

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

TUESDAY

8:30 A.M.

MAY 2, 2016

**CONCURRENT MEETING**

PRESENT:

**Kitty Jung, Chair**

**Bob Lucey, Vice Chair**

**Marsha Berkbigler, Commissioner**

**Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner**

**Jeanne Herman, Commissioner**

**Nancy Parent, County Clerk**

**John Slaughter, County Manager**

**Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel**

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 8:32 a.m. with the Reno City Council, and the Sparks City Council in concurrent session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

**16-0346      AGENDA ITEM 4 Public Comment.**

Gary J. Duarte, Director of the US Nuclear Energy Foundation, stated the Foundation advocated for education about nuclear energy. He said he conducted a presentation at the Advanced Reactor Technical Summit III at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. He talked about a company called Transatomic Power that was developing a molten salt reactor which was capable of burning the current inventory of nuclear waste. He said most people did not realize the advances that had occurred in the last 30 years, such as the installation of gravity functioning systems. He commented accidents were the result of ignoring the procedures and advice from stringent safety regulators. He mentioned Yucca Mountain's designation as America's site for nuclear waste storage and he submitted handouts, which were placed on file with the Clerk.

C.J. Manthe, said she was the Administrator for the State of Nevada Housing Division, which supported expanding affordable housing options by creating rental opportunities and opening the pathway for home ownership. She relayed a story about a man named Matthew who was homeless in 2012 but was recently able to buy a home by taking advantage of the Veteran's Association Supportive Housing Initiative. She said Matthew's first step was to obtain rental housing through the Reno Housing Authority and supportive services. She said an integrated model helped to make this happen for Matthew and the Housing Division believed through this and other success stories they could strengthen communities. She explained the Housing Division was a

member of the State of Nevada's Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), which was created by an executive order of the Governor. She said the ICH's nearly 20 members represented the Housing Division; veterans services; corrections agencies; health agencies; local, state and federal agencies; non-profit organizations and faith-based organizations. Through the sharing of knowledge and expertise, the ICH was hoping to leverage their resources to prevent and end homelessness. She said the ICH was also hoping to work in a complementary fashion with the Cities and the County because they felt that by working together they could provide for better outcomes.

Betsy Aiello stated she was the Deputy Administrator for the State Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHCFP), more commonly known as Medicaid. She said she also represented ICH. She said as part of Nevada's strategic plan, Medicaid was asked to develop a budget concept to help fund some of the wraparound services which had been shown to help homeless people gain and maintain housing. As a result of that request the DHCFP had been working with a subcommittee from the ICH to create a budget concept with technical assistance from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Medicare, Medicaid and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She said they were looking at how to bring federal match dollars into the budget concept. She indicated there would be future meetings with both Washoe County and Clark County to discuss ideas. She submitted a handout, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Lisa Lee, Northern Nevada Hopes, commented she was glad to see governmental organizations come together to create a political environment that was friendly with their community partners. She related her experiences as a person who was homeless for 10 years and stated it was access to housing that got her off the streets. She said she took a job in Alaska working for a fishing company that offered her housing and food as part of her employment; as a result she was able to work through her issues and come back to Reno a bigger and better person. She said when she got back to town her transition was sustained by support services, community organizations, new friends and new things to do. She stated she was currently a home owner, a graduate student and a housing case manager for Northern Nevada Hopes. She remarked she was fortunate to be able to pursue her passion for helping others, but she wanted to convey to the Councils and the Board some of the barriers to finding affordable housing. She said affordable housing was a huge issue and there was not much to be found, especially since the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) had acquired properties on 6th Street, 7th Street, Center Street and Lake Street. She explained rental companies wanted people to have an income that was two and a half times the cost of their rent, which was impossible for people who lived on fixed incomes, those who had no incomes and the working poor.

Ardena Perry submitted a handout, which she read and placed on file with the Clerk. She stated her concerns regarding the possible dissolution of the Animal Control Board. She felt the dissolution would not be in the best interest of the Cities or the County as the Animal Control Board was part of the judicial system and had the ability to enforce and dictate consequences. She said those types of duties could not be

carried out by an Advisory Board. She remarked she thought the video recordings of the County Commission meetings were edited.

Aria Overli thanked the Board for taking the time to consider the issue of homelessness. She said she represented Acting in Community Together in Northern Nevada (ACTIONN), which was an organization that represented faith communities throughout northern Nevada. She expressed ACTIONN's dedication to ensuring it did everything it could to combat homelessness. She said the organization was concerned about future developments that had the potential to displace homeless people as well as people who were currently in homes. She asked the Cities and the County to consider the potential consequences when they made development deals.

Fernando Leal said he was a proud citizen of Reno who worked downtown in the development business. He said he was currently working on the renovation of the Siena Hotel into a Marriot Renaissance, which was a significant conversion. He announced the intention to donate current furniture, artwork and other items to the work that different organizations were doing, such as Nevada Hopes. He felt there were gains to be made in social capital and he would rather see the items end up in the hands of people who could really use it.

Jacob Harmon, Regional Director of the Alzheimer's Association of Northern Nevada, introduced himself and Jennifer Baker, Project Director of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program at the University of Nevada, Reno. He announced they would be hosting the first Idlewild Health Walk, which was a series of walks designed specifically for people living with Alzheimer's disease, related dementias and their caregivers. He explained the walks would be led by volunteers and would allow people to enjoy the beautiful bounty of northern Nevada. He said the health benefits of being outdoors and being active were tremendous, and research had shown it could actually slow the progression of the disease. He explained the Walk was made possible by a generous grant by Reno's Senior Citizen Advisory Committee. He said the program was unique and one of only a handful across the Country. He stated there were 41,000 people in Nevada living with the disease; 10,000 of those resided in Washoe County.

Pat Cashell, Volunteers of America (VOA), said he had been asked to share his expert opinion on homelessness. He said he was concerned about the rise in violence at the homeless shelter and the loss of affordable housing. He did not think the improving economy was helping homeless people. He said they really needed to work on putting an end to homelessness and providing affordable housing for the working poor, the non-working, the mentally ill and the drug addicted individuals. He felt the Cities and the County needed to work on the issue together because it was a community issue.

Ken Koeppel said he would appreciate it if someone would address the traffic issue at the intersection of Las Brisas Boulevard and North McCarran Boulevard. He explained the danger at the intersection due to problems with poor visibility and high-speed traffic. He thought his concerns might be best directed to the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), but said there might be an inexpensive solution to the

problem that would benefit the City of Reno and Washoe County. He stated he was an Honor Flight Guardian. He informed the Board that another flight would be taking place on May 18th through May 21st and he invited the Board members to go to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport to welcome the Honor Flight participants home.

Kelly Marschall said she had the privilege of facilitating strategies to address homelessness in Reno, Sparks and Washoe County through the Reno Area Alliance for the Homeless (RAAH). She said the process included conducting an annual point-in-time count of the homeless, submitting a community strategy and submitting an application for funding. She stated the current year's application was for \$1.8 million and thus far \$1.6 million of that amount had been received. She was encouraged to see the Cities and the County address the critical, complex and often multi-generational issue of homelessness. She said there were strong collaborations in place between the faith-based community, non-profit organizations, public and private agencies, as well as state and local jurisdictions. She said there was some good data to assist in the understanding of what it would take to address homelessness. The solution was to provide more housing and supportive services, including trauma informed care; and to upstream services to address poverty, to ensure adequate education and to ensure financial literacy. She thought access to a shelter was a basic human right and the community could only be strong and thriving if the issue of homelessness was addressed. She stated she had serious concerns about the lack of housing for seniors, transition-aged youth, families, the working poor and veterans. She mentioned the book *Evicted*, which she said helped people to understand that 70 percent of the individuals who were evicted from their homes were head-of-household females with small children.

Kathleen Harris thanked the Board and the Councils for their time and attention. She spoke about the displacement of 97 people, including herself, from a property on Center Street. She stated the individuals needed help with moving expenses, including the cost of renting moving trucks, gas money, utility deposits and relocating internet services.

Ivy Spadone stated she worked at Northern Nevada Hopes (Hopes). She related a story about a man who used to be a patient of hers. The man worked at a casino and was doing so well he had considered volunteering at Hopes to help other HIV positive patients. However, in 2011 he lost his job and consequently lost everything he had. She said he could not get housing because he did not have an income. He also had trouble finding work because he did not have computer skills. She said he was encouraged to collect disability, but he was a proud man and wanted to work. The man was in and out of the shelters for one and one half years. It was difficult for him because he spent all day walking the streets of town and at night he had to sleep sitting up because of overcrowding in the shelter, which caused his legs to swell. His medication was also frequently stolen from him. She noted the man passed away alone in a motel room and she felt sure the man would have wanted her to share his story.

**16-00347**      **AGENDA ITEM 5** Approval of the Agenda

The Sparks City Council approved Agenda Item 5.

The Reno City Council approved Agenda Item 5.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

For the Board of County Commissioners, on motion by Commissioner Lucey, seconded by Commissioner Berkgigler, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved.

**16-00348**      **AGENDA ITEM 6** Presentation and update on Operation Downtown.  
Kenneth Krater, Chairman, Operation Downtown Blue Ribbon Commission.

Ken Krater talked about the background of Operation Downtown. He stated he read the book *The Next American Economy: Blueprint for a Real Recovery* by William J. Holstein, which discussed what some communities throughout the Country were doing to create job growth through innovation. He provided examples of some of the innovative work that was being done at various universities, which he said encouraged the startup of new businesses and improved local economies. He compared the work being done in other areas of the Country to the innovative work being done at the University of Nevada, Reno's (UNR's) College of Engineering and College of Science. He stated UNR's seismic lab was second in the world only to Japan. The University's Nevada Advanced Autonomous Systems Innovation Center (NAASIC) was one of only five programs selected and authorized to conduct drone testing. He explained NAASIC was the only program that was successful in the creation of a computer simulation to run thousands of drones in the air at the same time. He stated the innovative work was being done at the University, but to encourage the growth of jobs in the community the downtown area needed to be cleaned up. The downtown area had severe issues with blight, homelessness, addiction and mental health issues, but unlike some other places in the Country, there were really only a few blocks that were affected. He stated he met with Reno City Mayor Hillary Schieve and together they formed Operation Downtown in an effort to solve the issues in Reno. He displayed a list of Operation Downtown's Blue Ribbon Commission members on the overhead projector. He said the members were a group of people who were dedicated to improving the community by working towards solving the issues of homelessness, blight, mental health and addiction. He displayed Operation Downtown's adopted mission and vision statements. He commented he could imagine a downtown that included technology companies, shops, restaurants and services. He thought by working on the City's issues they could change the dynamics of the area's economy and create one of the greatest tourism destinations in the Country.

Mr. Krater said he learned it was much more cost effective to provide permanent supportive housing with case management than to have people living on the

streets. He stated Tony Ramirez, from the Field Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), was committed to bringing his resources from the Federal Government to help solve the problem. With Mr. Ramirez's help, a program had been developed to issue 50 vouchers to 50 chronically homeless people allowing them to get into permanent supportive housing with active case management. Mr. Krater displayed Operation Downtown's project priorities list and he pointed out the number one project on the list was permanent supportive housing with case management. He said it was very important to the community to create ways to increase the amount of supportive housing. Through meetings with Assistant County Manager Kevin Schiller, work had been done to identify developers who would set aside some of their units for that purpose. One developer already committed 50 units to the project and also set aside offices in each of the different housing projects where Social Services could provide assistance to those in need. He pointed out other priorities on the Operation Downtown list included blight reduction as well as addressing mental health and substance abuse issues. He said he would like to see all three local government entities adopt policies to treat drug use as a health issue rather than as a crime.

Mr. Krater stated there was a need to find a way to lessen the cost of affordable housing. He explained the "concentric ring theory" and proposed the idea of putting affordable housing in the urban core area where access to water, sewer and roads were within reach. He said looking at things like impact fees and sewer connection fees could also greatly reduce the cost to provide affordable housing. He explained density bonuses did not mean much anymore because most of the areas that were developed for affordable housing were mixed-use developments and there was no limitation on density. He concluded if developers could be helped with their bottom line, it would be possible to bring in more affordable housing with a set-aside program. The set-aside program would involve working with developers to set aside 10 percent of their units for affordable housing in exchange for a reduction in some of their fees. The documents that were displayed on the overhead projector were placed on file with the Clerk.

Mayor Schieve said Operation Downtown was created because there were a lot of silos in the community. She stated a lot of people were working on the issue, but they were not working together. She thanked the members of Operation Downtown and commented it would not be easy to fix the problem, but it was a community problem that could be changed if everyone made the commitment and worked together. She thanked Mr. Krater for his work.

Reno Councilwoman Neoma Jardon noted the City of Reno was working on a housing initiative to provide a path forward for immediate needs, mid-term needs and long-term needs. In relation to Operation Downtown's regional and systematic approach to creating affordable housing within all development projects, she asked Mr. Krater if he had a boilerplate of what that would look like. She said she wanted to ensure the City of Reno and Operation Downtown were working together and were not redundant in their efforts.

Mr. Krater replied one of the most important things that all local governments should take a serious look at was whether their codes were in synch with their master plans. He thought that would go a long way towards helping to provide more affordable housing. He also mentioned possibly creating an insurance pool. He explained the owners of existing multi-family properties were concerned about ensuring they had effective leases and also insurance to cover any potential property damage. He thought the creation of an insurance pool would help bring a lot of developers to the plate. He concurred with Mayor Schieve that work needed to be done to break down the silos, but he felt the discussions that were taking place were positive and encouraging.

Commissioner Hartung asked if the set-aside program pertained to only multi-family properties or if it included single-family dwellings. Mr. Krater replied it would apply only to multi-family properties because it was important for people to have access to services and transportation.

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

**16-00349**     **AGENDA ITEM 7**     Presentation of Northern Nevada Housing and Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, Brian Burriss, Chairman of Reno Area Alliance for the Homeless (RAAH).

Brian Burriss conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk. He stated his intention was to provide some hard data regarding what was going on with homelessness, to talk about the highlights of a plan that was developed and the progress that had been made, and then to ask for help. He read and discussed the following presentation slides which were entitled as follows: 1) Objectives; 2) Reno Alliance for the Homeless (RAAH); 3) RAAH – Mission; 4) RAAH – Vision; 4) RAAH Core Activities; 5) Point in Time; 6) Snap Shot from January 28, 2016; 7) The Number's Story; 8) Point In Time Trends; 8) Nevada Housing Division Numbers; 9) Nevada Housing Division – Taking Stock 2015 Report; 10) Continuum of Care; 11) Regional Strategic Plan; 12) Strategic Issues to Prevent and End Homelessness; 13) Data Coordinated Assessment and Centralized Intake; 14) Goals-Housing; 15) 2016 Request Continuum of Care; 16) Wrap Around / Soar; 17) Funding; and 18) We Need Your Help.

Mr. Burriss said RAAH was a wonderful coalition of agencies who met every month to discuss the homeless situation. RAAH representatives included individuals from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Volunteers of America, the State, the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), WestCare and a number of private entities. He stated Project Homeless Connect conducted an annual meeting, led by Catholic Charities, which took place at the Reno Events Center and there were more than 90 agencies in attendance at the most recent meeting in January. He explained the purpose was to provide an opportunity for the agencies to network with each other and to listen to the homeless people who came to speak.

Mr. Burris talked about the point-in-time count which was conducted on a specific day each year. This year the count was done on January 28, 2016. The count provided a very conservative estimate of how many people were living on the streets. The effort concluded there were 132 individuals living on the streets. He explained HUD's definition of a homeless person was an individual who was living in a place that was not designated for habitation, such as in cars, under bridges and in camps. It was also noted through this year's count that 452 people were staying in a shelter at night. He explained the under-housed were people who were one paycheck away, or one medical bill away, from being homeless. The county showed 392 individuals were in transitional housing and more than 3,600 people were living in weekly motels. He said the bottom line was there were 584 homeless people and more than 4,000 people who were on the verge of becoming homeless. He stated the weekly motel count was trending up with the largest increase coming from the senior population. He noted seniors and kids were highly vulnerable to exploitation. He said the most startling figure to note was a 50 percent increase to the number of people who were living in weekly motels for more than a year, which indicated people were getting stuck there. Weekly motels seemed to be a de facto safety net, but he thought they were less like a net and more like a spider web because the motel costs prevented people from saving money to get into an apartment. He said the other reason people were getting stuck there is because there was a vacancy rate of less than 5 percent, which meant people were also getting squeezed out of the affordable housing options.

Mr. Burris said RAAH had developed a strategic plan to solve the homelessness problem. Leaders met over a six-month period to create objectives including data coordination, the creation of a centralized intake system, housing, wraparound services and funding. He said there was also collaboration between three different agencies that had seven different grants between them, which allowed for transparency and resulted in the ability to place people into programs more efficiently. He noted some people needed ongoing long-term support and that was what permanent supportive housing was for. Those who were chronically homeless were the most expensive due to their need for emergency and police services as well as incarceration. He stated when staffing and funds were allocated to this group of people, those numbers decreased.

Mr. Burris indicated there was a need for 75 more case managers because although the system was getting better, it was getting more complicated. He said efforts were being made to bring in more funding because current funding was limiting. To increase affordable housing, it would require the removal of barriers and the consideration of inclusionary housing mandates so that all new development would have to set aside some of their units for affordable housing.

Commissioner Hartung asked Mr. Burris to define under-housed. Mr. Burris explained the under-housed were people who were living in weekly motels or in transitional housing. Commissioner Hartung wondered if that group included those living in vehicles. Mr. Burris replied a person living in a car would be considered the same as someone who was living on the streets.



Reno Councilwoman Brekhus stated the creation of affordable housing had been a focus in the City of Reno. She said she understood it would only be possible to produce about 50 units per year of subsidized affordable housing based on the home funds that were allocated by the regional Consortium. Privately owned and developed projects also had to request low income tax credits from the State so they would have the combination of a layered subsidy. The model that had been used for many years was based on whether 40 percent of a developer's units were occupied by residents with gross incomes of 60 percent or less of the median gross income. This model allowed some housing options for seniors and veterans, but not for the homeless population because those individuals needed deeper subsidies. She said the State applications were due now, which meant the money for this year's projects had already been allocated. She thought the local governments might want to consider providing administrative guidance related to how they wanted to allocate next year's funds. She said the message needed to get out to the for-profit developers as well as the affordable housing developers that the future goal would be to provide housing for very low income individuals and the homeless. She wondered how the wraparound services would be brought into the plan because developers would need to complete their home fund applications with that in place as well.

Mr. Burris stated he understood Councilwoman Brekhus' comments and he thought it was a complicated issue. He said growth was limited because of the current structure that was in place. He mentioned the number of affordable housing units in the State decreased last year and he expected to see the numbers decrease again this year. He explained after 15 years each of the current projects could be transitioned into the market and that is what property owners were doing. In response to the question about who developers should contact regarding wraparound services, he said it was complicated. The State was trying to avoid providing direct services; they were encouraging the private sector to do it. He thought developers would have to collaborate with private agencies that were willing to provide the wraparound services. He noted insurance would also be impactful because individuals with insurance could choose where they went for wraparound services. He thought it would be up to the case managers to ensure people accessed the services.

Councilwoman Brekhus understood there was a desire to provide a deeper subsidy and she thought the local governments needed to give administrative direction to pass resolutions or change the construct of the Home Consortium.

Reno City Councilman Oscar Delgado wondered how someone in the non-profit world would get access to the data collected by the centralized intake system.

Mr. Burris replied he had access to the information and could provide the numbers as long as he was sure the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was being respected.

Councilman Delgado stated the perception was there were silos in the communities, which indicated information was not being shared. He said he would like to see a collective impact and he wondered if everyone was willing to work on the same metrics and consider some changes to outreach efforts.

Mr. Burris said service providers with federal grants were required to use the homeless management information system. He indicated the system was expanding and it was a powerful tool. He thought people were starting to communicate and he had seen a lot of collaboration going on at RAAH. He said during the last couple of years “clarity cards” were issued to individuals who were accessing any of the social services, the food banks and affordable housing options to ensure the data would be going into the system. It provided a clearer picture of how active the individuals were, what the demand was and what the waiting lists looked like.

Councilman Delgado wondered about the cost for case workers. He asked if that information was being tracked so the local governments would know how to fund them.

Mr. Burris replied the cost was huge, but the cost of not funding them was larger. He said if people did not have case managers to help them get services they would find a very expensive way to get them on their own, such as the having the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA) attend to their needs. He said the numbers showed the cost was around \$60,000 to \$70,000 per case worker. He mentioned the folks at Medicaid were talking about issuing waivers. He thought the waivers could help fund case management, but if that did not happen the communities needed to find a way to make it happen because it was too expensive not to.

Sparks City Councilwoman Charlene Bybee stated discussions about homelessness often led to talk about mental health issues and problems with alcohol and drugs. She asked if there was a need to expand mental health services, what kind of challenges they were facing, and how those issues would be addressed.

Mr. Burris stated more than half of homeless individuals had some kind of mental or physical disability. He said the biggest problem he saw with providing services was due to the Medicaid expansion and the revision of the managed care system. He stated prescribers, psychiatrists and child psychiatrists were in short supply.

Reno City Mayor Hillary Schieve said the information provided was very insightful and she thanked Mr. Burris for his work. She knew the housing situation was not going to be solved overnight, but she thought elected officials should immediately be looking at the number of people who were living in hotels and getting payday loans. She thought something should be done about the impact of predatory lending on the cycle of poverty and she asked if Mr. Burris if he had done any research on it. Mr. Burris said he was not surprised by it. Mayor Schieve encouraged the elected officials to start having conversations about the problem to see about putting stricter codes in place.

Commissioner Herman said she thought the homelessness problem was not going to be permanent. She wondered about the possibility of creating a temporary fix such as a recreational vehicle (RV) park. She thought it might be possible to get some people to donate their RVs, which would be cheaper than renting motels.

Mr. Burris thought the idea was fascinating and he agreed there was a need to be creative with solutions. He thought Commissioner Herman's suggestion could be a cost effective option.

Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon stated she recently heard someone say "If you want to get the ear of your Congressional delegation, speak as one region", which she thought was good advice. She commented the concurrent meeting between the County and the Cities demonstrated their understanding of the severity of the homelessness issue. She thought solving it would require the entities to come together to make it a regional priority. She stated she was putting her money where her mouth was by donating all of her Council travel funds and donation funds towards the issue for the next five years. She thought it would be important to express the issue as a priority to State's elected representation, the Governor and the Congressional Delegation.

Reno City Councilman David Bobzien said he understood there were a lot of concerns about displacement, gentrification, a shift in housing, predatory lending, the protections afforded to tenants and the spider web of exploitation. He stated there was congressional and a legislative angle to consider, but when those issues came up in the Legislature local governments typically did not get involved. He said when each entity prepared their agendas for the next Legislative session they should ask their staff to do a survey regarding the issues and invite the advocacy community to put some of their ideas on the table. He thought people came to their local governments to ask for a "fix" and many times it was not possible. He thought if the local governments in the region came up with a common agenda for the next Legislative session they could make a significant impact.

Reno City Councilman Paul McKenzie said he remembered when payday loan legislation was brought before the Legislature and there were a number of public agencies who were opposed to it. He stated the 50 housing vouchers were not going to do much for the 4,000 people who needed homes. He wondered if it was anticipated there would be a larger influx of subsidies from the Federal Government in the near future. He stated the best proposals for low-income housing were only beneficial to individuals who fell within 40 to 60 percent of the gross median income (GMI), but the majority of the people who needed help fell within the 20 percent or less GMI. He said the owners of properties who were willing to volunteer places for people with vouchers to live were not giving up anything because they were still getting their full rent. He thought the solution would be to set the rent level at 20 to 30 percent for the low-income housing. He noted the weekly hotel problem was exacerbated by the fact that the State was subsidizing businesses that were only paying their workers \$12 to \$16 per hour to move into the region. He said there was not enough housing for people at that pay level and those individuals would end up living in the weekly motels. He felt the State needed to take the

lead when it handed out subsidies for housing. He said local governments also needed to take a closer look when they were approving multi-family housing to 1) conduct meetings with the tenants to address their issues; and 2) to ensure that a portion of the housing would be dedicated to low to mid-income workers. He said the solution was not to create clusters of low-income housing where there were higher incidences of police calls, but to spread them throughout the community so people who wanted to break the cycle would have the ability to do so.

Mr. Burris commented he did not want people to get stuck in the weekly motels or in affordable housing. The system was meant to help people to progress and to stand on their own two feet. Currently the system was not doing a good enough job of that.

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

**16-00350**      **AGENDA ITEM 8** Update and Presentation on the CrossRoads Program, Washoe County/Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada.

Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, stated one of the key opportunities that came from the recession was more collaboration in the social services area. The budget was shrinking, which forced a review of how services were delivered. He stated the budget for adult services was about \$30 million which included nursing home diversion, nursing home care, 27 to 30 staff members and other services. The largest budget items, besides nursing care, were emergency cash assistance, health care assistance and indigent care assistance. He noted the cash assistance often ended up being spent in liquor stores and in other places that were not beneficial. The health care assistance budget included everything that a client could not pay for, such as costs associated with emergency room care and hospital bills. He said several people got together to look at how services could be delivered differently. They looked at people who were incarcerated and cross referenced them with their medical bills. They learned that between six particular clients who were users of social services for care, the cost for each of them was about \$250,000 per year. He explained the Crossroads program was the result of that analysis. Crossroads was meant to be more than a housing model; it was intended to include the continuum of care. He said all the programs that had been presented at the meeting were in some way connected. He suggested taking a look at how things could be done differently.

Amber Howe, Social Services Director, conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk. The presentation slides were entitled as follows: 1) Washoe County Crossroads Program; 2) Vision; 3) How We Got Started; 4) Community Impacts; 5) Cost to the Community; 6) Chronic Users of The System (Approximate Cost to the Tax Payer Per Year); 7) Crossroads Population Served; 8) Every Client is Unique and comes in with a Unique Story; 9) Our Clients; 10) Client Intake; 11) Client Retrospect; 12) Washoe County Crossroads; 13) VRC – Veteran Resource Center & Housing Program; 14) River House; 15) Washoe County Justice

Court; 16) Crossroads, Drug & Alcohol Testing; 17) Crossroads Turnaround; 18) Crossroads, Learn to E. A. R. N. Program; 19) Crossroads Recovery Field.

Ms. Howe stated the Crossroads program was first created to assist serial inebriates and super-utilizers of the system. She stated homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse impacted several systems at a very high cost with minimal change to individual lives. She said it was estimated the Crossroads program saved the community \$12 million per year. She remarked each client was unique and came in to the program with a unique story; 66 percent of the male population suffered from co-occurring disorders, while 90 percent of the female population suffered from co-occurring disorders. She noted the program had 154 beds and the average length of stay was 103 days. She mentioned the 40 and under population had spiked between 2013 and 2014 and the average age, which had started at 48, was now at 28. She reported the program conducted 279 activities in 2015 including two softball teams, one basketball team, one flag football team and music and art therapy.

Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon said the Crossroads program was incredible. She asked how many clients entered the program voluntarily.

Sheriff Deputy Shawn Marston replied approximately 40 percent of Crossroads clients were volunteers. He commented when the program was created it was thought every single person would have to be ordered by the court to enter the program, but that was not the case.

Councilwoman Jardon asked if the other 60 percent of the clients were court influenced. Deputy Marston replied in the affirmative. He stated the program worked with the Second Judicial District Court, the Reno Municipal Court, the Reno Justice Court, and had just expanded to working with the Sparks Justice Court. He commented there were currently 24 mental health beds in the program.

Commissioner Hartung said he toured one of the Crossroads campuses which he thought was uniquely situated. He would like to see work continue with the State to try to get more space on the campus. He related a story about a man who was collecting money at a street corner with a sign that said he was sober, but who was using the money in the casinos and getting free drinks. He was not sure how that sort of problem could be solved.

Ms. Howe responded that work was being done to try to accommodate more people on the Crossroads campus, but they had to also consider what type of population would best fit there. She knew there were leadership individuals at the State level who were very impressed by the program and would support it in any way they could.

Commissioner Hartung suggested putting modular units in the empty space that sat to the north of the campus in question. He thought there were some real opportunities there.

Commissioner Lucey asked for more information about the 24/7 program.

Deputy Marston explained there was program in South Dakota called 24/7. It had been in operation for nearly 11 years and statistics showed it lowered Driving under the Influence (DUI) fatalities by 33 percent, DUIs overall by 12 percent and domestic violence by 9 percent. He stated the program was being piloted at Crossroads under the name of Sober 24 and there were currently 80 clients in the program who came in via Judge Scott Pearson's court. He said the bugs were still being worked out, but he guessed there would be more than 1,000 clients in the Sober 24 program within the year. Since Crossroads was struggling with bed capacity, it was being considered to create an outpatient Crossroads program so those that had another place to sleep would free up Crossroads beds for people who were homeless.

Chair Jung pointed out that Assistant County Manager Kevin Schiller was the mastermind behind getting the funding for the Crossroads program. She stated Deputy Marston and Sheriff's Deputy Clint Player were both social workers with badges. She thought Judge Pearson deserved a lot of credit for the extra work, time and assistance he gave to individuals; and for the intimacy with which he got to know each and every one of them. She recommended everyone read the book *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs* by Johann Hari, which contained some interesting data regarding the decriminalization of drug and alcohol abuse. She said providing treatment, rather than treating drug and alcohol abusers as criminals, was the most humane, compassionate and effective way to manage the issue.

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

**16-00351**      **AGENDA ITEM 9** Update and discussion on the Community Assistance Center (CAC), selected vendor for FY17, and direction to staff on the Interlocal Agreement and related matters.

Elaine Wiseman, City of Reno, conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding an update on the Community Assistance Center (CAC). The presentation's slides were entitled as follows: 1) Overflow Update; 2) CAC Updates (physical improvements) 12/9/15 slide; 3) RFP for Shelter Operations; 4) RFQ for Shelter Operations; 5) Scoring Matrix; 6) General Details; 7) Funding Formula; and 8) Next Steps, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Ms. Wiseman noted the Reno City Council gave the CAC about \$250,000 in General Fund, of which roughly \$40,000 went toward improvements. She stated there had been a lot of meetings to get ideas from staff members and the community about what they would like to see and what they thought was lacking in the shelter operations. She explained how the potential vendors for the shelter operations were ranked and talked about the process of vendor approval by the Transitional Governing Board, which was the CAC's governing body. She reported the Transitional Governing Board selected and approved Volunteers of America (VOA) as the vendor for shelter operations for the

next three years. She said VOA had come up with some creative and innovative ideas on how to run a shelter based on current best practices. VOA's proposal included a year-round overflow shelter that included programming and an individual assessment process to get clients into the services that best fit their needs. As part of their proposal, VOA submitted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada, which meant that if it was determined an individual in a shelter was a good fit for the Crossroads program, they could be placed there. The proposal also included the addition of a housing specialist and an employment specialist, which added yet another layer of assistance. She said VOA's proposal was very creative and collaborative, which was exactly what the CAC was looking for. She explained the next step was for VOA's proposal to get approval from the lead agency, which was the City of Reno. She expected the contract to go to the Reno City Council meeting on June 8th. She noted the funding request was increased due to the proposal for enhanced services including the year-round overflow shelter. The previous funding amount of \$1.9 million was established in 2009. She maintained there could not be an expectation of additional or enhanced services without an increase to the budget, so the goal was to meet the minimum funding requirement for VOA's proposal, which was \$2.6 million.

Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager, indicated the funding formulas depicted in the presentation slides related to meeting the \$2.6 minimum funding requirement and had been provided to the Transitional Governing Board. He reiterated the reason for the increased budget was primarily due to the need for a year-round overflow shelter, which was necessary because the current overflow shelter was at capacity. He maintained that if the intent was start managing the overflow capacity and to provide a continuum of care through programming, there needed to be a discussion about what would be accomplished. He said the current funding formula had been approved at a previous concurrent meeting and there were two options to consider for future funding; Option A and Option B. The Transitional Governing Board selected Option B as their recommendation. He explained Option A would provide the operating budget for the current bid; however, Option B would allow for an excess amount to be utilized for additional programming and development. He recognized the discussion on the topic so far acknowledged the need to evolve and he thought the local jurisdictions were light years ahead in terms of collaboration. He hoped the Interlocal Agreement would be approved by each entity and said the effect of agreement's approval would be the establishment of a lead agency for shelter services and an approved funding formula.

On the call for public comment, Nancy Parent, County Clerk, stated she received a request to speak from Sharon Chamberlain, of Northern Nevada Hopes; however, Ms. Chamberlain had to leave the meeting. Ms. Chamberlain asked the Clerk to indicate she was in favor of the agenda item and to also state that Northern Nevada Hopes recognized the need for increased funding throughout the community, including Reno, Sparks and the County.

Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon commented she was glad it was finally being acknowledged that the temporary overflow shelter was no longer temporary. She said she could not emphasize how immediate and extreme the need was for increased

capacity. She stated even if work on affordable housing started immediately it would probably take two years to complete, which further emphasized the need for the overflow shelter. She asked if a 10,000 to 15,000 square foot warehouse could be used as an overflow shelter if it included some basic services. She wondered if that would be consistent with rules and regulations and stated she understood there was a need to get creative.

Ms. Wiseman replied the VOA proposal included the enhancement of overflow services. She said currently the overflow shelter provided mats on the floor for people who came in around 8:00 p.m. and left around 5:00 a.m. She stated VOA's proposal would provide for a case manager as well as food and coffee. She said recent talks also involved the possible addition of some same-day services programming. She said it was time to look at the next level of services.

Councilwoman Jardon asked if the facility could be located in some other area rather than downtown since transportation could be facilitated. Ms. Wiseman said it could. She said transportation had always been provided to the facilities and they would continue to do so. Councilwoman Jardon felt if a facility was ready soon it would enable the clean-up of the Cities. She asked if it was true that if a person's camp along the river could not be cleaned up unless there was a bed in a shelter for that person. Ms. Wiseman replied if a person who was violating the no-camping rule along the river was asked to move along, there had to be an alternative place for them to go. If all the shelter beds were full, the warming room was full and there were no overflow beds, there would not be a place for them to go. Councilwoman Jardon asked if the average over-capacity number was 150. Ms. Wiseman responded the overflow shelter was approximately 60 beds short.

Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve stated there was a desperate need and she wanted people to be aware of the magnitude of the problem. She asked for the public to come forward if they knew of any warehouses that could be used for shelter services. She encouraged everyone to use their resources to make it happen over the summer; before the next winter hit.

Sparks City Councilwoman Charlene Bybee wondered if there would be an increase to both shelter beds and services with the increased funding and if so, how many more beds there would be.

Ms. Wiseman responded the increased funding would pay for both an increase to services, which included the addition of an employment specialist as well as a housing specialist, and the cost of a year-round overflow shelter. She said the overflow shelter had never been budgeted for in the past. Typically the overflow shelter was only operated between November and March, during the most inclement weather, and the funds for it had been gathered together at the last minute. VOA's proposal included year-round services and up to 110 additional overflow beds, plus additional services at the main shelters.



Councilwoman Bybee stated it was obvious with the addition of more services the goal was to get people employed and to provide them with affordable housing, which would help to remedy the homeless issue. She wondered if the 110 shelter beds that would be provided with the current proposal would help to alleviate the potential influx of people due to growth in the area, or if it was anticipated there would be a need for more money and more shelter beds in the future.

Mr. Schiller stated a review had been done of the overflow shelter population and it was found that 30 to 35 percent of the individuals had some level of accessible income. He said with the VOA proposal, and with help from the County's Social Services Department, it was anticipated they would be able to move a certain number of those clients to some level of independence and out of shelter beds. He thought once the funding was in place they would have the resources to put the programming in place to help make that happen. He mentioned the hope that certain populations could be distributed in a way that would benefit the management of services, such as possibly finding a location for the male population separate from families and children. He said they were early in the process and needed to find some available land, but the resources were needed first so they could get started.

Reno City Councilman David Bobzien stated he knew everyone was frustrated with the inability to find a replacement overflow facility. He said commercial real estate owners were understandably concerned about entering into an arrangement that might prevent them from pursuing other possibilities. He suggested bringing together a leadership roundtable of commercial real estate executives to let them know about the need for affordable housing. He said the complaints that were received about things that were happening on the streets were just going to get worse and potentially harm their industries unless something was done about it. He said the Transitional Governing Board was excited about taking the next step and that they acknowledged the overflow shelter was serving as a temporary solution to increased capacity.

Reno City Councilwoman Jenny Brekhus expressed her concern about the homeless population during the summer and spring months when many of them may be camping along the river. She said her constituents would start contacting her as soon as the camps started to pop up. Although she understood the inability to enforce no-camping laws when there were no overflow shelter beds, she thought there might be another solution. She discovered some other cities allowed camping in areas that were not visited as often by the general population. She suggested possibly allowing camping in different parts of the City or making changes to overnight parking laws so people would have other places to go besides the river area. She wondered if there had been any legal advice on the matter.

Ms. Wiseman replied she thought the reluctance to revisit that idea stemmed from the tent city that existed in 2009. During that year the number of homeless people spiked.

Councilwoman Brekhus suggested the idea be revisited while they were waiting for a more permanent solution.

Mayor Schieve asked Alex Woodley, Acting Community Development Director for the City of Reno, about reaching out to the Flood Project regarding some of their properties. She considered the possibility of diverting some of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds into fixing up some of those properties. She asked Mr. Woodley if he could find out how much that would cost.

Mr. Woodley responded he would be happy to look into it, but he wanted to make it clear the VOA bid included the hiring of a real estate agent to pursue the purchase of a property. He said he could move forward with Mayor Schieve's suggestion, but if the Interlocal Agreement was approved he would prefer to give VOA the opportunity to have a professional look for the property.

Mayor Schieve understood Mr. Woodley's preference, but thought he should also look for a property because the need was immediate. She remarked she was really proud of Sparks Mayor Geno Martini and former Chair of the County Commission Marsha Berkbigler for their work on a Veterans homelessness initiative. She said the initiative was encouraging people all over the Country to do the same and it had been very successful. She thanked them both for their work.

Mayor Martini stated he was the Chair of the Transitional Governing Board. He apologized to the Councils and the County Commission for the fact that the Transitional Governing Board had difficulty getting together and had not taken up the issue earlier. He said the issue should have come before the entities six or eight months earlier, before the tentative budgets were approved. He declared the Sparks City Council would not be able to take action on the agenda item at this time. He agreed the City of Sparks would need to spend more money on homelessness; however, the agenda item would have to be taken back to a regular Council meeting for a vote with an amendment to the budget.

Commissioner Berkbigler remembered how difficult it was the last time there was a search for a homeless shelter and she hoped there would not be negative attitudes from people who did not want a shelter in their neighborhoods this time around. She thought it was important to understand that with a growing population there would also be growth in homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, mental health problems and dementias. She hoped the time had finally come for the entities to work together as a team to resolve the issue.

Chair Jung asked for legal advice because she was under the impression that all the entities were ready to take action on the agenda item and did not have to take it back to their individual Boards.

Sparks City Attorney Chet Adams indicated he did not see a fiscal component on the agenda item that would allow for an earmark or a commitment of Sparks' funds. He saw the agenda item as allowing for direction to staff.

Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, explained the agenda item allowed for discussion, the receipt of an update, and the ability to provide direction to staff regarding an interlocal agreement. There was not an interlocal agreement available to act on. He stated it was not in the packet, it was not produced, and it was not part of the Board's record for the current meeting. He suggested the Board take action to direct staff however they wanted with a request to see the Interlocal Agreement in its final form on a future date.

Chair Jung expressed frustration. She stated that was not the direction given to staff in regards to the preparation of the agenda.

Councilman Bobzien stated he was not aware there had been a problem bringing the Transitional Governing Board together. He said he was under the impression that staff was working diligently to move forward with the request for proposal (RFP) process and vendor approval. He believed the City of Reno was ready to move forward and that staff was appropriately communicating with others in the organization to ensure the upcoming development would seamlessly tie-in with the budget process.

Councilwoman Jardon wondered what could be done to rectify the situation. She sought direction from the Managers on how the agenda item could come back to the three jurisdictions before their budgets were final in order to move forward.

Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger stated the Board and Councils could give direction to staff to move forward with the Interlocal Agreement in whatever manner they decided. He said the Agreement could be presented at the individual Boards for approval once that direction was given.

Councilwoman Jardon asked if that meant the Agreement could be ratified by the individual jurisdictions at their next meetings and Mr. Clinger stated that was correct.

Chair Jung thought the Interlocal Agreement could be ratified immediately. She understood the legal advisors indicated it was not possible to approve any budget augmentations because it was not stated on the agenda and it was not in the staff report. She requested confirmation from Legal Counsel.

Mr. Lipparelli explained the agenda would not permit the Board to vote for the approval of an interlocal agreement. He further stated there was no interlocal agreement yet to consider, so the consequences of such a vote would violate open meeting law. Chair Jung asked if they could vote on a budget augmentation and Mr. Lipparelli replied in the negative.

Mayor Martini stated Sparks' allocated budget for the homeless was already agreed to before this Interlocal Agreement was brought to the entities. He thought the amount they already agreed to budget for the homeless was the same amount as last year.

Chair Jung did not think there was a need to make a motion on this agenda item and said she believed staff had received direction. She stated resolving the homeless issue was a legal, moral and ethical issue, and she thought it was unconscionable that anyone who wanted or needed housing would have to go without it. She questioned the purpose of the Transitional Governing Board.

Sparks Councilwoman Charlene Bybee stated she understood each entity needed to provide direction to staff regarding the Interlocal Agreement and the possible increase in funding. They would have to make decisions and take action during their respective City Councils and County Commission meetings.

Mayor Martini said he was not questioning whether there was a need for the Transitional Governing Board. He thought the Board was useful when it was utilized correctly. He explained the Transitional Governing Board met to decide how much each entity would give and that information was passed on to the entities for their decisions. He stated this year the meeting was held too late in the process to get the recommended dollars into the budgets. He stated he could not make a decision for the Sparks City Council, but he recommended the acceptance of the Interlocal Agreement and the increase to the budget because he thought it was the right thing to do. He said the decision would have to be made at the Sparks City Council meeting.

Mayor Schieve inquired if Sparks had allocated its CDGB funds and Mayor Martini said it had.

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

**16-0352**     **AGENDA ITEM 10**     Comments from the Councils, Commissions, Boards or Managers.

Chair Jung stated she wanted the Cities and the County to cooperate in a regional effort to attack blight, graffiti and potholes. She said blight in both downtown areas was terrible and the less the Cities made from sales taxes and property taxes, the less the County received as well. She thought blight was unacceptable and since the recession was over, it could not be used as an excuse. She thought the regional graffiti meetings should be resumed.

Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon stated although the entities were not able to immediately take action on the Interlocal Agreement, she hoped staff understood that Reno City Council members wanted to have the ability to ratify the Transitional Governing Board's recommendation at their next meeting.

Reno City Councilman David Bobzien said he hoped it was clear to City and County staff that the Interlocal Agreement was going to require more funding to cover the enhanced services.

In response to Councilman Bobzien's concerns, Mayor Schieve stated the City of Reno would be ready to take action.

**16-0353**      **AGENDA ITEM 11** Public Comment.

Michele Gehr, Executive Director of the Eddy House Youth Resource Center, stated she was seeing about 40 young homeless people every day at the Resource Center. She said she implemented programming that was designed to teach social, emotional and life skills at the Center. She commented the program was not as effective as it needed to be because of the lack of transitional housing for young people. She reminded the Council and Board members that homeless youth were homeless for different reasons than homeless adults. She asked for support and invited everyone to attend an upcoming open house at the Resource Center.

Lynette Eddy, Founder of the Eddy House Youth Resource Center, said she recently attended the Housing First Partners Conference in Los Angeles which was attended by 800 policy makers, providers, and advocates from all over the Country. It was sponsored by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the Gates Foundation. She learned what other places were doing around the Country and she said the housing first movement worked. She said it was a harm-reduction model that took people off the streets and put them in housing with major supportive services. She stated health care was also a huge driving force in collaborations around the Country. She knew there would be federal funding available in the future, but she thought if all the State entities did not work together they would not be ready for it and would get passed over.

Amy Jones, Reno Housing Authority, said she wanted to respond to Reno City Councilman Paul McKenzie's comments about funding. She said he was right about the limited funding at the Housing Authority. She reported the Housing Authority would not be getting any additional funding except for the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. She commented affordable units were decreasing and with rising rents, voucher holders continued to have difficulties finding affordable housing. She remarked the payday loan issue was a problem she saw with her clients all the time. The Reno Housing Authority's Family self-sufficiency program was meant to help those types of issues, but case managers were necessary to help people break the cycle.

Juanita Cox stated she was very happy to see the Cities and the County consider the housing first model because housing is what saved her daughter's life. She thought moving homeless people to areas that did not have as many social services available was unconscionable. She was upset about the disease and debris that was floating down the river and impacting other Counties. She had been to a lot of meetings and she hoped the local governments would do something about it this time.

**11:10 a.m.** Commissioner Hartung left the meeting.

Cathy Brandhorst spoke about matters of concern to herself.

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**11:13 a.m.** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

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**KITTY K. JUNG**, Chair  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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**NANCY PARENT**, County Clerk and  
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:  
Cathy Smith, Deputy County Clerk*