

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

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

JUNE 30, 2020

PRESENT:

Bob Lucey, Chair
Marsha Berkbigler, Vice Chair
Kitty Jung, Commissioner (via telephone)
Vaughn Hartung, Commissioner (via Zoom)
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

Jan Galassini, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Eric Brown, County Manager
David Watts-Vial, Assistant District Attorney (via Zoom)

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:01 a.m. in special 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:

20-0467 AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Chief Deputy County Clerk Jan Galassini read an email by Ms. Wendy Pitts. In it, Ms. Pitts said she was a former Washoe County Property Program Fiscal Control Manager. She stated she was cyber stalked and alleged the stalking was encouraged by vigilantes, police, and donors of Commissioners who were aware of her disability. She contended her disability was caused by 16 years of emotional abuse by politicians, the County management team, and civil attorneys. She said she requested her personnel file more than two weeks prior but it had not yet been released to her. She requested the emails from her personnel file be released.

Ms. Galassini started reading an email from Ms. Elise Weatherly, but it was determined there were technical difficulties with the Zoom application. Chair Lucey announced the meeting would recess.

10:07 a.m. The Board recessed.

10:09 a.m. The Board reconvened with all Commissioners present.

Chair Lucey asked for a new roll call and to restart Agenda Item 3. Ms. Galassini repeated the roll call and re-read the email from Ms. Wendy Pitts.

As read by Ms. Galassini, Ms. Elise Weatherly mentioned current events in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She spoke about drug use, alcoholics, and the persecution of

people who tried to do what was right. She asserted it was time to do something about what was wrong. She said she stood up for a former coworker who was falsely accused of wrongdoing. She noted the difference in how the community treated her versus her daughter.

20-0468 **AGENDA ITEM 4** Announcements/Reports.

County Manager Eric Brown mentioned the Board of County Commissioners would have regular meetings on July 14 and July 21, but would then take a hiatus until August 18. He commended the efforts of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) in battling the Poeville Fire the prior weekend. He thought Fire Chief Charles Moore and his team did a great job of limiting structure damage. He thanked Chief Moore for staying in contact, which allowed staff to coordinate County resources effectively. He expressed appreciation for Washoe311 staff who took many calls from people affected by the fire, and he acknowledged the efforts of the Red Cross in coordinating shelter for residents affected by evacuations. He mentioned the County would extend the current workforce policy through the end of July in response to the Governor's message on June 29 about extending phase 2 of reopening.

Chair Lucey noted the previous five days had been busy for the State and the County. He mentioned the Governor's directive announced on June 24 requiring face coverings, which he stated was not something to take lightly or fight against. He said the State was still in the midst of the pandemic and the number of positive cases in both Washoe and Clark Counties had increased exponentially over the previous two weeks. He acknowledged hospitalization and mortality rates were stable. He asserted the Governor was very serious and would not hesitate to roll back the reopening progress if people failed to adhere to the mask mandate. He stressed the importance and minimal inconvenience of wearing a mask, adding that not wearing one put people's life at risk. He urged everyone to consistently wear a mask while going out in public.

Commissioner Herman noted she submitted email correspondence to Chief Deputy County Clerk Jan Galassini, a copy of which was placed on the record. The email documented her attempts to secure a place for people to shoot. She said it was up to the Board to determine if a parcel might be released to create a safe area for shooters. She stated the County could lease or purchase the property according to the Bureau of Land Management. She thanked TMFPD firefighters for their efforts and bravery during the Poeville Fire, which was in her district. She thanked whoever worked on Mr. Archer's ditch, noting Mr. Archer expressed his gratitude for the excellent work. She mentioned a ditch located above Oregon Boulevard in Lemmon Valley which overflowed in 2015 needed work again. She read email correspondence from a constituent who asked why the company Get Rattled was unable to provide rattlesnake avoidance classes. The constituent asked for help because there had been multiple rattlesnake sightings in the North Valleys.

Commissioner Hartung announced the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) would host a Water Resource Plan public outreach webinar at 2 p.m. He directed people to TMWA's website for details. He mentioned a fatal vehicle/pedestrian accident

that occurred the prior weekend on Pyramid Highway and Dolores Drive. He asked staff to investigate whether the County needed to do anything, but he wanted to take proactive action along with the Regional Transportation Commission and the Nevada Department of Transportation. He expressed concern about that residential corridor of Spanish Springs. He stated he would request a road safety audit or road safety study for the stretch of road between the library and the north end of the valley.

20-0469 **AGENDA ITEM 5** Recommendation to approve and execute the Resolution levying tax rates for all Washoe County entities for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. (All Commission Districts.).

Budget Manager Lori Cooke indicated this agenda item was a Resolution for the Board to levy tax rates, which would enable the Treasurer’s Office to send out tax bills. She said this act of levying the tax rate would apply countywide and it would include all entities that received property tax, such as the Washoe County School District and the fire protection district. She stated the Treasurer’s Office needed the tax levied within a certain amount of time so they could send out tax bills in a timely manner. As per Nevada Revised Statutes, she noted, the Board could not execute the Resolution until the Nevada Tax Commission (NTC) certified the rates for the next fiscal year, which they did on June 25.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 4-1 vote with Commissioner Herman voting “no”, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved and executed. The Resolution for same is attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

20-0470 **AGENDA ITEM 6** Possible Closed Session for the purpose of discussing labor negotiations with Washoe County and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District per NRS 288.220.

Chair Lucey stated there was a need for a closed labor session. The Board of County Commissioners meeting would adjourn at the conclusion of the closed session.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Vice Chair Berkbigler, seconded by Commissioner Hartung, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that the meeting recess after completion of all items to a closed session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with Employee Organizations per NRS 288.220.

20-0471 **AGENDA ITEM 8** Announcements/Reports.

There were no announcements or reports.

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Later in the meeting, Agenda Item 8 was reopened and Commissioner Herman said she found North Valleys Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) Member Kenji Otto to be extremely American. She noted he was half Japanese. She asserted she had not experienced a racist attitude from Mr. Otto. She stated he worked hard and had a stroke as a result, so he resigned from the CAB, which she thought would be a great loss.

Chair Lucey thought the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) needed to consider how to identify tolerance in anyone appointed by the BCC to a leadership role. He believed the BCC should have the ability to remove any appointed individual if they made intolerant statements in public or posted them on social media. He thought the BCC needed to review allegations of intolerance and take action when the claims were valid. He asserted those people were not representative of the County or the community and should not be tolerated any further. He asked staff to work with the District Attorney's (DA's) Office to determine whether the BCC had the capability to remove appointed representatives. He noted Commissioners were removed from the Planning Commission in the past for posting things about agenda items before a vote was taken.

Commissioner Jung seconded Chair Lucey's comments.

Commissioner Hartung agreed with Chair Lucey's statement because those people were representatives of the County. He asked the DA to provide policy options for dealing with this type of issue. He asserted there was no place or appropriate time for this type of behavior. He requested this item be agendized as soon as possible so the Board might adjust policies and procedures with respect to boards whose members were appointed by the BCC.

Vice Chair Berkbigler agreed with the other Commissioners. She mentioned the CAB program would be agendized for an upcoming meeting. She suggested this issue could be included in the overall CAB program discussion. She hoped the DA would provide options for handling this type of issue. She agreed with Commissioner Hartung's statement about those individuals being representatives of the County, and she felt the Board needed to ensure they represented the community equitably without saying negative things about County citizens.

20-0472 AGENDA ITEM 7 Public Comment.

On the call for public comment, a voicemail from Ms. Annemarie Grant was played in Chambers. She played part of the audio recording of her brother Thomas Purdy's arrest. She alleged her brother was hogtied for 40 minutes and smothered by Washoe County deputies and Reno Police officers. She stated she heard the event every day of her life. She urged the Commissioners to do their jobs and hold elected officials accountable.

Via the Zoom app, Ms. Rebecca Marco said Cold Springs was a wonderful community, like a big family. She expressed concern about North Valleys Citizen Advisory

Board (CAB) Member Kenji Otto. She alleged Mr. Otto had a history of posting racist comments online, which he subsequently deleted. She stated Mr. Otto habitually harassed community members, and one resident called the police on him the prior week. She indicated community members felt unwelcomed at CAB meetings. She said residents expressed concerns in the past and were told Mr. Otto was a good representative for that area. She asked to Board to review Nevada Revised Statutes for a means of removing Mr. Otto from the CAB.

Using the Zoom app, Ms. Bonnie Valker said she started a petition and obtained several hundred signatures to remove Mr. Otto from the CAB. She believed the racist comments Mr. Otto posted were about two years old. She stated Mr. Otto went door-to-door handing out business cards with a website link promoting the unincorporated town. She noted the business cards had the County logo on them, which misled residents. She recounted the incident which prompted a resident to call the Sheriff’s Office about Mr. Otto. She asked Commissioner Herman to clarify why Mr. Otto’s behavior was tolerated. She noted residents had been told to find common ground with Mr. Otto when they expressed concerns in the past.

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Agenda Item 8 was briefly reopened; see that item for further details.

10:42 a.m. The Board recessed into a closed session.

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11:02 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

BOB LUCEY, Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared by:
Carolina Stickley, Deputy County Clerk*