

EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Budget Meeting – February 1, 2016

STATE OF NEVADA)
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COUNTY OF EUREKA)

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on February 1, 2016, for a budget meeting. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy (via interactive video); Commissioner Fred Etchegaray; District Attorney, Ted Beutel; and Commissioner Clerk, Jackie Berg. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The interactive video conferencing system was connected and utilized between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda as posted; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments; there were none.

COMMISSIONERS

Reschedule Regular Meeting: Due to a scheduling conflict, Chairman Goicoechea requested a change in meeting date. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to cancel the February 19th Commission meeting and reschedule it to February 22nd; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0. The meeting will begin at the regular time of 9:30 a.m.

County Mileage Rate: In January 2009, the Board motioned that the County mileage reimbursement rate would track the State rate and would not require independent action by the Board each time the rate is adjusted. It was recently brought to the Board’s attention that the State rate had been reduced on two occasions with no corresponding change to the County’s rate. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to reaffirm that Eureka County’s mileage reimbursement rate will track the State of Nevada’s rate, currently \$0.54 per mile, effective immediately; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

In instances where a personal vehicle is used for the employee’s or official’s convenience, the State reimburses one-half of the standard mileage rate. The Board considered whether to implement this as well, but declined for several reasons. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned that the full standard mileage rate will apply in all instances of travel when a personal vehicle is utilized for County business; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

COUNTY COMPTROLLER

Response to Internal Job Posting: District Attorney, Ted Beutel, informed the Board that one application was received from the internal posting of the position of Eureka County Comptroller. The response was received from Payroll Specialist, Tina Hubbard. The District Attorney and contract Human Resources reviewed the application and found that Ms. Hubbard meets all of the qualifications. Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to appoint Tina Hubbard as County Comptroller, an at-will position answering directly to the Board of County Commissioners, and to set her salary commensurate with her current rate of pay (Range 130 Step 28) to include the benefit package afforded at-will employees; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

The appointment caused a vacancy with the Payroll Specialist position, which answers to the Comptroller. The Board directed Ms. Hubbard to immediately advertise internally for the Payroll Specialist position and to report back to the Board at their February 5th meeting whether she was able to successfully fill the vacancy.

ELKO-LANDER-EUREKA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Library Contract & Budget: Library Director, Jeanette Hammons, and Assistant Director, Kassie Antonucci, joined the meeting by telephone to review the library budget to help determine services that could possibly be reduced or eliminated in an effort to lower library contract costs. The highest cost is associated with salaries. The Eureka Librarian is already at the minimum 30 hours per week, which is required to maintain benefits through Elko County, and the Crescent Valley Librarian works 13.5 hours per week.

The Board decided to leave the library contract as is for the upcoming fiscal year, but cautioned that drastic cuts may be necessary in the subsequent year. The only change requested in the immediate contract was to update the mileage reimbursement rate to reflect the County's new rate of \$0.54 per mile. Once the contract is approved by the Library System Board of Trustees, it will be forwarded to Eureka County for approval.

FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017 BUDGET PREPARATIONS

Revenue Projections: No new figures were available. Revenue projections are expected from the Nevada Department of Taxation in mid-February.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET REVIEWS

County Commissioners: As part of the ongoing discussion of essential services, the Board reviewed the County Commission budget. The Commissioners are elected and salaries are set by Nevada Revised Statutes, so that must remain static. Most areas of the current budget are on track (50% expended halfway through the fiscal year) without much room for reduction. The Commissioners' budget funds annual membership fees to various organizations such as NACO, Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, American Lands Council, Western Counties Alliance, etc. The Board agreed to evaluate these fees when determining their budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

One area over-expended in the current fiscal year is litigation. District Attorney Beutel noted that his budget contains monies intended for legal assistance, in the form of salary and benefits for a Deputy DA. Since he has no intention of filling this position due to the attrition policy, the funds could be transferred to cover the Commissioners' need to access outside legal counsel. Other than the areas discussed, substantial changes aren't expected in the Commissioners' budget.

Ambulance & EMS: EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan, reviewed services provided by his department. NRS 450B.015 states, "*The Legislature hereby declares that prompt and efficient emergency medical care and transportation is necessary for the health and safety of the people of Nevada, and that minimum standards for such care and all persons providing it must be established.*"

Although there is no statutory requirement to provide emergency medical services within any particular jurisdiction, if that service is offered, it must comply with certain standards outlined in statute. This includes a minimum of one fully operational emergency vehicle in service 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Each ambulance or agency vehicle must have at least two responders, one of whom must be certified at the care level for which the agency is licensed. Supplies must be current; vehicle(s) and equipment must be clean and fully functional; and staff must be properly trained, certified, and licensed.

In addition to these requirements, provision of ambulance services is outlined in Eureka County Code, Title 11, Chapter 50 – Emergency Medical Services.

Eureka County EMS is currently staffed by three full-time employees: an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician/Instructor (Mr. Sullivan) and two EMTs (one in Eureka and one in Crescent Valley). The services are supplemented by, and rely heavily upon, volunteers.

Mr. Sullivan and the Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteer staffing, which is critically low in northern Eureka County. Mr. Sullivan cautioned that further loss of volunteers or career staff in Crescent Valley could force the County to consider converting that service to a non-transport service.

Additional items discussed in relation to ambulance services were: the recent increase in ambulance rates and the positive effect on revenues; possibility of establishing fees for services currently provided for free (i.e. standby); and the possibility of migrating employees from hourly to salary to combat overtime costs. Lastly, the Board requested that Mr. Sullivan compile further information on volunteer stipends, standby occurrences and costs, and costs related to overtime.

Public Works: Public Works Director, Ron Damele, and Road Superintendent, Raymond Hodson, addressed the Board to discuss services provided by Public Works and its sub-departments, including the Road Department. Public Works is governed by multiple statutes covering water and sewer, sanitation, roads, fire districts, Fire Marshall, water law, emergency management, planning and zoning, boilers and elevators, and public bathing facilities.

Mr. Damele and Mr. Hodson detailed the necessary functions provided by each department and reviewed staffing levels. The entire department is staffed with 25 FTEs (full-time equivalents) and 19 casual employees.

The **Public Works office** in Eureka handles multiple functions and is staffed by the Public Works Director, one full-time employee, and one $\frac{3}{4}$ -time employee. Assistance is being provided occasionally from another department. One full-time vacancy exists, but there are no plans to fill this position.

Crescent Valley Public Works has two FTEs and one casual. An additional casual is typically hired in the summers for work related to the parks, but they will forego this extra position this year.

Buildings and Grounds consists of three FTEs in Eureka. Work is typically supplemented by casual employees in the summer, but there are no plans to do so this season.

The **Swimming Pool** has one FTE and a total of 14 casuals with varying schedules. Although Mr. Damele feels the swimming pool provides tremendous value to the community, he feels other County services should take priority during these difficult economic times. He will prepare a proposal to have the pool open for three months during the summer and closed for the remaining nine months of the year. The FTE would continue working full-time by rotating to other departments and continuing year-round pool maintenance.

There are two FTEs assigned to the **Eureka Landfill**. Mr. Damele recommended maintaining the seven day per week operating schedule.

The **Road Shop (Mechanic)** currently consists of two FTEs. A recently vacated FTE position was budgeted with the option of filling if needed. Mr. Damele recommended that this third position be eliminated, but that half of the wages remain in the budget as contract services to fund outside mechanics, if needed.

The **Road Department** has 10 FTEs (six in Eureka and four in Crescent Valley) and one casual employee. This is the lowest number of employees the Road Department has operated with for many, many years.

Eureka Town Water & Sewer has three FTEs, who work with all three water systems (Eureka, Devil's Gate GID, and Crescent Valley).

Related to the **Fire District**, Mr. Damele recommended that the Dunphy Fire Station be closed during the winter and the equipment temporarily relocated (it serves as a wildland fire station only).

Mr. Damele noted that employees from different departments are used to cover other areas where practical and feasible. Despite this, the level of park maintenance, road maintenance, snow removal, and other services accomplished throughout the departments will continue to be reduced due to decreased budgets and decreased staffing levels.

EUREKA COUNTY SHERIFF

Authorization to Hire Dispatcher: Sheriff Keith Logan submitted the Hiring Freeze Waiver Justification form and requested authorization to fill a vacant Dispatcher position. Consequences of not filling this position include continued use of overtime, as well as strain on the current communications staff. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to authorize the Sheriff to advertise to fill the vacant Dispatcher position, posting an internal job announcement through February 12th followed by an external job posting; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments; there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Board this 22nd day of February, 2016.

/s/ J.J. Goicoechea
J.J. Goicoechea, Chairman

I, Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the February 1, 2016, budget meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.

/s/ Jackie Berg
Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk

I, Beverly Conley, Clerk & Treasurer of Eureka County, acknowledge and accept the attached minutes as approved by the Board of Eureka County Commissioners and attested to by the Commissioner Clerk.

/s/ Beverly Conley
Beverly Conley, Clerk & Treasurer