized parcels in the area was conducted. She reported that The Deco, south of the site, contained 209 units. Square One was west of the site and contained 100 units, so there was a range of the possible number of units that could be built. She shared that staff was currently assessing the disposition of a vacant structure on the site, which would delay the RFP.

Ms. Jones stated that Sparks was appropriated \$3 million through Assembly Bill 396 (AB396) to provide rental assistance for fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024 and for FY 2024-2025. Two programs were created, the Eviction Prevention and Short-term Senior Rental Assistance programs. The Eviction Prevention program provided three months of assistance to prevent eligible households from being evicted. Eligible households must have experienced a financial hardship or emergency that caused them the inability to pay rent. She said the Short-term Senior Rental Assistance program provided \$500 per month for 6 months to assist seniors who had experienced a financial hardship, an emergency, or rent increases. Sparks partnered with the Reno Housing Authority (RHA) to complete the processing, approval, and payment of all the applications. She explained that city staff began meeting with residents and accepting applications on October 2, 2023. All the funds had been expended. There were 341 applications, 303 of which were approved and 38 of which were denied. The average processing time from receiving the application to the payment being issued to the landlord was approximately 20 days. She pointed out that households above 80 percent AMI were not eligible. Of the 303 households that received assistance, 181 were households with children. She said 88 percent of the funds that were expended provided rental assistance, while 12 percent went to administrative fees between Sparks and RHA.

Ms. Jones announced the city's rental assistance programs were anticipated to resume on July 1 with some changes. She explained the AMI eligibility requirement would change from 80 percent and below to 60 percent and below. The amount of assistance provided in the Short-term Senior Rental Assistance program would increase from \$500 to \$750 per month. This was because staff observed that many seniors were eligible for both programs and typically got more assistance in the Eviction Prevention Program. The changes would align the programs so seniors could choose which program would be more helpful for their situations.

Member Dahir was very proud of the programs. He opined that Washoe County's focus allowed the City of Sparks to also gain more focus. He stated each jurisdiction had a role to play in preventing homelessness. He believed it was a team effort and he commended staff at the City of Sparks.

Chair Hill asked if the rental assistance programs would provide help to citizens of unincorporated Washoe County in the future. Ms. Jones advised that the programs would assist residents of the City of Sparks. She noted that the Sparks City Council had discussed the topic. Based on the need it observed during the previous seven months, the Council wanted to keep the funds within the City of Sparks.

Member Reese inquired what happened when someone who lived in the City of Reno asked for assistance. Ms. Jones advised they were provided with the contact methods and information for the City of Reno and its respective programs.

24-008C **AGENDA ITEM 8** City of Reno presentation to provide program updates on affordable housing and rental assistance activities. Non-Action Item. Monica Kirch, City of Reno.

City of Reno Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development Monica Kirch conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Housing and Neighborhood Development Housing Update; Regional Breakdown; Rental Assistance Achievements; Senior Program; Data from Surveys – 68 Responses; Impact Statements (2 slides); Current Eligibility Requirements; HOME Program; Our Toolbox; 8 Community Cleanups.

Ms. Kirch announced she would provide information about the programs administered by the City of Reno’s Housing and Neighborhood Development department. She pointed out that her presentation was similar to the update she provided to the Board in 2023. However, her previous presentation included information for the entire fiscal year (FY), while the current presentation provided data to the end of April.

Ms. Kirch stated the city’s rental assistance program offered short-term, three-month rental assistance support to households within the region, including the Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County. She pointed out that citizens in each of the three jurisdictions were assisted, totaling about \$2.5 million in nearly 1,000 households. The previous year, the program assisted about 1,200 households, and two years prior, it assisted approximately 1,400. She predicted it would be within a similar range for the current year.

Ms. Kirch stated that three months of assistance was the maximum amount a household could receive, but she thought it was important to mention the average length of assistance was 1.81 months. She said this demonstrated that people did not take advantage of the program nor need the entire three months to stabilize. She reported that each household received an average of \$2,600 in assistance.

Ms. Kirch announced that Reno began a pilot program that year called the Interim Assistance for Cost Burdened Seniors. In the program, staff that administered rental assistance would qualify seniors who were at 60 percent of the area median income (AMI) or below. If those seniors paid more than 30 percent of their income in rent, the program provided a six-month reprieve. In that reprieve, the program paid the balance of rent that was above 30 percent of the individual’s income. She reported that 174 seniors

were assisted with an average of \$1,500 per household. She said the full budget of \$273,000 for the program was expended.

Ms. Kirch stated the city desired to obtain additional data once it transitioned back to a real emergency rental assistance program after COVID-19 (C19). This included more information about people's housing situations, time periods, other resources they needed, and their satisfaction. Reno started sending out surveys the previous July that would provide a full year of data in the upcoming July. She noted that they were exploring the possibility of sending surveys via text messages to obtain a higher response rate and were working with the information technology (IT) department to facilitate that change.

Ms. Kirch believed it was important to share impact statements from people who received assistance because the information could be useful. She thought it was beneficial to see kind notes that thanked staff for their thoughtfulness and commitment to helping people.

Ms. Kirch announced that Reno's assistance programs had eligibility requirements, one of which was an income below 60 percent AMI. Various documentation was also required. Staff were available during walk-in hours three days a week for two hours per day. There was also a housing phone line that citizens could call for assistance with items such as navigating the online portal or if they did not have identification (ID). She noted that certain barriers, such as a lack of ID, could be navigated around. For example, a citizen could use a Clarity card if they did not have an ID card. She said Reno tried to help in every area that it could.

Ms. Kirch discussed housing units and said Reno led the Washoe County HOME Consortium (WCHC). Through the WCHC, the City approved \$4.3 million in funding for 4 affordable housing projects that would produce 580 units within the next couple of years. Through the WCHC, Reno contributed funding towards developing 3,500 affordable housing units in the past 5 years, all of which helped people at 60 percent AMI and below. She specified the units were regular affordable housing units, not permanent supportive housing units. She reported that Reno contributed to two other housing projects that were still under construction. One was The Village on Sage Street, and the other was Hi-Way 40. Reno donated land and money towards both projects and was working with the Volunteers of America (VOA) and the Community Foundation of Northern Nevada (CFNN) on both projects. She mentioned that State funding was being utilized, and the projects created lower-income units. Hi-Way 40 included a partnership with Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS), and preference there would be given to individuals with mental disabilities.

Ms. Kirch reviewed the slide titled Our Toolbox. In addition to direct funding, Reno used other unique tools to help support housing projects, such as committing its volume cap to affordable housing units. Reno contributed about \$3 million in sewer waivers and building permit waivers toward new units. Along with some other

jurisdictions, Reno awarded parking reduction fees and density bonuses. She shared that two housing developments on the Cares Campus received sewer reduction fees.

Ms. Kirch stated that in addition to providing housing and rental assistance, Reno performed neighborhood improvements. These improvements occurred in neighborhoods with low to moderate incomes since they might not be able to fund improvements themselves and included items such as sidewalks, parks, and facilities. She noted that Reno had provided about \$3.5 million in funding within the past few years to parks, including Paradise Park and Robinhood Park.

Ms. Kirch explained that the Community Cleanups program recently transferred to her department. While the program was available for everyone, it was typically utilized by people who could not afford to dispose of their waste properly. She said this helped citizens live safely in their homes without debris and other hazardous items.

Vice Chair Taylor mentioned that the City of Sparks received funding related to Assembly Bill 396 (AB396). She asked how much funding the City of Reno received from AB396 and inquired about its additional program funding mechanisms. Ms. Kirch replied that Reno and Sparks received the same amount of funding from AB396, which was \$3 million over 2 years. Reno also utilized certain trust funds from the State for rental assistance. She noted that Reno had applied for HOME Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP) funds for rental assistance.

Vice Chair Taylor commended the number of households within the three jurisdictions that were assisted by the programs. She asked if people from each jurisdiction were served or if they were ever sent to other jurisdictions or to the Reno Housing Authority (RHA). Ms. Kirch responded that people who came to the program were served. She explained that cross-referencing was performed to ensure that a City of Sparks resident did not already receive assistance from Sparks. Eligible Washoe County residents were assisted because the City of Reno knew they were not also being served by Sparks.

Member Reese requested clarification about rent subsidies. He confirmed that the program worked with landlords to cover the difference between 30 percent of someone's income and the amount they paid above that in rent. Ms. Kirch affirmed. She said the pilot program targeted seniors who lived in affordable housing units because they were already qualified. She noted that other seniors reached out when they became aware of the program. She clarified that someone was considered cost-burdened if they paid more than 30 percent of their total income in rent. Therefore, the program attempted to give them a short-term reprieve by paying the difference between the 30 percent and the actual rent amount for six months after they were qualified. Member Reese asked if the pilot program's efficacy had been studied and if it was determined that the program kept seniors in their homes. Ms. Kirch advised that the six months would conclude at the end of June, at which time the data could be pulled and analyzed. Member Reese stated the program essentially provided a form of universal basic income for six months. He asked Ms. Kirch if staff would report back to the Board once the data was collected. She replied that was

correct, in addition to a variety of other bodies. It would then be determined if the program would continue the following FY, given the availability of funding.

Member Reese spoke about legal service protections and the Washoe County Law Library, where Lawyer in the Library took place. He said a lot of situations brought to Lawyer in the Library turned out to be issues between tenants and landlords. He felt there was a need in the region for services offered by organizations such as Nevada Legal Services and Northern Nevada Legal Aid (NNLA). He suggested that those types of services be collectively explored across jurisdictions so people with low or no income could access legal representation through volunteer lawyers. Ms. Kirch informed that her department partnered with those agencies. She explained that depending on a citizen's need, they would be referred to either legal services agencies or the Silver State Fair Housing Council (SSFHC). She said her department also worked with the Reno Justice Court (RJC) and was looking to establish an eviction and diversion court. Staff had met with the RJC and RHA for the past several months to explore that possibility.

Member Lawson congratulated the Reno City Council for its purchase of land from the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and commended the progress it made in subsidized housing units. Member Reese stated that Member Lawson was humble and said it was a joint project. RTC, with Member Lawson as Chair, had a role in the purchase, as did the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). He asserted that all three agencies worked together to facilitate the project. Chair Hill declared that teamwork was essential, and it was clear that more teamwork was needed to establish additional affordable housing units.

Member Clark announced that a new nonprofit organization called Senior ResQ helped seniors in the area. He liked to focus on seniors because he thought they were often overlooked. Senior ResQ was started by a local developer who sought involvement from other developers. He provided an example of the organization's services and said if a senior experienced a \$250 rent increase, Senior ResQ would pay \$200 per month for 12 months. This allowed the individual time to act and perhaps find other arrangements or negotiate with their landlord. He stated that 12 months provided adequate breathing room, as opposed to a shorter timeline, such as 60 days. He suggested that people research Senior ResQ to see if there was an opportunity to help and recommended that Ms. Kirch direct senior citizens to the organization. Ms. Kirch noted that if a citizen seemed too cost-burdened, staff would try to help them get into other units that would be more sustainable for them. This allowed long-term sustainability once the assistance period ended.

Chair Hill was optimistic and excited to hear the outcome of the senior pilot project.

24-009C **AGENDA ITEM 9** Board members announcements, reports and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Member Clark believed the Board's Members should include community members, individuals who lived at the Cares Campus, and local businesspeople who were

impacted by the Cares Campus and its surrounding activities. He desired more frequent Board meetings and increased community involvement.

Member Dahir requested more frequent Board meetings. He wanted to explore if the region had examined its full range of opportunities for obtaining grants. He said he had not witnessed as much collaboration in other states as there was in the region, and he felt that federal and State grants were more likely to be awarded for collaborative efforts.

Vice Chair Taylor expressed a desire to discuss potential zero-barrier solutions with Ms. Dana Searcy, Washoe County Division Director of Housing and Homeless Services.

24-010C AGENDA ITEM 10 Public Comment.

Mr. Michaelangelo Aranda stated he was a Washoe County District 2 resident and a City of Reno resident in Ward 2, soon to be Ward 6. He announced he was a candidate for Ward 6 City of Reno Council Member. He shared a story about his recent experience driving on Steamboat Parkway in the evening. He almost collided with an unhoused gentleman crossing Steamboat Parkway. He asked the gentleman why he was crossing so late and was told that the gentleman was asked by either security or law enforcement to leave a shopping center because it was private property. Mr. Aranda noted that most deaths of unhoused individuals resulted from traffic accidents. He advocated for increased awareness regarding public safety and traffic concerns, as roads were becoming increasingly busier in south Reno. He spoke about volunteers who helped children cross busy roads and donated high-visibility vests and flags. He posited the same could be done for unhoused individuals as a temporary solution. He said the region had to face the reality that certain people lived on the streets, and those people had to be provided with resources to stay safe. He mentioned a nonprofit organization that helped provide luggage bags to homeless individuals, which were safer and more transportable than shopping carts. He commended Member Clark's suggestion to provide a safe location for those who did not want to visit the Cares Campus or who used alternative housing solutions, such as living in a car or a tent. He commented that a program called Camp Resolution was piloted in Sacramento, California, that was still in its pilot phase. He said the city had stopped delivering water and trash pickup services, but perhaps those services could be funded if the model was implemented locally.

Ms. Penny Brock announced she was a Washoe County resident. She declared that the amount of money spent on homelessness did not align with information provided by various agencies and organizations. She asserted that the Country was entering a recession and that both the federal government and Washoe County were in debt. She questioned the level of burden that would be placed on the region's taxpayers and mentioned a property tax increase would occur in July. She stated that she supported helping the homeless population, but she thought there were not enough unhoused individuals in the area to justify so much spending at the federal, State, and local levels. She requested accountability for where the money was spent and said it was not possible


to perform an audit of the Cares Campus. She remarked that she was refused answers when submitting public records requests. She recently found out that Built for Zero (BFZ) existed only in the local area. She claimed that other counties in the State and areas in California would send their unhoused individuals to Washoe County since it used the BFZ model.

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11:46 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.


ALEXIS HILL, Chair
Community Homelessness Advisory Board

ATTEST:


JANIS GALASSINI, County Clerk

Minutes Prepared by:
Kendra DeSoto-Silva, Deputy County Clerk