

EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 6, 2019

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 6, 2019. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy; Commissioner Rich McKay; District Attorney, Ted Buetel; and Commissioner Clerk, Jackie Berg. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.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

Chairman Goicoechea removed two items from the agenda: approval of the minutes and the Diamond Valley water level monitoring presentation. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda with those changes; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

COUNTY COMPTROLLER

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Comptroller, Maureen Garner. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$374,478.01 for accounts payable, \$403,444.45 for payroll and retiree related expenses, \$698,522.48 for a pass-through tax allocation to the School District, \$3,803.38 for a pass-through to the State Controller, \$2,180.00 for a pass-through to the Division of Minerals, \$509.49 for a pass-through to the Department of Taxation, \$93.00 for a pass-through to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, and \$6,051.02 in Yucca Mountain expenses, for a grand total of \$1,489,081.83. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Fund Balance Report: The Board reviewed the Fund Balance Report provided by the Comptroller's office.

Mileage Reimbursement Rate: Notification was received from the IRS regarding standard mileage rates for 2019. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to change the County mileage reimbursement rate from \$0.545 to \$0.58 effective January 1, 2019, to align with the federal standard mileage rate. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. The Board concurred that the County's mileage rate will follow the federal rate and there is no need for Board action each year.

Waiver of Policy: Assistant Comptroller, Kim Todd, explained that employees have donated 160 hours to the sick leave bank designated to a specific employee, and more donations are anticipated. Policy states that an employee may only draw 120 hours of donated sick leave per event, so the Comptroller's office is requesting a waiver for the individual for this particular event. Ms. Todd added that employees may not draw from the sick leave bank until all other forms of paid leave are exhausted.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner McKay motioned to waive Personnel Policy 6.3.1.3.e. (which limits donated sick leave withdrawals to 120 hours) and to allow the designated employee to draw up to 240 hours for this event. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

COMMISSIONERS

Legislative Update: The 80th Session of the Nevada Legislature began on February 4th, and Chairman Goicoechea noted he is watching several bills that he expects to move rather quickly. He invited staff to provide updates on legislation of interest.

Assessor, Michael Mears, stated that SJR14, originally heard late in the 2017 Session, was reintroduced. This bill proposes to reset depreciation and the abatement upon sale or transfer of property, which would have a beneficial effect on revenues for local government. It also proposes to reinstate tax assistance for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

On the evening of February 5th, Sheriff Jesse Watts testified on AB47 at a legislative dinner hosted by the Nevada Sheriffs' & Chiefs' Association. AB47 proposes to establish a pilot program to address mental and behavioral health issues in rural counties. The bill will require training of law enforcement officers and will allow non-law enforcement transport for evaluations, which will allow the County to contract for transport services rather than taking a Deputy off patrol.

Out-of-State Travel: Chairman Goicoechea has been asked to meet with the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC, representing not only Eureka but the State of Nevada, to discuss legislation related to management of wild horses and burros. He has asked to participate by telephone, but is requesting travel authorization in the event that is not possible.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve out-of-state travel, including travel reimbursement, for the Chairman to fly to Washington, DC, on February 7th to meet with the Department of the Interior to discuss legislation related to management of wild horses and burros. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 2-0. Chairman Goicoechea abstained. *(Later in the meeting, the Chairman received notification that he was able to participate by telephone.)*

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program: Chairman Goicoechea spoke with Kelly McGowan, Manager of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program, and a final version of the proposed mitigation regulations should be available the following week. The Chairman explained that the regulations will require mitigation for sage grouse habitat when there is disturbance on State lands. The Department of the Interior does not require mitigation on federal lands, but will recognize State law and, therefore, the regulations will apply to disturbances on federal lands as well. The proposed regulations should be introduced to the Legislature in early March.

SENIOR CENTERS

Update Report: Senior Centers Program Director, Millie Oram, reported on activities at the Eureka Senior Center and Fannie Komp Senior Center. In January, Eureka served 617 meals and Crescent Valley served 599 meals. A total of \$17,681.85 was deposited for the month.

Crescent Valley Vacancy: Ms. Oram submitted a Hiring Freeze Waiver Justification for a casual position in Crescent Valley that will soon become vacant. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to waive the hiring freeze and to authorize hiring a Casual Worker III for the Fannie Komp Senior Center; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Report on Activities: Assistant Public Works Director, Raymond Hodson, reported on Road Department activities. In between plowing snow, the gravel haul project on the JD Ranch Road kept both north and south crews busy for the month of January. Mr. Hodson noted that the SNOTEL site at Vaccaro Springs has measured 41 inches of accumulated snow. Commissioner McKay spent a day touring the northern portion of the County with Mr. Hodson, and the Commissioner stated it gave him a new appreciation for how big the County is.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Update: Public Works Director, Ron Damele, reported on Public Works projects and activities.

Utilities & Facilities: All utilities are in good working order. Parts for the Opera House elevator have arrived and Silver State Elevator Company will have a crew in Eureka the following week to complete installation. Thompson Overhead Doors replaced the front doors and frames at the Eureka Clinic and is conducting an annual check of all buildings with rollup or overhead doors.

Firefighter Training & Equipment Testing: The Red Card wildland firefighter refresher trainings were well attended in both Eureka (January 22nd & 23rd) and Crescent Valley (January 25th & 26th). L.N. Curtis will be in Eureka County the week of February 18th to do annual SCBA and compressor testing.

Cleanup Work in Eureka: Mr. Damele and Chairman Goicoechea were in Carson City earlier in the week to meet with Nevada Division of Environmental Protection regarding the US Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup work in the Town of Eureka. About two months of work remain, and the EPA will complete that next summer. To help move the process along, the County agreed to fence the slag pile on the south end of town. The slag pile on the north end of town is privately owned, and the owner has also agreed to have it fenced.

Municipal Garbage Collection: February 7th is the deadline to submit a Statement of Qualifications for municipal solid waste collection. At the next meeting, Mr. Damele will ask the Board to designate a person or a team to negotiate the solid waste collection contract.

SHERIFF

Certificate of Service: Sheriff Jesse Watts read a Certificate of Service that he will present to Deputy Michael Santoyo, who has accepted employment in the private sector. The Certificate highlighted Deputy Santoyo's dedicated service to the Sheriff's Office and Eureka County since 2012.

Announcement of Promotion: Sheriff Watts announced that Deputy Jeri Sanders has met the necessary qualifications and has been promoted to the position of Sergeant at the Detention Facility.

Contract for Background Investigations: Sheriff Watts presented a scope of work and contract from the company that the Commissioners engaged in late 2018 to conduct background checks for the incoming Undersheriff and other potential Sheriff's Office candidates. This is a one-year contract to conduct background checks on an as needed basis.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve a one-year contract with Martin-Ross Investigation & Security Services for an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Vacant Sergeant Position: Sheriff Watts submitted a Hiring Freeze Waiver Justification for the position of Sergeant, which will become vacant at the end of the week. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to waive the hiring freeze and to authorize the Sheriff to fill the position of Deputy I, II, III, or Sergeant; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Risk Management Audit: As a risk management service, Nevada POOL/PACT offers audits of jails and detention facilities, which are conducted by the Legal & Liability Risk Management Institute. Sheriff Watts feels the jail is the highest liability within the County and has scheduled this audit to be done as soon as possible. After the audit, POOL/PACT offers assistance with a remediation plan and even financial assistance in correcting issues. Once the audit is complete, the Sheriff will share the findings with the Board.

Transfer Vehicle to EMS: Sheriff Watts stated that his department has more inventory than staff, so there are unused vehicles. He asked that the Board declare one of the pickup trucks surplus property and authorize transfer of the vehicle to EMS to be used as a response vehicle.

Commissioner McKay motioned to declare the 2011 Chevrolet Silverado Pickup Truck, VIN 1GCPKPE30BF168905, Property #6762, surplus property pursuant to Eureka County Code, Title 3, Chapter 20, Section .130; and to authorize transfer of said vehicle from the Sheriff's Office to Eureka County EMS in accordance with NRS 244A.523. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Surplus Chevrolet Blazer: A civilian vehicle was donated to the Sheriff's Office in January 2018. It was towed to Eureka following arrest of the relative who was driving it, and the owner did not want to travel from Illinois to retrieve it. It is of no use to the County, so Sheriff Watts requested that it be declared surplus property.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to declare a 2000 Chevrolet Blazer, VIN 1GNCT18W7YK245730, surplus property pursuant to Eureka County Code, Title 3, Chapter 20, Section .130. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Surplus Radar Trailer: Sheriff Watts requested that a trailer, which hasn't been functional for a decade, be declared surplus property. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to declare a 1997 Mighty Mover Radar Trailer CSV, VIN 4AGAU8S5VC025119, Property #003398, surplus property pursuant to Eureka County Code, Title 3, Chapter 20, Section .130. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Surplus Van: Lastly, the Sheriff asked that a former Incident Command Vehicle from Crescent Valley be declared surplus property because it has been destroyed by rats and mice and is not worth repairing. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to declare a 1987 Ford Van, VIN 1FDKE30M1LHB74319, surplus property pursuant to Eureka County Code, Title 3, Chapter 20, Section .130. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMISSION

SERC Grant Application: Sheriff Watts serves as Chair of the Local Emergency Planning Commission and requested authorization for LEPC to submit a grant application in an effort to purchase a UTV (small off-road side-by-side vehicle) and trailer for Crescent Valley, and to continue utilizing the USPD hub application, which is used for quickly communicating critical information.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve signing and submitting a SERC Grant application to the State of Nevada Emergency Response Commission requesting a grant of \$32,338.00 for emergency response equipment and operations. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Resources Manager, Jake Tibbitts, provided a memorandum to the Board regarding his agenda items, as he was traveling and unable to attend the meeting.

FRTC Modernization DEIS: In the memo, Mr. Tibbitts explained that he and Consultant, Abby Johnson, are reviewing the FRTC (Fallon Range Training Complex) Modernization Draft EIS in order to submit comments by the February 14th deadline, and he requested Board approval.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to submit comments by the deadline on the FRTC Modernization Draft EIS, with comments based on and consistent with the County's previous comments on the Preliminary Draft EIS, and consistent with Eureka County's established policies. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Waters of the United States: Mr. Tibbitts prepared a comment letter to the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers related to the proposed rule revising the definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS) to clarify federal authority under the Clean Water Act. The letter supports redefining WOTUS and asks that water be protected in a common-sense manner without trampling the rights of property owners, businesses, and state and local governments.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve and submit the comment letter, regarding the definition of Waters of the United States, to the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers by the February 8th deadline. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

White Pine County Silver State Trail EA: Mr. Tibbitts noted in his memo that he did not receive notice of an open scoping comment period related to the Proposed White Pine County

Silver State Trail EA. He heard through a third party that the comment deadline was February 1st, so he submitted a letter by the deadline from the Department of Natural Resources. He asked that the Board adopt his letter and also send a support letter signed by the Chairman.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to ratify and adopt the letter from the Department of Natural Resources to the BLM Ely District Office concerning the Proposed White Pine County Silver State Trail EA. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner McKay motioned to send a letter to the BLM Ely District Office from the Board of County Commissioners supporting Mr. Tibbitts' comment letter and asking that the BLM closely coordinate with Eureka County to ensure the County's concerns, related to impacts from the Proposed White Pine County Silver State Trail EA, are addressed. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

ELKO-LANDER-EUREKA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Library Contract: Director, Kassie Kincaid-Antonucci, sent a letter asking the Board to consider the library contract for the upcoming fiscal year, along with the library budget that contained an increase of \$2,362.00 to cover an accumulating increase to personnel costs in Eureka County.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the library contract for Fiscal Year 2019-2020, including the contract budget amount of \$99,161.00; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

CRESCENT VALLEY TOWN ADVISORY BOARD

Easter Egg Hunt: A request was received from the Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board for \$800.00 to purchase supplies and prizes for an Easter Egg Hunt planned for April 20th. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to authorize \$800.00 from the North End Activities Fund, to be paid to CVTAB Vice Chair, Jessica Evertsen, to organize an Easter Egg Hunt in Crescent Valley. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

CRESCENT VALLEY ART SHOW

Waive Facility Fee: Emily Whittlesey sent a letter requesting that the facility fee for the Crescent Valley Community Center be waived so she can host a community art show on May 19th (art and craft items will be dropped off at the Center on May 18th). Chairman Goicoechea asked if there were plans to utilize the kitchen in the facility, and staff in Crescent Valley confirmed that the kitchen would not be used.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to waive the facility fee at the Crescent Valley Community Center to accommodate a community art show to be held on May 19th; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

HEALTH INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Recommendation on Dependent Insurance Premiums: Employees hired before July 1, 2009, pay 30% of dependent health insurance premiums; employees hired after July 1, 2009, pay 40% of dependent health insurance premiums; and employees hired after July 1, 2015, pay 50% of dependent health insurance premiums.

Jayme Halpin, Chair of the Health Insurance Advisory Committee, stated that the Committee calculated the cost to the County if all eligible employees paid 30% of dependent premiums. They found that it would cost the County an additional \$1,651.97 per month under the employees' current selected plans. Mr. Halpin relayed that the Committee recommends that the Commissioners adopt this change. He reasoned that the Committee has worked hard, and will continue to work hard, to keep premiums as low as possible and has saved the County money in this regard.

The Commissioners agreed that the benefit package is an incentive for retaining valuable employees and for recruiting new talent. Due to the persistent work of the Committee, insurance costs were reduced for the current calendar year.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to eliminate the current employer/employee splits for dependent health insurance premiums of 60/40 and 50/50, and apply the 70/30 dependent health insurance premium split to all active eligible employees effective July 1, 2019. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Since this will require a change to Section 7.1.5. of the Personnel Policy, a resolution outlining the change will be proposed and circulated to all employees before the Board considers adopting the resolution at a public hearing.

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 BUDGET

Budget Question: Assistant Comptroller, Kim Todd, reported that she contacted the Department of Taxation to find an answer to a question from Commissioner McKay, and was informed that a portion of the clinical services contract can be paid from Fund 180, the County Indigent Hospital Fund, because the local clinic does provide indigent services.

Personnel Requests: At the last meeting, the Board heard personnel requests for the upcoming fiscal year from any departments requesting new personnel. Ms. Todd incorporated the requested positions into the salary costs worksheet. This showed that salaries and benefits for ten new employees (nine employees, plus the new Road Department employee to be funded by Barrick Cortez) will cost the County \$981,185.63, or approximately \$900,000.00 excluding the Barrick funded position. The Board discussed each position in detail with the requesting department head.

Clerk Recorder: The first request was from Clerk Recorder, Lisa Hoehne. She asked that another full-time position be added, which would allow the casual position to be eliminated. Chairman Goicoechea stated that the ballot question posed to voters, regarding joining the Clerk and Recorder offices, promised it would result in a cost savings in salaries and benefits, and he couldn't justify adding a position at this point.

Ms. Hoehne described the number of documents handled by her office, stating there is a backlog of documents received during the month of January that have not yet been indexed. Chairman Goicoechea agreed that the letter Ms. Hoehne submitted to justify her request listed several percentages when describing the increase in documents handled by her office. This caused him to investigate himself, and he found that the actual number of documents was not that extreme.

Commissioner McKay commented that with reports of a possible decrease in revenues for the upcoming fiscal year, he felt the County should give priority to employees that meet a public safety or legal need. Commissioner Sharkozy commented that this was a valid point.

Ms. Hoehne stated there was pending legislation that could increase the workload in her office. She added that if the Board was not inclined to approve an additional position, she would like to request more casual hours, estimating that she would need 2,000 hours, which would allow her to hire a second casual for elections, if needed. The office currently has 500 casual hours.

Chairman Goicoechea felt what he had seen did not justify that number of hours, so he suggested that a time study be done. He referenced studies completed in recent years determining minimum staffing needed to complete the statutory and necessary functions of each department. The Commissioners used these studies as a guide to evaluate hiring needs and worked hard over the past several years to reduce personnel costs. He noted that the combined Clerk Recorder office did not exist when the studies were done, so a study of the newly combined office would be helpful in determining the level of staffing needed. He will visit with the Comptroller's office to determine what type of study should be done.

The current budget for the Clerk Recorder's office funds an elected official, one Deputy II position, two Deputy I positions, and one casual position. Ms. Hoehne's second request was to

fund two Deputy II positions and one Deputy I position, which would allow her to promote an existing employee.

This led to an extended discussion regarding the County's policies in relation to promoting or reclassifying an employee. Ms. Todd noted that the promotion would involve an hourly wage increase of approximately \$5.00. She further explained that employees are not eligible for reclassification at the three month or six month evaluations. Employees must meet the knowledge and skill sets of the new classification. Ms. Todd pointed out that the office has only been combined for four weeks, therefore it is highly improbable that the Clerk employees have yet learned the Recorder duties and highly improbable that the Recorder employees have yet learned all of the Clerk duties. Ms. Todd added that she worked for the County nearly 10 years before being promoted from a level I position, which is typical if one asks the long-term employees of the County.

Commissioner McKay stated he understands Ms. Hoehne's predicament, but given policy and precedent, he recognizes that this is not private industry where quick promotions are an option.

Chairman Goicoechea commented that an employee should work several years in a position learning the duties before an advancement of this magnitude is considered. He added that he would have a hard time giving a substantial raise to someone who has worked for the County five or six months, when the Board may be telling employees, some who have been on the job for 30 years, that they are getting a minimal cost of living adjustment.

Data Processing: Assessor Michael Mears, who serves as IT Supervisor, felt the Board should consider making Data Processing a stand-alone department. He recommended that the IT Manager be moved to a salaried position with an additional support person – either a full-time assistant or a casual position. Due to the demand and the immense volume of work, the IT Manager works a lot of overtime. Mr. Mears added that he experienced the same 'sticker shock' the Board had when seeing the total cost for the requested positions, so was willing to consider casual hours that could be utilized during high volume times.

After a brief discussion, the Board asked Mr. Mears and IT Manager, Misty Rowley, to consider what salary would be proposed and the number of casual hours needed and to return for further discussion at the February 20th meeting.

District Attorney: The District Attorney provided a detailed letter outlining the requested positions and suggested salary ranges. He requested one Chief Deputy District Attorney, one Deputy District Attorney, one Legal Secretary, and additional casual hours.

Mr. Beutel explained the dilemma faced by a rural District Attorney's office. For the salary that can be offered by Eureka County, he doesn't expect to attract experienced staff, especially attorneys. This means it is important to have a time of training and mentoring to preserve the institutional knowledge in the office. As staff becomes experienced, they will be able to earn a higher salary elsewhere and will eventually move on. The current staffing level does not permit thorough completion of all tasks and projects assigned to the office.

Commissioner McKay agreed that the proposed salaries (not to exceed \$85,000.00 for a Chief Deputy) would not attract an experienced attorney and asked if a higher amount should be considered. Mr. Beutel responded that more experienced attorneys are generally imbedded in a career in a larger county and likely would not be interested in relocating to a rural location.

Chairman Goicoechea recognized that the requested positions were needed, noting that he had encouraged the District Attorney to request help in his office. But the Chairman suggested hiring one Chief Deputy District Attorney and one Legal Secretary for the upcoming year and revisiting this in the next budget season to reassess the needs of the office and the state of the economy. Commissioner McKay and Commissioner Sharkozy agreed.

Sheriff: Sheriff Jesse Watts requested four positions, a Senior Civil Administrator and three Deputy positions (northern patrol, southern patrol, and jail). When asked to prioritize the positions, he ranked them as follows; jailer, north end patrol, civil administrator, and south end patrol.

The jail is understaffed and out of compliance with federal regulations. Sheriff Watts reiterated that this is currently the County's highest liability. At halfway through the fiscal year, the jail has already expended \$23,000.00 out of the total \$27,000.00 budgeted for overtime.

There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of housing inmates in a neighboring county. Sheriff Watts stated he has analyzed this and he would still be required to keep the jail open as a temporary holding facility. Housing inmates in a neighboring county has a lot of ancillary costs, so for that and other reasons it is not a feasible option. Eureka has housed inmates from other counties in the past and will have opportunities to do so again, and this does generate some revenue.

The Sergeant in Crescent Valley is the only officer stationed in northern Eureka County. Even with relief provided from Eureka staff, he is earning a lot of overtime and on-call pay. Sheriff Watts is also concerned with burnout for this person if he doesn't get backup soon.

Sheriff Watts explained that many civil administrative duties have been assumed by supervisors in dispatch, resulting in large amounts of overtime. Halfway through the fiscal year, the Sheriff's budget has paid \$83,000.00 in overtime, which is 84% over budget.

Adding a Deputy in Eureka would provide more consistent patrol coverage. Sheriff Watts explained that in recent years the Sheriff's Office had 26 FTEs (full time equivalents) and two casuals, but currently has only 19 FTEs.

The Commissioners discussed options with Sheriff Watts. They determined that they could support the jail Deputy and the north end Deputy since those areas are unquestionably understaffed. Based on the tremendous amount of overtime that will be saved, they agreed to tentatively budget the Senior Civil Administrator, but declined the request for a south end Deputy.

Motion on Approved Positions: Based on the previous discussions, Commissioner McKay motioned to budget the following positions for Fiscal Year 2019-2020: one Chief Deputy District Attorney, one Legal Secretary, one Deputy for detentions, one Deputy for north patrol, and one Senior Civil Administrator. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Salaries, Wages, Benefits: So overall costs could be considered, Ms. Todd prepared cost worksheets showing a 3% salary increase for elected officials (regulated by NRS), a 3% increase for appointed officials, potential merit increases, and cost of living adjustments for hourly employees of \$0.10, \$0.25, or \$0.50, as requested at the previous meeting.

Ms. Todd explained that elected officials salaries are set by NRS and the last legislation provided for four years of increases (FY15-16 through FY18-19). The County opted out the first year due to budget constraints, so this year will be a make-up year. It will likely be several years before there is another elected officials' salary bill, so salaries are expected to remain stagnant for several years. The County typically gives appointed officials the same percentage increase as elected officials. The same NRS sets the salary increase for County Commissioners and the County typically gives the Justice of the Peace the same percentage as Commissioners.

The total annual cost to grant the salary increase set forth in NRS would be \$19,194.00 for elected officials and \$13,484.00 for appointed officials. Considering that it will almost certainly be several years before the Legislature proposes another salary bill, the Commissioners agreed to the increase.

Ms. Todd explained that if all eligible employees received a merit increase, the annual cost would be \$67,973.00. There are three employees who have reached the top of the pay scale for their positions and are no longer eligible for merit increases, but do receive longevity pay commensurate with their years of service.

Ms. Todd calculated COLAs for all hourly employees (including vacant positions) and a \$0.10 COLA would cost \$16,353.00, a \$0.25 COLA would cost \$40,882.00, and a \$0.50 COLA would cost \$81,765.00. Everyone was reminded that a \$0.50 COLA was given in FY18-19, after five years of no COLAs, and merit increases were given after being frozen for at least two of the previous five years.

The Commissioners felt the raises were warranted as a reward to employees who had endured the years with no raises. They agreed to help offset this by utilizing \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00 from Fund 180 (County Hospital Indigent Fund) to pay a portion of the clinical services contract.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the 3% increase as provided in statute for elected officials, including the Justice of the Peace, a 3% increase for appointed officials, and a merit increase and \$0.25 cost of living adjustment for hourly employees for Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Agricultural Extension: Chairman Goicoechea stated he spoke with some legislators in Carson City recently and there is concern over counties who have large fund balances in Cooperative Extension budgets if there are no specific plans for those monies. The County's Agricultural Extension Fund currently has a balance in excess of \$907,000.00. The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension would like to utilize some of the funding for the benefit of Eureka County, but wants direction on what balance needs to remain.

Chairman Goicoechea recommended that three years of operating expenses be safeguarded, a minimum of \$300,000.00. Extension Educator, Gary McCuin, explained that his operating budget for the upcoming year may be closer to \$125,000.00. With this information, the Commissioners felt \$400,000.00 should remain in the account.

Bill Payne, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, & Natural Resources (CABNR) has been working on establishment of an Agricultural Research Station in Eureka over the last year. Cooperative Extension has agreed to contribute funding up to \$400,000.00 from the local Agricultural Extension Fund for capital improvements (buildings and infrastructure) if land can be obtained. Presently, \$500,000.00 is obligated for this purpose, but it is estimated that the full amount will not be spent before the end of the current fiscal year. Mr. McCuin will work with the Comptroller's office to release a portion of the funds, so they can be budgeted in the upcoming fiscal year to continue to be earmarked for the research station.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to retain a minimum fund balance of \$400,000.00 in Fund 030, Agricultural Extension Fund; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from: Emily Whittlesey; District Attorney, Ted Beutel; Clerk Recorder, Lisa Hoehne; Natural Resources, Jake Tibbitts (3); Medical Clinics Advisory Committee; Eureka Conservation District; Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board (4); Newmont North America; Elko-Lander-Eureka County Library System; Storey County Manager, Pat Whitten; Humboldt River Basin Water Authority; Nevada Assoc. of Counties; Allison MacKenzie Ltd.; Nevada Div. of Water Resources (3); Nevada Dept. of Transportation; Nevada Dept. of Taxation; Nevada Div. of Minerals; Nevada Health Foundation newsletter; National Cattlemen's Beef Assoc.; US Dept. of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor; and IRS Notice 2019-02.

Commissioner Reports: Chairman Goicoechea stated that David Bernhardt was nominated for Secretary of the Interior and is expected to be confirmed. Mr. Bernhardt most recently served as Deputy to the Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Bernhardt has been an advocate for many western issues, which has led to talk that he may become a target for many of the environmental groups.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments. Clerk Recorder, Lisa Hoehne, said she wanted to correct something stated earlier in the meeting. She stated the wage difference from a Deputy I to a Deputy II is \$1.98.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

Approved by vote of the Board this 20th day of February, 2019.

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

I, Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the February 6, 2019, meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.

/s/ Jackie Berg
Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk

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 Clerk.

/s/ Lisa Hoehne
Lisa Hoehne, Clerk Recorder