

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

MONDAY

9:00 A.M.

JUNE 13, 2022

PRESENT:

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

**Catherine Smith, Chief Deputy County Clerk**  
**Herbert Kaplan, Deputy District Attorney**

ABSENT:

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

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 9:01 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, Chief Deputy County Clerk Catherine Smith called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

**22-038C**      **AGENDA ITEM 3** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**22-039C**      **AGENDA ITEM 4** Approval of minutes of the August 2, 2021, and April 4, 2022, Community Homeless Advisory Board meeting.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Member Jardon, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote with Members Lucey, Weber, and Reese absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

**22-040C**      **AGENDA ITEM 5** Approval to adopt new Community Homeless Advisory Board meeting schedule to have 1 regular meeting per quarter on the first Monday of every third month, with the meeting that would be scheduled for September 5, 2022, being held on September 12, 2022, due to the Labor Day holiday occurring on the first Monday of the month of September.

Member Dahir wanted to know how and where unity would be achieved under the proposed meeting plan. He believed the proposed meeting schedule would not provide a good example of the best way to keep up to date on activity in the region. He mentioned round table meetings had been discussed in the past. He observed the board was started because each jurisdiction experienced many silos; he wanted to ensure changes would not be reverted and that unity within the community would continue.

Chair Hill thought Washoe County Special Projects Manager Dana Searcy's team would increase its efforts on the Built for Zero program, which she believed would provide an opportunity for better convenings and working together across the region.

**\*9:05 a.m. Member Bonnie Weber arrived.**

Member Jardon suggested monthly updates on points of interest for Board members as a way to stay up to date between quarterly meetings.

Chair Hill thought Ms. Searcy had done a good job of ensuring the Board was aware of issues before they were made public either through announcements or through the news. She knew the increased activity of Ms. Searcy's team would provide additional capacity for communication with the Board.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Member Jardon, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote with Members Lucey and Reese absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved.

**22-041C AGENDA ITEM 6 Regional Emergency Rental Assistance efforts presentation. Heidi McKendree, Reno Housing Authority; Monica Cochran, City of Reno; J.D. Klippenstein, Washoe County.**

Reno Housing Authority (RHA) Deputy Executive Director Heidi McKendree conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Emergency Rental Assistance Update; RHA's Emergency Rental Assistance Programs; Coronavirus Aid, CARES Act Chap 1.0; Chap 2.0; RHA Cumulative Data.

Ms. McKendree reviewed the funds awarded for rental assistance since July 2020 and projected assistance through September 2022.

City of Reno Housing Manager Monica Cochran continued the presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: City of Reno Emergency Rental Assistance Programs and City of Reno Emergency Rental Assistance.

Ms. Cochran mentioned the City of Reno operated a deposit assistance program for people experiencing homelessness for a number of years. She said the program

was expanded in May 2020 to include rental assistance and to help individuals with higher area median incomes. She reviewed the City of Reno's Emergency Rental Assistance for the past fiscal year.

Member Jardon asked for a breakdown of the number of non-duplicated households helped within the region during the past fiscal year.

Housing and Grants Specialist J.D. Klippenstein continued the presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Washoe County ERA2; Washoe County Emergency Rental Assistance; Regional Impact.

Mr. Klippenstein said the County had the newest and most flexible rental assistance program. He explained emergency rental assistance (ERA) 1 was funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act while ERA2 was funded by the American Rescue Plan Act. He said Washoe County kept the ERA2 funds in-house and hired grant-funded staff rather than sub-granting them to the RHA which already had its hands full with distributing other ERA funds. The County wanted to ensure the program was very flexible and targeted the most vulnerable households in the community. He indicated the County's program was designed to have community partners apply for rental assistance on behalf of individuals they were already assisting. He said the program was meant to provide assistance more quickly; it took approximately one month from application to funding. He noted the County distributed approximately \$3.5 million in the course of six months. He said the application had been closed at the end of April to avoid overspending. He stated the County wanted to ensure funds were available to relocate people out of the Cares Campus (CC) in light of the change in leadership of the CC. He noted that ERA2 funds were the most flexible of all assistance funds in the community. He summarized the regional impact of all three programs including disbursed funds and the number of households helped through May 31, 2022, and projections through September 30, 2022.

Chair Hill asked whether the numbers provided were non-duplicative. Mr. Klippenstein said the County had assisted some households which had at some point received funds from one of the other jurisdictions. He said staff from the three jurisdictions could review data and determine the number of non-duplicative households that received assistance.

Chair Hill asked whether the County ERA2 funds were used exclusively for rental assistance or whether they were used for other services. Mr. Klippenstein said those funds were being used for staffing for the housing navigators and to provide a security deposit and rental assistance for a certain number of months for individuals who met the eligibility criteria. He said some individuals met the criteria which allowed the County to cover the tenant owed portion of the rent and the security deposit. He said the County tried to leverage usage to maximize voucher utilization in the community.

Member Dahir acknowledged the importance of keeping people in their homes. He questioned the reason the City of Sparks was not listed on the slide that displayed the regional partners. He asked whether staff had information about the

allocation of ERA funds in the region. He inquired about the number of households in Washoe County and the Cities of Sparks and Reno that received aid. Mr. Klippenstein said staff retained addresses of households that received aid and the information could be analyzed and mapped out.

Member Dahir thought having information about household location could be helpful both to ensure the limited finances were put to good use and to identify areas of need. He asked whether the application for assistance was closed or if people could still apply for aid. Mr. Klippenstein understood the City of Reno intended to offer ongoing rental assistance. He said the RHA was currently distributing funds but was no longer taking applications except in some instances. Ms. McKendree said the RHA was accepting direct referrals from the court when someone faced eviction, and from social service organizations working with people in crisis.

Ms. Cochran said the number of households provided by Mr. Klippenstein was mostly non-duplicative. She said the RHA and the City of Reno cross-referenced their clients to ensure compliance with all funding sources.

Member Jardon asked for clarification of the funding sources. Mr. Klippenstein outlined the three separate sources of funding.

Member Jardon asked for additional information on future reporting to include: the number of unique households, the average assistance per household, the length of time each household received assistance, and the amount contributed by each jurisdiction. Mr. Klippenstein confirmed the data was available but the staff capacity had been limited as they operated the programs, but staff could discuss that type of reporting as the programs were concluded.

Chair Hill thought the presentations needed to provide regional information. Mr. Klippenstein clarified the programs listed in the presentation were intended to represent the two in-house programs and the RHA; staff had not intended to exclude the City of Sparks. He noted the City of Sparks did not run an in-house program independent of the RHA to provide the rental assistance. He said staff recognized the City of Sparks' financial contribution to the ERA programs.

**22-042C** **AGENDA ITEM 7** Board update on Built for Zero initiative. Dana Searcy, Washoe County.

Washoe County Special Projects Manager Dana Searcy conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Built for Zero Update 6-13-22; Foundational Work; Benefits of Foundational Work; Status of Our Foundational Work; Community Dashboard Monthly Reporting Data (3 slides); Community Inventory; Coordinated Outreach; Case Conferencing; Software Usage; Achieving Regional Data Quality; HMIS Reporting Programs; Remaining Programs to get into HMIS; Reporting into HMIS; Built For Zero Goal.

Ms. Searcy spoke about changes in the methodology used to collect and report data as more agencies started using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). She noted the number of people on the by-name list would continue to increase because it was an indicator that more programs were reporting data to the HMIS system. She said staff would be monitoring the community housing inventory with the aim of ensuring programs were utilized at 100 percent capacity. She observed the community had many beds available and the next step in the program would be to figure out how to use those resources more effectively. She said data collection had been a struggle in the past, but some progress had been made. She spoke about partners currently entering data into the HMIS. She said the need to integrate the emergency departments and the detention facility in the HMIS system was starting to become apparent. She noted both facilities had case managers working towards discharge plans and staff was trying to engage with individuals before they were discharged to the street in which case the outreach team had to start over. She explained the process of case conferencing for unsheltered individuals and discussed software usage noting a central database was needed to improve efficiency. She outlined the benefits of improved data efficiency. She mentioned the County had allocated a significant amount of American Rescue Plan Act funds for the HMIS licensing. She said the next goal was to acquire a case management module in the system as recommended by partners.

Member Jardon asked whether the community partners not participating in the HMIS had been asked to participate the prior year. Ms. Searcy replied many had been asked at some point. She said staff had more tools and funding to improve outreach and they would ask those community partners to participate once again.

Member Jardon expressed concern because some partners that received funding from the City of Reno were not participating in the HMIS system. She wanted to know the feedback from the community partners when they were approached about participating in the HMIS. She specifically wanted to know the feedback from Northern Nevada HOPES and the Downtown Reno Partnership.

Member Dahir agreed with Member Jardon's statements about the importance of sharing information. He asserted the community partners needed to get onto the HMIS system. He suggested staff communicate with donors regarding where their money was going if there were no changes in the next few months. He said the organizations were not helping as much as they thought if they did not work together. He thought staff needed to show donors how important it was to share information and work together.

Chair Hill pointed out some Washoe County programs were not on the HMIS, so she understood that some programs still needed to be onboarded to the system. She acknowledged some resistance might be attributed to past issues with functionality. She said the last time she and Ms. Searcy met with a community partner regarding the HMIS program they were encouraged by the assistance and funding provided by the County.

Member Jardon observed the community had gone through three major things in the past two years: the COVID-19 pandemic, establishing the Cares Campus, and transitioning homeless services to the County. She thought it was time to reconnect and noted more tools were available than in the past.

Ms. Searcy said other programs were going through the same things. She noted the County was not on the HMIS program because it did not meet their needs. She said discussing software with community partners was important to ensure that effort and expended funding would meet the needs of those partners. She mentioned that Our Place was now on the HMIS, and they had spent the past several months inputting past data from their opening to the present day.

Vice Chair Ed Lawson said he attended a Built for Zero class during the United States Conference of Mayors a couple of weeks prior. He observed that hearing the perspectives of different mayors from around the Country had been interesting. He said the most successful jurisdictions had dedicated funding for their homeless programs. He mentioned the city of Miami instituted a small tourism tax and raised approximately \$35 million a year. He observed their homeless population was about 1,200 people so ostensibly their Built for Zero count was at zero. He thought this community would need to establish dedicated funding to fix the homelessness issue in the region but believed it would require some legislative changes.

Member Dahir offered his aid in speaking with the Gospel Mission.

Member Jardon said the City of Reno had designated the transitional housing program as a priority in their dedicated funding. She indicated the City of Reno had purchased properties to renovate for that purpose. She agreed with the need for legislative changes and the need for ongoing dedicated funding. Chair Hill thought a presentation on the City of Reno's programs would be a helpful future agenda item.

**22-043C**     **AGENDA ITEM 8** Board update and discussion on the Nevada Cares Campus Emergency Shelter. Ana Huntsberger, Washoe County; Dana Searcy, Washoe County.

Washoe County Special Projects Manager Dana Searcy conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She reviewed slides with the following titles: Cares Campus Update; Cares Campus Priorities; Cares Campus – 1 year update; Cares Campus Updates; Cares Campus Partnerships; Meet VOA's Nevada Cares Campus Team; Cares Campus – Staffing.

Ms. Searcy mentioned four applications had been submitted for supportive housing: one at the Cares Campus (CC), one for three acres of the Reno Housing Authority property for permanent supportive housing, one for an acre at Safe Camp gained from leveling the property, and one for a copy of the CC supportive housing to be located at the Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services campus. She noted the campus partnership

and volunteer development efforts had started to pay off and the list of partners was growing.

Volunteers of America Northern Nevada (VOA) Operations and Compliance Manager Julianna Glock introduced the new CC shelter staff. She introduced the new Shelter Director Scott Benton and Assistant Shelter Director Penny Adams. Mr. Benton expressed excitement about stepping into the role of Shelter Director. He spoke about his past experience working with the shelter and Washoe County. Ms. Adams spoke about her background and experience and expressed excitement about working with the County in her new role.

Ms. Searcy reviewed the most recent staffing numbers. She said the atmosphere at the CC was much more hopeful as a result of recent changes.

Mental Health Counselor Supervisor Ana Huntsberger continued the presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Behavioral Health; The Proposed Scope of Behavioral Health Services (5 slides).

Ms. Huntsberger said there were six allotted positions for mental health counselors for the CC. She was the only counselor currently working but a new counselor would start work the following week. She spoke about the five areas in which mental health counselors would be providing services.

Ms. Searcy continued the presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Cares Campus – Construction and Summer Planning; Cares Campus – Jon DeCarmine Recommendations; Cares Campus – Emergency Shelter (5 slides); Cares Campus – Safe Camp.

Ms. Searcy said a paper newsletter would be produced monthly and copies would be provided to Board members. The reason for a paper newsletter was to ensure information, such as the location of case management and moved buildings, was provided to everyone who needed it. She noted not everyone had access to email to receive the newsletter. She mentioned the newsletter would include success stories, updates on seasonal changes, and the types of things happening at the CC. She said the Board would receive the newsletter and staff would communicate anything that Board members needed to know about before it hit the news as well as any big changes. The newsletter would also be available on the website as usual.

Ms. Searcy said staff had provided an update to the 4th Street business partners regarding the increase in traffic from people walking around and construction vehicles. She wanted to remain responsive and ensure the business partners would be able to reach staff in case anything changed. She displayed a map of the construction area and said she hoped the intake building would open later in the week. She noted the intake would be moved from the middle of the sprung building to the front gate and she expected that would help streamline the process.

Ms. Searcy stated staff would try to keep as many people inside the sprung building during construction as possible. She said food would be moved outside to a tent which would be enclosed and both heated and cooled. Staff would ensure enough space would be available so the food tent could remain as the day center open to anyone who wanted to get out of the heat. She said the tent would remain open overnight if it became smoky outside for people who wanted to get out of smoke. She indicated the CC would be leaning on community partners with day centers when the weather outside became very hot during construction.

Ms. Searcy spoke about the progress of the Jon DeCarmine recommendations. She said Mr. DeCarmine was working with staff during the transition to help develop diversion at the CC. He had been asked to provide an update to the Board in September. She reviewed the statistics to date and pointed out that the exits to permanent housing had increased.

Member Dahir requested a tour of the CC when appropriate after construction. He commended staff on the progress of the CC and expressed interest in receiving updates on mental health services. He observed that the number of veterans who received services had not changed. Ms. Searcy said the veteran status was self-reported, but as case workers started to review information the veteran status would be cleared up.

Member Jardon commended Ms. Searcy for the presentation and her recent television interview. She said she looked forward to the newsletter. She welcomed the new VOA staff. She mentioned that a year prior to the CC opening the shelter was only able to serve half the number of people that were currently sheltered. She noted the data and point-in-time count of unsheltered individuals confirmed the effectiveness of the CC. She said the unsheltered population during the point-in-time count had decreased by 46 percent from the prior year. She said changes at parks and along the river were very evident and she encouraged people to take a look. She expressed recognition for Ms. Searcy, staff, and community partners who worked to establish the CC and made significant progress in decreasing the homeless population.

Chair Hill agreed with Member Jardon and attributed the leadership of the Board. She expressed excitement about the future of the CC and its staff. She thought the community should be proud of the progress. She mentioned Great Basin Chaplain Corps had expressed interest in establishing a partnership agreement.

Member Jardon acknowledged there was still a significant amount of work to be done. She mentioned an opening event she attended at Rancharra the prior weekend which was also a fundraising and awareness campaign for the Nevada Cares Campus. She spoke about the private group that was doing significant fundraising for the CC. She observed this program would not succeed by government assistance alone noting there were many generous private individuals who wanted to be a part of the future of the CC. She acknowledged the funding efforts of the private sector.

**22-044C**      **AGENDA ITEM 9** Board members announcements, reports and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Chair Hill expressed excitement about Mr. Jon DeCarmine providing an update so the community could see how much had been achieved from his to-do list.

Member Jardon requested a City of Reno update on housing efforts and priorities as well as additional information about funding. Chair Hill confirmed the information would be about funding for emergency deposits and rental assistance.

**22-045C**      **AGENDA ITEM 10** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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**10:17 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:  
Carolina Stickley, Deputy County Clerk*