

**EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BUDGET MEETING - January 19, 2022**

STATE OF NEVADA        )  
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COUNTY OF EUREKA     )

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on January 19, 2022. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea, Vice Chair Michael Sharkozy, Commissioner Rich McKay (via phone), District Attorney Ted Beutel, and Administrative Assistant Jackie Berg. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Goicoechea announced that Commissioner McKay was joining by telephone, as he is under quarantine due to close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Goicoechea noted that items will be taken out of order on the agenda to accommodate those who have traveled to attend the meeting. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda as posted; Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments. He read an email from Michael Gilbert, resident and small business owner, who respectfully stated strong opposition to any budget or tax increases. The email said, *“We relocated to Eureka County because we like how things are done here. Please keep up the good work and preserve our way of life.”*

Chairman Goicoechea offered condolences to Kim Todd, acknowledging the recent loss of her mom just a short time after the passing of her dad, stating *“...it’s been a tough year Kim, and our thoughts and prayers are with you.”*

Chairman Goicoechea also recognized the passing of Eureka County’s oldest known resident, Floyd Slagowski, who was lost the previous week at the age of 105, noting *“...he had a good run...he was home until the end, and that’s what mattered.”*

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Consider Election Registrar Position: Human Resources Director Heidi Whimple explained that Clerk Recorder Lisa Hoehne worked with her to draft a new position description – Election Registrar-Commissioner Administrative Assistant I. The purpose was to reallocate a currently vacant Deputy Clerk Recorder position to a position with a primary focus on duties surrounding elections and to provide backup support to the Commissioners. Ms. Whimple assisted in the process to help the parties meet the intended goals, but noted that Ms. Hoehne had some thoughts on the final product.

Ms. Hoehne concurred that she worked with Ms. Whimple on the job description, but had expressed that it needed to clearly state that the Clerk Recorder would not be responsible for elections, which was her intent in agreeing to moving the election procedures out of her office.

Chairman Goicoechea explained that, in a county of this size, State statute identifies the County Clerk as ex officio Registrar of Voters, and that will not change. The Chairman and District Attorney explained that the intent of this action was to reduce the responsibility placed on a single elected official and to address challenges surrounding elections, which have become increasingly complex in recent years due to ever-changing election laws.

Ms. Whimple offered that selecting the proper candidate and providing appropriate training will ensure that this position meets those challenges and will ultimately reduce election liability for all parties involved.

Ms. Hoehne responded that if she continues to be the official statutorily responsible for elections, then this position and the election system need to be retained in her office and need to

be directly supervised by her. She eventually agreed to make some edits to the proposed job description and return later in the meeting for possible action.

Continued Discussion – Election Registrar: Ms. Hoehne returned later in the meeting and requested that the Board not approve the proposed job description, but instead allow her to place a request on the next agenda to fill the vacant Deputy Clerk Recorder position. She asked that the election worker job descriptions and hiring requests, listed on the January 20<sup>th</sup> agenda, be tabled to a future meeting as well.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BUDGET – PERSONNEL REQUESTS**

Tentative Budget: It was stated that all budgets are tentative and subject to revision before adoption of the final budget at the statutory public hearing scheduled in May.

Current Vacancies: Comptroller Kim Todd reviewed positions that are presently vacant, but approved and budgeted in the current fiscal year, as follows: CLERK RECORDER vacancies include a Deputy Clerk Recorder and a casual worker (300 hours for elections). PUBLIC WORKS vacancies include a casual worker (Crescent Valley buildings & grounds/office), a full-time worker (Crescent Valley water department, with time split among several categories), a Swimming Pool Supervisor, and another casual (750 hours for parks). DISTRICT ATTORNEY vacancies include a Chief Deputy District Attorney, a Legal Secretary, and a casual worker. SHERIFF vacancies include two Dispatchers (one pending resignation), and four Deputies (one Eureka patrol; three detentions).

New Personnel Requests: The Board entertained requests for additional personnel, noting that some requests may be calculated into the budget in order to show the financial impact, but are subject to final approval later in the budget process.

**District Attorney:** District Attorney Beutel requested an investigator position, but asked for the flexibility to utilize contract services for investigations. He explained it is problematic for District Attorneys to conduct their own investigations because they cannot serve as prosecutor and be called as a witness.

**Senior Center Program:** Director Millie Oram said she had planned to request moving a Crescent Valley casual worker to ¾-time, but after visiting with Public Works, would like to request that the position be moved to full-time. This would help with the high turnover rate experienced with casuals and the extra hours could be used by Public Works for janitorial work. Ms. Oram announced that she plans to retire in May of 2023, so the upcoming budget should include salaries for overlap, of at least a couple months, to allow for training a new Director.

**Public Works:** Jeb Rowley said Public Works would like to continue funding an operator position that is currently half-funded by an area mine under a Memorandum of Understanding. A representative of the mine voiced some consternation over funding a wage increase, so the MOU is again under negotiations. Mr. Rowley explained that this shared funding has provided an operator, on a half-million dollar piece of County equipment, solely assigned to the JD Ranch Road. If the shared funding does not continue at an equitable level, it will not be feasible for the County to continue maintaining that road at the level it has been.

**CVTAB:** Nona Kellerman said the Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board would like the County to consider reinstating its casual secretary position. The duties are currently being covered by a utility worker. After some discussion, the Board agreed to see what the budget will look like with an added casual (10-19 hours per week), with the utility worker's 400 hours (currently assigned to CVTAB) moved back into the water department.

Ms. Kellerman added that the Town Board would like to see an increase to its meeting stipend, which is currently \$45.00 per meeting. The Board asked how the stipend originated, and whether it was set by resolution, ordinance, or some other means. Ms. Kellerman answered that it was in place when she began as Board secretary in 2012. Staff agreed to research it.

**Sheriff:** The Sheriff's budget (current fiscal year) has four officers assigned to Crescent Valley, four officers assigned to Eureka, five administrative staff (including Sheriff and

Undersheriff), five communication staff, five detention/jailers, and one casual bailiff position. *Note: Seven of these positions were currently vacant.*

Sheriff Watts requested 9.5 new positions – two additional Dispatchers, four additional Deputies in Crescent Valley, 3.5 additional Deputies in Eureka, and asked to increase the casual Bailiff to full-time. He explained this would allow two Dispatchers and four Deputies (two in Eureka and two in Crescent Valley) to be on duty 24/7, with a supervisor on duty 12 hours per day. The Sheriff contended that converting the five full-time detention Deputies to patrol, and adding the requested Deputies would allow for two Sergeants and eight Deputies up north, and two Sergeants and eight Deputies down south (this does not include the Sheriff and Undersheriff).

Chairman Goicoechea noted, as stated earlier in the meeting, that he and his fellow Commissioners will make final personnel decisions at a future meeting, but he told the Sheriff, *“I’ll tell you right now...I’m a hard ‘no’. That is just completely out of touch.”*

Commissioner McKay asked the Sheriff to prioritize the 9.5 positions and bring it back to the Board. He emphasized that he wanted it prioritized down to a single position so the Board could understand where the Sheriff felt there was the greatest need.

**FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BUDGET – COLAs & MERITS**

Cost of Living Adjustment: Ms. Todd provided cost projections based on COLAs (cost of living adjustments) of \$0.50, \$0.75 or \$1.00 with or without merit increases, including a comparable COLA/merit for salaried employees. Elected officials’ salaries are set by statute and they are only eligible for raises when authorized by the Legislature.

Merits (no COLA)	COLA	COLA + Merits	Comparable/Salaried
\$100,966	\$0.50 = \$94,000	\$195,000	3.24% = \$24,000
	\$0.75 = \$141,000	\$242,000	4.35% = \$32,500
	\$1.00 = \$188,000	\$289,000	5.46% = \$41,000

Staff commented on several years, in the County’s recent history, of no COLAs and even a short hiatus on merit increases, as well as the increased cost of groceries, gas, and other goods, which have escalated at an even higher rate due to the pandemic.

Chairman Goicoechea agreed there have been some lean budget years during his tenure as Commissioner, including a hiring freeze and years without any raises for employees. He said the County has some valuable employees and he prefers taking care of existing staff before adding more staff. He also felt it was time to start investing in infrastructure again.

Commissioner McKay said he shared the Chairman’s philosophy and would rather invest in retaining existing staff and would hate to see good employees lured away by high mine wages. He said he would support a \$1.00 COLA.

Chairman Goicoechea responded that Commissioner Sharkozy had just slipped him a piece of paper supporting a \$1.00 COLA. He asked the Comptroller to prepare budget projections utilizing the COLA and merit combined option tentatively agreed upon by the Board. He noted that a decision will be made on the requested new personnel before a final determination is made on any wage adjustments.

**FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 BUDGET – CAPITAL OUTLAY REQUESTS**

Television District: Television District Board members, President Bill Leppala and Randy Klatt, along with technician Paden Hilyard, were in attendance representing the Television District. They explained the capital project planned for FY 2023 is an upgrade of the transmitter site on Argenta Ridge, which will correspondingly merge the site onto the new distribution system. The latest project estimate of \$141,000.00 could increase by 10% up to 40% (worst-case scenario) due to manufacturing issues and supply chain delays. There are no capital projects planned at other tower sites, and with recent upgrades no failures are anticipated, but the Television District

said it would like to budget some contingency. Based on this discussion, everyone agreed to budget \$160,000.00 for capital outlay in the upcoming fiscal year.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to tentatively budget \$160,000.00 for capital outlay in the Television District budget for Fiscal Year 2023; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Library System: Earlier in the day, the Chairman and Public Works Director met with staff from the Elko-Lander-Eureka County Library System concerning needed upgrades at the Eureka Library to address handicap access, design issues, and front desk reconfiguration. Chairman Goicoechea admitted he hadn't been in the library for years and was a bit embarrassed at the condition it was in. He agreed the building was overdue for some upgrades.

Jeb Rowley referenced the original plans for the building, which was constructed over 40 years ago (dedicated in 1981). A lot has changed in 40 years and he felt an architect or engineer should be engaged for professional assessment in order to properly address building, accessibility, utility, and technology issues. He felt money could be found in the current fiscal year to begin the preliminary design, and recommended budgeting \$75,000.00 in FY 2023 for preconstruction services and design. Actual construction costs can be estimated during budget talks for FY 2024, and he felt this might require another \$75,000.00.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to tentatively budget \$75,000.00 for capital outlay to address needed upgrades at the Eureka Library in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Capital Improvement Requests: Ms. Todd gave a detailed review of capital improvement requests submitted to her office for the tentative budget (*items noted with an asterisk [\*] are carryovers from the current fiscal year*).

#### **General Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Ambulance Equipment (12-lead ECGs) - \$185,000.00 (5 are needed, this is for 3)
- Elections (contingency) - \$5,000.00
- Computer/Network Upgrades (including LTE\*) - \$1,277,000.00
- Sheriff Equipment (Search & Rescue UTV & outfitting, UTV trailer w/ 911 mobile dispatch center; Communication Center consoles; Animal Control kennel/buildings) - \$280,000.00
- Buildings/Grounds (fire panel\*, EMS HVAC) - \$51,000.00
- Fairgrounds (sewer upgrades\*); Crescent Valley Park (cameras) - \$25,000.00
- Airport FAA Grant (plow building\*; hangar upgrades\*) - \$669,000.00 (*Note: \$605,000.00 reimbursable by grant.*)
- Public Works/Natural Resources (map copier/scanner) - \$9,500.00
- Justice Court (furniture, copier\*) - \$14,000.00
- LEPC Grant (emergency items) - \$30,000.00
- District Attorney (filing cabinets\*) - \$15,000.00

#### **Road Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Equipment Replacements (2 transports; dump truck; sweeper; 2 pickups\*) - \$970,000.00 (*Note on transports and dump truck: budgeted to secure 'build slots'; will be received in FY 2024.*)
- Road Shop (oil room expansion\*) - \$25,000.00

#### **RTC (Regional Transportation Commission) – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Overall County Road Maintenance Program - \$1,302,000.00 (*Note: Public Works will invite County Engineer to future meeting to go over road maintenance project multi-year planning and phasing options.*)

#### **Agricultural Extension – Capital Improvement Requests**

- UNR Extension Project (possible carryovers\*) - \$200,000.00

**Building Maintenance Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Various Building Repairs & Misc. Remodels (contingency) - \$300,000.00
- Annex Generator\*/Clinic Generator - \$200,000.00
- Fairgrounds Roof\*/Masonry Work - \$150,000.00

**Capital Projects Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Capital Outlay (CV maintenance truck\*; misc. equipment contingency) - \$200,000.00
- County Car Pool (Public Works truck\*) - \$60,000.00
- Data Processing Conversion (Commissioner agenda program) - \$25,000.00
- Fire Equipment (contingency; paint) - \$25,000.00
- Radio Upgrades (increases each year it is not used) - \$250,000.00
- Sheriff Vehicle Replacement (5 vehicles) - \$345,000.00
- Fiber Optic Network Infrastructure Upgrade (wireless Eureka, partial carryover\*) - \$1,182,775.00
- Fiber Optic (Crescent Valley upgrades\*) - \$205,000.00
- Diamond Valley Weed District (weed spray set-up/truck, trailer, tanks, etc.) - \$230,000.00 (*Note: reimbursable with BLM grant.*)
- Devil's Gate Mainline Extension\* - \$150,000.00
- Crescent Valley Cardlock\*/Tank Cleaning\* - \$290,000.00

**Recreation Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Recreation Improvements - \$30,000.00

**Water Mitigation Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Test Well (Kobeh Valley and misc. well drilling\*) - \$300,000.00

**Landfill Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Landfill Capital Projects (recycling shed\*) - \$25,000.00
- Trash Fence - \$43,000.00

**Assessor Technology Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Technology Upgrades (contingency) - \$100,000.00

**Recorder Technology Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Recording Equipment Upgrades (contingency) - \$10,000.00

**Justice Court Admin. Assessment – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Equipment Upgrades & Replacement (contingency) - \$50,000.00

**Juvenile Court Assessment – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Equipment Upgrades & Replacement (copier\*) - \$11,000.00

**Justice Court Facility Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Justice Court Facility Improvements (contingency) – 50,000.00

**Crescent Valley Town – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Community Center (Conex) - \$8,000.00
- Fire Equipment (contingency) - \$5,000.00
- Water Improvements/Repairs (contingency) - \$75,000.00

**Town of Eureka – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Water Department (utility truck\*) - \$45,000.00
- Fire Equipment (contingency) - \$5,000.00
- Water System Improvements (contingency) - \$75,000.00
- Sewer System Improvements (contingency) - \$20,000.00

### **Devil's Gate Water Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- Water System Improvements (contingency) – \$75,000.00

### **Eureka Television District – Capital Improvement Requests**

- TV District Improvements (Argenta Ridge fiber) - \$160,000.00 *(As discussed earlier in the meeting.)*

### **Diamond Valley Weed Fund – Capital Improvement Requests**

- General Improvements (contingency) – \$1,000.00

Ms. Todd cautioned that, of all the funds, she had concerns that the balance in the Capital Projects Fund was at \$4.7 million, but capital outlay carryovers and new requests for that fund were nearly \$3 million.

Chairman Goicoechea responded that there is no way the County can spend that much. Similar to Commissioner McKay's request concerning personnel, he asked everyone to prioritize their requests and be prepared to justify priorities at the February 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET – DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS**

Juvenile Probation: Juvenile Probation Officer Steve Zimmerman presented the proposed budget for Juvenile Probation. The only change was a minimal increase to the medical line item to cover costs of his annual physical. Any changes to the grant-funded programs, simply reflected changes in pass-through grant amounts.

Ambulance & EMS: EMS Director Kenny Sanders said the increases in his operating budget reflected the rising cost of fuel and potential computer/software replacements.

Senior Centers: Program Director Millie Oram reviewed the proposed Senior Centers budget. Increases in the operating budget were due to rising costs of food, supplies, repairs, and fuel. Monies were budgeted for two potential replacement computers. She was able to decrease travel/training, telephone/fax, and machine maintenance. Overall change was a net increase of about \$10,000.00. Ms. Todd noted that significant portions of the Seniors Program expenses are reimbursed by grants.

Treasurer; Public Guardian: Treasurer Pernecia Johnson sent an email outlining the minimal increases requested in her budgets. An overall increase of \$1,750.00 in the Treasurer's budget was for postage and machine maintenance, which have been under budgeted.

A \$3,000.00 increase in the Public Guardian budget was for travel/training since the office now has a ward in Reno that is visited once a month.

Clerk Recorder: Clerk Recorder Lisa Hoehne described proposed changes in her budgets. For Clerk Recorder, she decreased service/supplies, machine maintenance, microfilm, office supplies and postage; and increased data software, mining maps, and telephone/fax.

Recorder Tech Fund: She requested no changes to the Recorder Tech Fund budget.

Elections: Ms. Hoehne expects many election costs for FY 2023 to be similar to FY 2021. She increased data software contracts, budgeted for a scanner, and anticipates higher costs related to a Crescent Valley polling place (equipment, legal advertising, paper/print costs, ballots, etc.). She decreased travel/training.

District Court: Ms. Hoehne budgeted an additional \$21,000.00 to cover a required court audit, computer replacement, and potential JAV System repairs. She made a slight increase to telephone/fax, and decreased court expenses by \$8,000.00.

Assessor: Assessor Michael Mears stated he had no proposed changes to his two budgets. He wanted to retain the \$15,000.00 budgeted in contract services for assistance in appraising the solar plant being built in northern Eureka County. Mr. Mears stated that he will be coming to the Board at some point in the future regarding management of the GIS program. Although there are currently no impacts to his budgets, this is part of succession planning as he intends to retire after one more term.

Assessor Technology Fund: Again, no changes were requested in this budget, but Mr. Mears explained he always budgets for technology contingency, and this budget supports the aerial photography flights.

Comptroller: Ms. Todd reviewed the Comptroller budget. She explained her overall operating budget increased to support the new Tyler Cloud platform (which is used by all County offices, but will be funded by her office). Other areas, including service/supplies, legal advertising, and office supplies, were reduced.

Annual Audit: Ms. Todd explained this budget funds the annual audit, which costs about \$100,000.00 each year. It also contains contingency in the event of a single audit, required if \$750,000.00 or more is received in federal funding. The County nearly reached this threshold in FY 2021, and Ms. Todd expects to reach it in FY 2023 (due to FAA grants and anticipated ARPA monies).

Human Resources: HR Director Heidi Whimple presented her budget. She noted that the only significant change was an increase of \$5,000.00 for investigations, which can be costly. There were slight increases to legal advertising and travel/training, but office supplies and postage were reduced.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Most correspondence will be reviewed during the regular meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>. One item of correspondence was included for this meeting due to its potential impact on budget planning and decisions. This was an email from Above All Communications (Express Internet) outlining milestones as it works to migrate off the County's broadband infrastructure and secure its own links for bandwidth in northern Eureka County.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments; there were none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.

*Approved by vote of the Board this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2022.*

/s/ J.J. Goicoechea, DVM

J.J. Goicoechea, Chairman

*I, Jackie Berg, Commissioner Administrative Assistant, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the January 19, 2022, meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.*

/s? Jackie Berg

Jackie Berg, Commissioner Administrative Asst.

*I, Lisa Hoehne, Clerk Recorder of Eureka County, acknowledge and accept the attached minutes as approved by the Board of Eureka County Commissioners and attested to by the Commissioner Administrative Assistant.*

/s/ Lisa Hoehne

Lisa Hoehne, Clerk Recorder