

**EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**February 22, 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 February 22, 2022. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea, Vice Chair Michael Sharkozy, Commissioner Rich McKay, District Attorney Ted Beutel, and Administrative Assistant 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 between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Two agenda items were tabled (Nevada Department of Transportation and Northern Nevada EMS Consortium) and a correction was noted on the Senior Center transportation grant item. 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.

Sheriff Jesse Watts asked for a moment of silence, noting that Eureka County suffered a great loss over the past week with the passing of lifelong Eureka resident George Brown and Crescent Valley residents Marissa Hill and Phyllis Rice.

Jeremy Rice thanked the community, and commended the Sheriff’s Office and EMS for everything they did to help his wife Phyllis this past Wednesday.

**COMPTROLLER**

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Comptroller Kim Todd. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$468,939.66 for accounts payable, \$365,820.13 for payroll and benefit related expenses (including employee paid deductions), \$108.00 for a pass-through to Washoe County Crime Lab, for a grand total of \$834,867.79. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0

Fund Balance Report: The Board reviewed the current fund balance report.

**COMMISSIONERS**

Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle (MRAP): In July 2020, the Sheriff’s Office acquired an MRAP vehicle from the Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency. Chairman Goicoechea explained that federal law mandates that policies and protocols be adopted by the governing board of any entity in possession of this type of vehicle. He asked the Sheriff why nothing had been presented for Board approval.

Sheriff Watts said he believed the Sheriff’s Office SOPs (standard operating procedures) covered the MRAP. He explained it was obtained through the Department of Defense’s 1033 Program for use by the tri-county task force made up of Eureka, White Pine, and Lincoln Counties.

The Chairman voiced concerns over liability and proper maintenance of the vehicle. Jeb Rowley agreed, stating Public Works does not have the ability to work on the MRAP or to haul it if it breaks down in the field. He added that his primary concern was the weight of the vehicle, which could potentially damage underground utility lines. Kim Todd confirmed that the MRAP has never been included on the County’s asset list and therefore has never been insured by Eureka County.

Chairman Goicoechea stated that policies must be adopted if the MRAP is going to stay in Eureka County, but he preferred transferring it to one of the other task force counties or another

neighboring county. Commissioner Sharkozy said he was also concerned about liability and the costs to retain and maintain the MRAP.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to transfer the MRAP vehicle to a neighboring county or return it to the Department of Defense if another county doesn't accept it. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Lieutenant Job Description: On January 6<sup>th</sup> the Board approved the Lieutenant job description, but that position has not been budgeted for several years. It was later discovered that Sheriff Watts had promoted an employee to Lieutenant before the job description came before the Board. Then on January 20<sup>th</sup>, the Sheriff submitted a Hiring Freeze Waiver request for the Lieutenant position. The Board denied it because it was not a budgeted position, but offered that the Sheriff could recommend reinstating the position when he submits his budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year.

In the meantime, the Chairman suggested rescinding the job description to allow more time to further refine it. Commissioner McKay motioned to withdraw the Lieutenant position description, which will remain unbudgeted in the current fiscal year. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Letter of Support: The City of Ely asked for a letter supporting its efforts to secure funding from the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund for a housing complex project for critical health support staff. Commissioner McKay motioned to write a letter supporting the City of Ely's request for \$4,000,000.00 to construct a housing complex for critical health workers at William Bee Ririe Hospital and the Rural Health Clinics. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Schedule Public Hearing: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to reschedule a public hearing at 10:00 a.m. on March 21<sup>st</sup> to consider changes to the Eureka County Personnel Policy (as proposed on February 7<sup>th</sup>). Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **SENIOR CENTERS**

Update Report: Senior Center Program Director Millie Oram reported on activities at the Eureka Senior Center and Fannie Komp Senior Center. In January, Eureka served 792 meals and Crescent Valley served 814 meals. A total of \$9,839.00 was deposited for the month.

Senior Center Advisory Board: Tracey Mellard of Beowawe submitted a letter of interest to serve on the Senior Center Advisory Board. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to appoint Tracey Mellard to the seat representing "Non-Senior North" on the Senior Center Advisory Board for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2022. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Nutrition Grant: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to ratify Notification of Grant Subaward from Nevada Aging & Disability Services Division for Nutrition Grant #07-000-57-NX-22 in the amount of \$1,655.00, with no match required. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Transportation Grant: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to ratify grant application to Nevada Aging & Disability Services Division for Transportation Services Subaward Grant #07-000-10-LX-22 in the amount of \$29,577.00. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **AMBULANCE & EMS**

Report on Activities: EMS Director Kenny Sanders reported there were a total of 19 calls for ambulance service in January, with 10 responses from the Eureka station and nine responses from the Crescent Valley station. Three patients were transferred to air medical services.

Chairman Goicoechea thanked Mr. Sanders and Shealene French for meeting with school officials over a matter of concern, saying he got a lot of positive feedback about their professionalism.

## **DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

**Case Management Software:** District Attorney Ted Beutel explained that the case management program that his office has used for years has recently increased its cost to \$25,000.00 annually. His office researched options and located a competing company called Karpel with an annual assessment of \$2,700.00. The initial cost will be \$22,600.00 to install the software and import the data set into the new program. The requested \$5,000.00 will serve as a deposit to secure a place in line for installation.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to authorize the District Attorney's office to spend up to \$5,000.00 to begin the process of replacing the current case management software system. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **TREASURER**

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report for January was submitted by Treasurer Pernecia Johnson, showing an ending General Fund balance of \$43,610,278.54.

## **SHERIFF**

**Reallocation of Positions:** Sheriff Jesse Watts said there has been a significant cost savings by housing Eureka County's inmates in White Pine County. He requested approval to reallocate the five detention positions to patrol in the upcoming fiscal year, with three assigned to Crescent Valley and two remaining in Eureka.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve reallocation of five detention positions to patrol effective July 1, 2022. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **NORTH END ACTIVITY FUND**

**Easter Egg Hunt:** Marcial Evertsen submitted a donation request and a budget for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Crescent Valley scheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup>. Monies will be used to purchase plastic eggs, candy, prizes, refreshments, and other miscellaneous items.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve a donation of \$800.00 from the North End Activity Fund to be used to purchase supplies for the Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Crescent Valley, with the check issued to volunteer Marcial Evertsen. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **BEOWAWE LIBRARY BUILDING**

**Request to Use Building:** Tracey Mellard of Beowawe was interested in utilizing the library building in Beowawe, which has been closed for quite a few years, as a meeting place for the residents. She would also like to look into having it designated a historical building.

Jeb Rowley said the building would require extensive repairs to make it suitable for a meeting place, and he believed there were some water and septic issues at the time it was shut down. There was a brief discussion on other potential meeting sites, and Ms. Mellard plans to approach the School District about using a room at the school.

The Board agreed to have staff evaluate the library building more extensively to determine whether it would be a viable option.

## **COUNTY FACILITIES**

**Facilities Update:** Joyce Jeppesen, Public Works Assistant Director-Administration, gave an update on activities at County managed facilities.

**Opera House:** The Opera House continues to be booked for mine meetings. Upcoming events include a dance recital on March 10<sup>th</sup>, Tylor & the Train Robbers on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and pesticide applicator training on April 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>.

**Sentinel Museum:** The Museum had 40 visitors in January, and recently received a large donation of livestock brands.

Swimming Pool: The Pool had 133 swimmers for the month, including two birthday parties. Lifeguard training was conducted on February 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>.

Eureka Canyon Subdivision: One application for a subdivision lot is pending, and Nevada Department of Transportation has made application for two lots.

Eureka Landfill: The Landfill had 434 municipal customers and 45 commercial customers in January. It received 104 tons of municipal waste and 132 tons of construction and demolition debris.

Eureka Airport: A total of 170 gallons of fuel was sold at the Airport in January – 85 gallons of avgas and 85 gallons of Jet A fuel.

Hangar Lease Agreements: There has been some demand for renting hangar space, and Airport Hangar Lease Agreements were drafted – one for overnight rentals and one for longer stays. Overnight rentals will be \$25.00 and monthly rentals will be \$150.00. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve both Airport Hangar Lease Agreements as presented. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Plain Talk Newsletter: Ms. Jeppesen asked for direction related to the *Plain Talk* newsletter now that editor Abby Johnson has retired. The Commissioners had mixed feelings. They were interested in continuing *Plain Talk* as a means of communicating with the public, but in reality few actually read it. It was suggested that it might be timely to look into more of a Public Information Officer approach. For the time being, they agreed to pause the quarterly editions, but may still publish the newsletter for significant matters.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

Public Works Update: Public Works Director Jeb Rowley reported on projects and activities.

Pickup Trucks: Two of the cab and chassis pickups ordered last year have been delivered. The last one is expected in about a month.

FEMA Team: The FEMA EMTs have been working out of the Eureka Clinic to do COVID testing and vaccinations.

Airport: Quest is in town to finish camera and door lock installations at the Eureka Airport.

Resource Liaison: Jonica Gonzalez, the Resource Liaison hired by Churchill County, is getting set up at the Airport.

McEwen Mining: Mr. Rowley has been meeting weekly with McEwen Mining regarding options for constructing a temporary man camp at the Eureka Canyon Subdivision.

Road Project: Lumos & Associates will be in Crescent Valley on February 24<sup>th</sup> with Public Works to identify any utility, drainage, or other work necessary before paving.

Eureka Library: Public Works is soliciting proposals for a facility assessment of the library, which will cover structural, mechanical, electrical, and architectural areas.

Child Care Facility: Public Works met with the group of moms who are advocating for a daycare to look at the two potential site locations in the Eureka Canyon Subdivision.

Fair Building Roof: Mr. Rowley obtained a quote from Brown Brothers for supplies and labor for roof replacement on the Fair Building at the Eureka Fairgrounds. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve a quote from Brown Brothers for supplies and labor for roof replacement and repairs to the Fair Building at the Eureka Fairgrounds in an amount not to exceed \$38,978.17, utilizing funds budgeted in the current fiscal year for capital outlay (040-130-55010-000) in the Building Reserve Fund. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Report on Activities: Natural Resources Manager Jake Tibbitts reported on recent activities and meetings.

CNRWA: The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority met on February 10<sup>th</sup>. The group is working to establish position statements to more formally address many of the recurring issues in a consistent manner.

Gold Bar Mine: Mr. Tibbitts has been participating with a working group to address some of the Gold Bar Mine's mitigation obligations. In addition to the proponent, the group has

representatives from the BLM, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and the Sagebrush Ecosystem Technical Team.

South Railroad Mine Project: The BLM permitting work has begun on the South Railroad Mine Project (Gold Standard Ventures Corp.). Although located in Elko County, there are potential impacts to Eureka County resources, roads, and the ranch operations in Pine Valley.

Fuels Management Funding: Mr. Tibbitts received a call the previous week from KC Shedden who is Fuels Program Manager at the Battle Mountain District BLM. He wanted to let Mr. Tibbitts know that the BLM will be receiving substantial funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill adopted last November. The BLM will distribute funding to weed districts, counties, etc., to be used primarily for fuels reduction work and habitat conservation.

Alfalfa U: Mr. Tibbitts has been spreading the word about the upcoming Alfalfa U, which will have a variety of educational sessions that can be attended virtually. There is no cost to attend, and this year's focus is on producing alfalfa with less water.

NRAC Meeting: During the Natural Resources Advisory Commission meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Goicoechea and Mr. Tibbitts spoke with Assistant Field Manager Jason Spence, Tuscarora Field Office, about a recent letter that went out to permittees. The letter was about courtesy permits, but it had an unnecessary negative tone to it. Mr. Spence agreed that the letter could have been improved. Chairman Goicoechea wanted to acknowledge and thank Mr. Spence because he followed-up and personally called each permittee who received the letter.

Rangeland Management Policy Center Summit: UNR is hosting a Rangeland Management Policy Center Summit in March and is putting together a very selective group of speakers and educators. NRAC voted to support the summit with a financial donation, pending Commissioner approval. Commissioner McKay motioned to authorize the Natural Resources Advisory Commission to provide a contribution of \$1,000.00 to support the upcoming Rangeland Management Policy Center Summit. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

America the Beautiful / 30x30 Initiative: The current administration's goal with the 30x30 Initiative is to protect 30% of the nation's lands and waters by the year 2030. As part of this Initiative, a mapping tool is being built called "American Conservation & Stewardship Atlas." The entire movement is concerning because it is rather vague and fails to define what it means to 'protect' or 'conserve' the land and water. Comments are due by March 7<sup>th</sup>, so Mr. Tibbitts will present the final comment letter for approval at the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Grass Valley Allotment Skull Creek & Cowboy Rest Riparian Exclosures: Mr. Tibbitts prepared a letter outlining the County's concerns over the riparian exclosures proposed on the Grass Valley Allotment. These concerns are lack of involvement with the permittees, impacts to area ranchers and their grazing and water rights, failure to recognize BLM's mismanagement of wild horses as a contributing factor to riparian degradation, and negative unintended impacts from fencing off riparian areas.

Commissioner McKay motioned to send the response letter to the Battle Mountain District BLM concerning the proposed Grass Valley Allotment Skull Creek & Cowboy Rest Riparian Exclosures. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources: During the 2021 Legislative Session, the Legislature created the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources, which was basically a restructuring of the Interim Committee on Public Lands. This new group has meetings scheduled on February 28<sup>th</sup>, March 21<sup>st</sup>, June 16<sup>th</sup>, and a work session on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, with a deadline to submit recommendations by June 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Tibbitts prepared a letter requesting Eureka County's participation in the Interim meetings and an opportunity to present natural resources and public lands issues at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner McKay motioned to send the letter to the Nevada Legislature's Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources and its Subcommittee on Public Lands with the requests outlined by the Natural Resources Manager. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Greenlink North Project: The County received an invitation from the BLM Nevada State Office to participate in the Environmental Impact Statement process for the proposed NV Energy Greenlink North Project (GLNP). Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to send a letter to the BLM Nevada State Office accepting cooperating agency status on the proposed NV Energy Greenlink North Project and the associated Environmental Impact Statement process. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Cooperating Agency MOUs: Mr. Tibbitts recommended approval of two cooperating agency memoranda of understanding with the Battle Mountain BLM. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve two cooperating agency MOUs (memoranda of understanding) with the Battle Mountain BLM on the Nevada Gold Mines Goldrush Project Environmental Impact Statement and the Nevada Vanadium Gibellini Project Environmental Impact Statement. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was received from: Tracey Mellard; Eureka County District Court (CV-2002009 filings); David Jones; Churchill & Eureka Counties – flyer re: COVID testing and vaccinations; Television District; Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board; City of Ely; Nevada Assoc. of Counties (2); UNR Extended Studies; UNR CABNR newsletter; University Diversity Survey; Nevada Div. of Water Resources; Nevada Div. of Environmental Protection; Nevada Operation Lifesaver & Rail Auxiliary Teams; National Assoc. of Social Workers/Nevada Chapter; US Dept. of the Interior-BLM (3); National Assoc. of Counties (multiple); American Conservative Union Foundation; US Navy; America First Policy Institute (multiple); and Governing E-news (multiple).

Commissioner Reports: Chairman Goicoechea will meet with Superintendent Tate Else later in the day to develop a mitigation plan, which is required because of the decision that masks will no longer be mandatory for school children. He will attend the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> and the NACO Board of Directors meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner McKay motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 a.m.; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

*Approved by vote of the Board this 20<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.*

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

*I, Jackie Berg, Commissioner Administrative Assistant, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the February 22, 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