

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

MONDAY

9:00 A.M.

MARCH 7, 2022

PRESENT:

**Alexis Hill, Chair**  
**Ed Lawson, Vice Chair**  
**Neoma Jardon, Member**  
**Kristopher Dahir, Member**  
**Bonnie Weber, Alternate Member\***

**Janis Galassini, County Clerk**  
**Herbert Kaplan, Deputy District Attorney**

ABSENT:

**Bob Lucey, Member**  
**Devon Reese, Member**

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 9:04 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:

**22-019C      AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.**

Mr. Sean Hosier shared that he was a success story and noted all he had to do was listen and follow procedure. He said he used to have to protect his items daily or they would be stolen. He expressed appreciation for where he lived now and the things he had. He thanked Yvonne and said that to him she was the program.

Mr. Pat Cashell announced it was his last Community Homelessness Advisory Board meeting as the director of the Volunteers of America (VOA). He noted he had taken over the shelter operations ten years ago and it was the best time of his life. He informed that his last day would be March 31, which coincided with the last day he was homeless and struggling with addiction. He commented it was an amazing journey and he had been blessed to work with wonderful people. He encouraged the Board and the community to continue doing the work. He believed it was making a difference and huge strides had been made in the last ten years. He thanked everyone for their trust and for allowing him to serve as the director of the VOA. Chair Hill thanked Mr. Cashell for his service and acknowledged that the work was hard but appreciated.

**22-020C      AGENDA ITEM 4 City of Reno Clean and Safe Program presentation.  
Cynthia Esparza, City of Reno. Non-Action Item.**

Senior Management Analyst Cynthia Esparza conducted a PowerPoint, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Clean & Safe; Program Highlights; Clean & Safe Program; Annual Fiscal Impacts Overview; Reno Initiative for Shelter & Equity; Operational Coordination; Community Health & Safety; Public Spaces; Truckee River Operation Summer 2021; Truckee River Operation Winter 2022; 2018-2021 Reno Direct Service Requests; 2021 Reno Direct Service Requests; 2021 Activities Overview; Photo of Mackay Stadium; Outreach; Outreach Outcomes; and Future Projects.

Ms. Esparza noted the program began as a strategy to address public health and safety along the river; however, over time it became service and outreach centric with the mission of improving equitable access to public space. The Downtown Reno Park Ambassadors partnership provided an additional team to work specifically at the parks within the business improvement district and two neighboring parks. She mentioned that additional staff was hired for the Reno Police Department's Mobile Outreach Safety Team, which was an additional tool the program used for community outreach. In January, an interlocal agreement was signed with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) to allow the program to provide outreach on their properties.

The contract with the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE), Ms. Esparza explained, was intended to bridge the gap between service-resistant individuals and the Clean and Safe Program. She said RISE provided lived experience to the outreach, helped with staffing levels, reduced pressure on law enforcement agencies, and worked weekends and evenings. She hoped the partnership would be transformative and assist in connecting additional individuals to services.

Ms. Esparza explained the program held daily operation huddles to review service requests and determine where to deploy services. The Outreach Team discussed trends in the community and individuals that were found to need additional assistance. The weekly downtown huddle was important to the partnership the program had with the City of Reno and the Downtown Reno Partnership. Through the downtown huddles, the program was able to provide outreach during events that brought a lot of people to the downtown area.

Ms. Esparza said community health and safety were the top priorities for the program. She showed photos of clean-ups the program had done and said follow-up at the sites was important to maintain the clean-ups. She opined the rise in service requests in 2020 was due to the inability of the program to do outreach during the pandemic. She thought the decrease in service requests for 2021 was partly due to the river operation and additional shelter in the region. Last year, the municipal court was added as a resource to the program to help inform individuals about community court. Thirty-one citations resulted from the program's clean-up efforts, which was less than one percent of the contact the community action officers made. Join Together Northern Nevada was part of the outreach efforts with the municipal court, which added more support for individuals.

Ms. Esparza said the program's Community Outreach Program Coordinator was part of the Built for Zero Outreach Team that worked with the County; this helped the program facilitate enrollment into the Safe Camp. One service provided was identification replacement, which included connecting individuals to the Social Security Office and the Department of Motor Vehicles. She mentioned details were being finalized for two additional park rangers to provide support to the Truckee River. She said community members had shown interest in assisting with the maintenance of local areas. In April, employees would attend a virtual training led by Jon DeCarmine.

**\*9:11 a.m. Alternate Member Bonnie Weber arrived.**

Member Jardon said calls from the community about homeless issues had diminished, and she received feedback from the citizens that the areas in the City of Reno looked better than they had in the past. She noted the Riverwalk looked completely different but still needed work. She wondered when the point-in-time count for 2022 would be done because she was curious to see if the numbers were trending in the right direction, due to the added programs and personnel.

Ms. Esparza said the data could be pulled at any time. She explained that she worked with Reno Direct to get daily reports, which enabled the program to deploy resources to certain areas. She stayed updated on the numbers and what the trends were based on keywords. Member Jardon wanted to ensure the data was pulled around the same time it had been previously pulled. She opined the information provided to the Board was great and the program was beneficial. She thought the work everyone put in the last few years was starting to come together.

Member Dahir appreciated the work done by the program; however, he stated the Truckee River should have never gotten as bad as it had. He opined the agencies needed to be careful with the upkeep because the Truckee River was a resource for the community. He did not want to discourage anyone from being at the river. He said the agencies needed to work together as a region on the homeless and clean-up issues. He wondered if it would be better to see the data monthly.

Chair Hill thought the Clean and Safe Program's collaboration with RISE was a game-changer. She was excited to see the results and thought the statistics on housing arrangements would go up, especially as more housing was added to the community. She asked if the 1,500 notices given were repeat offenders. She wondered if the program had access to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Ms. Esparza said the notices could be duplicates because there was a lot of movement in that population. She noted there was not an entry for every individual in the HMIS; oftentimes, tents were vacated. She said everyone did receive the proper notice.

**22-021C** **AGENDA ITEM 5** Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (H.O.P.E.) update. Lieutenant Anthony Miceli, Washoe County Sheriff's Office; Lieutenant Chris Rowe, Sparks Police Department. Non-Action Item.

Lieutenant Rowe conducted a PowerPoint, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He reviewed slides with the following titles: Sparks Police Department H.O.P.E. Program Update; 2021 Data; Challenges; Additional Challenges; and Successes.

Lieutenant Rowe said the jurisdictional agreement between the Sparks Municipal Court and the Reno Municipal Court allowed the Sparks Police Department (SPD) HOPE officers and patrol officers to notate citations to go through community court rather than municipal court. He explained the citations were still routed through the municipal court to be reviewed by a judge. If the judge believed the citation to be a good candidate for community court, then jurisdiction would be transferred.

Lieutenant Rowe explained that approximately 15 percent of the people the SPD HOPE Team made contact with had accepted services. He said the SPD HOPE Team took law enforcement action on about 2 percent of the people they contacted. He observed that 19 of the arrests were felonies, which equated to about 51 percent of all arrests. He noted that officers had uncovered a human trafficking ring because of an arrest.

Lieutenant Rowe said the biggest hazard with broken down recreational vehicles (RVs) was leaking sewage holding tanks. The tanks, he explained, would leak black and gray water onto city streets. Another concern was RVs parked in areas that restricted the view of traffic, which could potentially cause traffic accidents. The SPD HOPE Team partnered with the Sparks Fire Department to perform safety notifications at homeless encampments. Despite their mitigation efforts, it did not result in much success as many homeless encampment fires occurred after the safety notifications.

Lieutenant Miceli conducted a PowerPoint, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He reviewed slides with the following titles: Washoe County Sheriff's Office H.O.P.E. Program Update; 2021 Data; Large Scale Clean-Ups (2 slides); Challenges; Additional Challenges; Successes; and Future.

Prior to any clean-up done, the County HOPE Team met multiple times with the homeless population in the impacted area to offer outreach, education, and resources. Lieutenant Miceli said the County HOPE Team had the same challenges as the SPD HOPE Team regarding broken down and abandoned RVs. He explained the County's HOPE Team worked with other County employees to tow the RVs and trailers that were inoperable and abandoned. The RVs and trailers were moved to a County facility on Longley Lane where they were drained of fluids and properly disposed of.

Lieutenant Miceli mentioned that because open land was limited, there was difficulty finding open land for people to safely camp on. He noted the County Hope Team offered outreach to individuals who would then move over to another jurisdiction. He said the County HOPE Team was working with the County to get verifications of bed space in real-time. He opined it was important for the County HOPE Team to be able to find out, on an hourly basis, what bed spaces were available.

Lieutenant Miceli said the County HOPE Team was working on developing an ordinance regarding illegal camping to present to the Board of County Commissioners that would allow the team to deal with areas more efficiently. He opined it was important that the unsheltered population understood the County HOPE Team was there to offer resources. He believed that the relationships the County HOPE Team was able to make with the homeless individuals were positive, which led to the individuals being very cooperative when they were moved during clean-ups.

Lieutenant Miceli said the County HOPE Team alleviated the service calls to patrol deputies, which freed the deputies to deal with other calls for service. He said the County HOPE Team did a great job of dealing with calls for service regarding homeless encampments and unsheltered persons. He opined it was beneficial for the County HOPE Team to take those calls because regular patrol deputies might not have the experience or education to offer the proper services to those people.

The County HOPE Team had been publicized heavily, and Lieutenant Miceli said they received many emails from the community regarding concerns, success stories, and appreciation for the team. He noted the County HOPE Team currently used a system that communicated with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) but thought developing a consolidated database for jurisdictional continuity would be beneficial. He said the County HOPE Team was currently providing a lot of the follow-ups with individuals and acting as caseworkers to ensure resources were provided. He said having caseworkers permanently hired and assigned was a future plan.

Chair Hill mentioned she had done a ride-along with Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Sergeant Shatayna Daniels and noted the compassion she had and the hard work she did as a caseworker. Member Dahir appreciated the work the HOPE Teams did to ensure people were being helped; however, he hoped people were being punished if they were breaking the law. He wanted to clarify to the community that laws should not be broken because the police would ensure the community was kept safe. He opined the presentation implied the agencies were doing their best to avoid arresting someone who might be a criminal and he did not agree with or support that. He noted the police were more active than ever in dealing with crimes, and he thought it was important the HOPE Teams had a balance of helping individuals and punishing them if they were breaking the law. He did not want arrests to be seen as a negative statistic and explained holding people accountable was a form of caring for them.

Vice Chair Lawson asked what the average amount of times it took for someone to accept services was. Lieutenant Rowe said it could take between eight to ten contacts before someone felt comfortable enough to have a real conversation. He opined there was not a set number of encounters to build trust and it was dependent on the person and their situation.

Vice Chair Lawson asked whether the 2,000 contacts included multiple contacts with the same individual. Lieutenant Rowe responded the number included all contacts, including multiple contacts with the same individual. Vice Chair Lawson asked

how information was exchanged between the Cities of Sparks and Reno and the County. Lieutenant Miceli said there was a lot of communication between the regional teams and reiterated his hope for a consolidated database between the agencies. He noted the agencies were not privy to much information from other agencies due to regulations; however, if the information was entered into the County's system it would transfer over to the HMIS. He said there was information that other agencies put into the HMIS that the County was unable to see.

Vice Chair Lawson thought a consolidated database was the way to streamline the process of getting resources for the homeless. He opined the different jurisdictions needed to be aware of contact previously made to an individual. He mentioned approximately six months ago the Board had asked for an effective way for the jurisdictions to communicate with each other.

Vice Chair Lawson opined people were not being arrested for being homeless and down on their luck; people were being arrested for breaking the law. He noted there was a group of homeless people that preyed on other homeless people and mentioned some incidents of wanted felons being arrested. Lieutenant Miceli noted that the County HOPE Team encountered an individual at an encampment who was wanted by the federal government. He said the County HOPE Team did a great job of making contact with the individual and taking him into custody without any issues.

Member Jardon said it was important for the jurisdictions to not only share information but to be able to effectively transfer resources and services. The entities, she explained, needed to know the status of the individual and what their needs were. She wondered if transportation was provided when an individual was encountered and referred to a resource. Lieutenant Miceli responded that most of the time they did transfer the individual.

Member Jardon asked if there was a shelter or facility that most encounters were directed to. She asked what the largest demographic was that the HOPE Teams saw. Sparks Police Department Sergeant Jaime Adhunko said the City of Sparks had the most contact with older males. She said people were directed to different resources depending on what services they needed. She said the majority of people were referred to the Psychiatric Urgent Facility (PUF) on Mill Street. She said PUF offered a variety of services, such as assistance with identification, psychiatric services, and primary care providers.

Member Jardon asked whether PUF directed individuals to shelters or housing. Sergeant Adhunko said once the individual was put into PUF's system and had their psychiatric and primary care provider appointments, PUF would help them apply for housing. Member Jardon wondered if data was provided to the Board regarding trends and calls for service. She opined that information would be helpful to understand how the jurisdictions were handling their calls for service. She noted that prior to the opening of the CARES Campus, the agencies could not do a lot of enforcement because there was

nowhere for the homeless to go. She said the amount of bed space for homeless individuals had doubled and that had helped the community tremendously.

Member Weber asked if the Cities of Sparks and Reno had illegal camping ordinances and whether or not the County's proposed camping ordinance would be similar to the ordinances the Cities of Sparks and Reno had. Sergeant Miceli said the proposed ordinance would mirror the ordinances that the Cities of Sparks and Reno had. Member Weber noted there was a panhandling problem and asked if any of the entities had a panhandling ordinance. Lieutenant Miceli said panhandling was covered under the Nevada Revised Statutes. Member Jardon said the Reno Police Department had a lot of ordinances regarding illegal panhandling in certain areas of the city.

Member Weber asked if the entities did training and education together. She opined the jurisdictions should have the same training, so things were done the same. Sergeant Miceli said the WCSO communicated often with the Cities of Sparks and Reno regarding trainings. He said they worked together to provide the same services across the community. The WCSO visited other agencies that had developed successful programs to learn what resources, trainings, and education they used.

Member Weber asked for further information about PUF. Member Jardon asked if PUF used to be Well Care and Sergeant Achunko and Sergeant Daniels responded that it was still Well Care. Sergeant Daniels said the WCSO had a meeting with PUF and discovered that PUF offered many services she was unaware of. She informed that PUF had 300 beds available and a team that transported people to Reno Behavioral Health and Renown. She mentioned PUF had recently started a Mobile Outreach Team that could meet the HOPE Teams on location to do a screening process with individuals. She opined it was tremendously beneficial that individuals could receive help immediately.

**22-022C**      **AGENDA ITEM 6** Board update and discussion on the Nevada Cares Campus Emergency Shelter. Dana Searcy, Washoe County. Non-Action Item.

Ms. Searcy conducted a PowerPoint, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Cares Campus Priorities; Updates; Partnership; Safe Camp ModPods (2 slides); Jon DeCarmine Recommendations; Staffing; Stats (3 slides); Exits from Emergency Shelter; Exits from Safe Camp; Up Next; Construction Update (2 slides); Sprung Update; Cubbies; Showers/Restrooms/Laundry; Showers/Restrooms; Laundry; Phase III Building, Floor 1; Phase III Building, Floor 2; Dining Hall (2 slides); Exterior/Green Space (2 slides); and Homeless Services Update.

Ms. Searcy said the newly opened women's dorm remained full and there was only one night the overflow shelter was at capacity. She noted that capacity was full in the warming center, and it was anticipated the warming shelter would remain open through the end of March. She explained that partnership and volunteer development were a big focus during the past month.

The Community Resource Guide was created due to a long-term standing request, Ms. Searcy explained. She noted the team struggled to create a resource guide that stayed up-to-date and did not end up as trash on the street. The resource cards were printed to fit in a pocket and included emergency shelter information, as well as a Quick Response (QR) code that linked to the County's website and listed shelter availability. She said feedback had been fairly positive and the card could be tweaked if needed.

Ms. Searcy explained the service providers and partners were the groups of individuals and companies the CARES Campus (CC) was working with through memorandum of understanding agreements. She noted there were another ten providers and partner agreements in the works, and that list would continue to grow. The process of bringing the service providers and partners on campus involved making sure everyone understood who was on campus and what they were providing. Plans were made to ensure the partnerships were working effectively.

The Volunteer Program, Ms. Searcy explained, had one volunteer signup since its launch. That person attended orientation and would be starting soon to help serve meals on the campus. She looked forward to the program growing and continuing to evolve to the needs of the campus. She noted there would be future discussions on volunteer opportunities and how to get the community involved.

Ms. Searcy said there had been a lot of recruitment activity happening with the Volunteers of America (VOA) and things were looking much more positive. The County positions of Case Manager and Mental Health Counselors had garnered quite a bit of interest and a large interview process would be happening later in the month. She noted a new Analyst had started and a Mental Health Counselor Supervisor would start the following week. Two Case Managers, approved through last year's County budget, would work with the Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement Team. One Case Manager would work at the Safe Camp, and 20 would be hired for the CC.

Ms. Searcy said the CC was working towards creating monthly statistic packs that could be emailed and posted on the website. She opined the packs would enable the community to better see progress made at the CC. She talked about the possibility of expanding those measurements to other programs in the community for consistency in reporting and making decisions.

Ms. Searcy said construction was about six weeks out for the campus. She explained that a lot of construction preparation was happening, such as temporary buildings and running power and internet to those buildings. She said the VOA staff would be moving to the front of the campus to help with phones and fielding visitors. The CC was working with Allied Security and the VOA to determine the best way to equip staff to answer phones and provide accurate information about beds. Staff was working with the City of Reno Housing Team and the post office to relocate the community mail onto the CC. She said a building was in place, but they had to plan carefully to ensure the timing was correct. She acknowledged that the capacity dashboard was slow and mentioned they were working towards an automatic update process.

Member Dahir asked why the number of veterans was so high when there were many resources for them in the community. Chair Hill opined the caseworker shortage had something to do with the high number of veterans at the CC. She hoped when more caseworkers were hired, they would have employees to meet with the veterans and provide them with the available resources. Ms. Searcy said there were big groups, like women and veterans, who had specialized opportunities and resources available to them. She noted it would be an organized effort to get those resources to them as the CC hired more caseworkers. Member Dahir asked if caseworkers from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) partnered with the CC. Ms. Searcy replied the VA was a good partner to the CC and said she would research the matter and bring an answer to the Board.

Ms. Searcy said Phase III was the 20,000 square foot building that included a cafeteria, case management space, mental health space, training space, an intake area, and a security area. The second floor of the building would have administrative offices, a break room area, and locker space for staff. Member Jardon wondered where the guests did laundry until the permanent laundry facilities were built. Ms. Searcy answered that the City of Reno provided a temporary laundry facility that would remain on site until the permanent laundry facilities were built. She noted the building with restrooms, showers, and laundry facilities would be the first building under construction; the target date for completion was December.

Ms. Searcy mentioned Phase IV was targeted for the Resource Center which would serve as a hub of partnerships and resources for people who were unsheltered or about to be homeless. The Resource Center would provide meals, showers, and laundry facilities. The current garage building would be repurposed to house the Resource Center and would include space for wintertime overflow capacity.

Ms. Searcy noted the sprung structure would be divided into six housing sections and one storage section. Each housing section would hold approximately 100 people. Everyone coming onto the campus would pass through an intake area, which included an x-ray machine and bag scanner. She noted the focus at the intake area was minimal touch. She mentioned there would be an outdoor patio area between the building and the shower building.

Member Jardon asked whether the kitchen was a commercial kitchen. Ms. Searcy said it was a warming kitchen like the Catholic Charities setup. Warm meals would be brought in and separated into individual trays. She noted most of the area would be preparation tables and a storage area that could be removed and replaced with freezers and ovens. The goal, she explained, was to make the space flexible for other uses.

Member Dahir asked whether any transitional housing was being done and Ms. Searcy responded that the transitional housing would be in the large purple building on the Construction Update slide. Member Dahir wondered whether the nursing area was a cubicle or a place where medical services could be performed. He opined it did not do the region any good to continue to bring ambulances to the CC.

Ms. Searcy explained the nurse's station was similar to a school nurse's room and included two exam tables, a sink, and a small refrigerator for medication; the room would be located next to a restroom. She said the nurse would be able to take care of bruises and bumps, which they saw regularly at the CC. The CC would have a hotline number for the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). The hotline would enable staff and guests to speak with a nurse before calling 911. The intent, she noted, was to reduce the number of calls to 911. She noted the hotline had worked well at Our Place. She said the Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement Program facility would be built next to the CC and they had discussed a partnership regarding medical services.

Vice Chair Lawson was amazed at how far the CC had come in a year. He thought Ms. Searcy and her team had done a great job. He said it showed the agencies could accomplish things together when they wanted to.

Member Jardon asked Ms. Searcy to keep the Board informed regarding the monthly statistic packs. She believed it was good data to share with the community to show how things were progressing at the CC. She wondered if Mr. DeCarmine was scheduled to return for an assessment. She thought it would be helpful to get his expert opinion. Ms. Searcy mentioned Mr. DeCarmine would be returning in May to help with the next phase of the transition. She said she would put Member Jardon's suggestions on the plan for Mr. DeCarmine.

Member Weber asked if the resource cards would be distributed in the community. Ms. Searcy responded she would get the cards wherever the Board desired. Ms. Searcy said the cards linked to resources for food and legal services, as well as the housing list created through the Built for Zero program. Member Weber opined the Board would want to hand out cards when walking around and talking to people.

Member Jardon asked if there was data on how many of the homeless population had smartphones. Ms. Searcy responded that she could retrieve that information and noted the number was a lot more than expected. Member Jardon agreed with Ms. Searcy that the number was more than a person would expect. She asked Ms. Searcy to provide that data at the next meeting. She noted the difficulties in keeping resource guides current.

Member Dahir wondered if the resource card information could be put on stickers and placed around town so people could utilize them when they were ready for help. Ms. Searcy suggested putting them on the Karma Boxes. Chair Hill suggested QR codes throughout the parks in the Cities of Sparks and Reno.

Chair Hill noted that half of Washoe County's homeless population was in the 55 plus age group. She assumed many in that age group were disabled people who could not seek employment. She wondered if Built for Zero tracked those statistics. Ms. Searcy said she would investigate those numbers. Chair Hill thought it would be insightful

for the community to see those numbers to understand that particular population did need assistance.

Ms. Searcy commented she had taken suggestions from the Board members and started emailing them each time there was big news available on the County website. She wondered if that change was effective. Member Dahir said he appreciated the information provided that way. Member Jardon believed it was helpful to receive notice that new information was available on the website. She thought the more that information was shared, the more comfortable the Board and the community would feel in using it. She appreciated the great job Ms. Searcy had done in obtaining the data. Member Dahir said it was important the Board be kept informed of the good and bad news so it could give informed answers to the community. Chair Hill noted the County strived to be transparent.

**22-023C**      **AGENDA ITEM 7** Board members announcements, reports, and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Member Dahir asked to hear more regarding the training for the volunteers and Chair Hill said she would add it to the next agenda.

**22-024C**      **AGENDA ITEM 8** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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**10:44 a.m.** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

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**ALEXIS HILL**, Chair  
Community Homelessness Advisory Board

ATTEST:

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**JANIS GALASSINI**, County Clerk

*Minutes Prepared by:  
Evonne Strickland, Deputy County Clerk*