

**EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**March 20, 2015**

STATE OF NEVADA            )  
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COUNTY OF EUREKA        )

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on March 20, 2015. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy; Commissioner Fred Etchegaray; District Attorney, Ted Beutel; and Executive 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 and utilized between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The March 4<sup>th</sup> budget minutes were removed from the agenda. With that change Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments; there were none.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

March 5, 2015: Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2015, Commission meeting; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

**FINANCE**

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Deputy Recorder & Auditor, Lisa Hoehne. A voucher requisitioning payment of \$2,063.51 to the Nevada State Health Division was held pending further information. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$247,364.80 for accounts payable and \$267,049.14 for payroll, for a grand total of \$514,413.94. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. There were no Yucca Mountain expenditures for this period.

Later in the meeting, Ms. Hoehne provided information regarding the voucher to the Nevada State Health Division. The Environmental Health Division regulates the following categories: food establishments, residential septic systems, septic tank pumpers, public bathing places, recreation vehicle parks, mass gatherings, schools, institutions, jails, conservation/labor camps, drug/cosmetic manufacturers, and truck wrecks. A fee is assessed to the County for all mandated inspections within the jurisdiction. The annual fee for the current fiscal year is \$8,254.04 and the voucher submitted represents a quarterly payment. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve Voucher #57038, in the amount of \$2,063.51, to the Nevada State Health Division; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0. This brought the expenditure total to \$516,477.45.

Auditor's Report: The Auditor's Report was unavailable.

**COMMISSIONERS**

Update Reports: All Commissioners attended the budget meetings on March 12<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Sharkozy attended a Search & Rescue meeting in Crescent Valley on March 9<sup>th</sup>; attended a Crescent Valley Volunteer Fire Department meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>; and attended Nevada POOL/PACT Human Resources training in Eureka on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Etchegaray traveled to Carson City for the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>; attended the Recreation Board meeting on the evening of March 12<sup>th</sup>; and attended the Nevada POOL/PACT Human Resources training on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Goicoechea traveled to Crescent Valley on March 9<sup>th</sup> related to a Human Resources issue; participated in a conference call with the Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources on March 9<sup>th</sup> regarding the State Plan (Alternative E in the Greater Sage-Grouse Draft EIS); met with Newmont Mining representatives and members of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority in Winnemucca on March 10<sup>th</sup> regarding removal of protests of Newmont water applications; had a follow-up call with Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources on March 11<sup>th</sup> and again on March 12<sup>th</sup>; participated in a conference call for Humboldt River Basin Water Authority on March 16<sup>th</sup>; traveled to Carson City on March 16<sup>th</sup> to testify before the Senate Committee on Government Affairs; while in Carson City, met with Assemblywoman Robin Titus; attended Red Card training for wildland firefighting on March 17<sup>th</sup>; and attended the Elko County Commission meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Change in Meeting Date: The April 15<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting was cancelled earlier and the Commissioners considered changing the location of the April 6<sup>th</sup> regular meeting to Crescent Valley in order to meet in the northern County at least once this quarter. The District Attorney provided information from Nevada Revised Statutes regarding regular and additional meetings of the Board. A change in location is allowed as long as no action is taken related to zoning or planning matters. With this clarification, Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to change the location of the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to Crescent Valley; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program & Nevada Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan: Chairman Goicoechea reported that the BLM and US Forest Service should release the Greater Sage-Grouse Draft EIS for public review in about three weeks. The final version of the State Plan (Alternative E) included disturbing language requiring a 7-inch stubble height during sage grouse late brood rearing season. This makes it applicable to not only lowlands and riparian areas, but uplands as well. A tremendous fire hazard would be created if this stipulation remains in the plan. This will be addressed at the next meeting of the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council.

Legislative Updates: The County's legislative representatives continue to track legislation, providing input as necessary.

Jake Tibbitts reported that March 16<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for House and Senate bills to be introduced to the State Legislature. Approximately 400 new bills were submitted, bringing the total to around 900 bills. The bill deadline for committees is March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Tibbitts briefly reviewed some of the legislation worth watching. AB347 revises conservation provisions related to domestic wells.

AB398 would ensure protection of public access to public lands. The County provided language incorporated into Bill Draft Request 35-1089 to allow the Attorney General to join counties on protecting RS 2477 roads. AB398 included the County's language verbatim.

AB408 asserts the State's rights over public land, and although much of what the bill says makes sense, Mr. Tibbitts believes it is setting up a constitutional fight with the federal government.

The two water bills from the State Engineer, SB65 and SB81, are scheduled for legislative workshops on March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. SB81 now contains language that groundwater management plans in active management areas must be supported by 60% of water rights holders and would give domestic well holders the same vote as agricultural users. This would work in areas like Pahrump where the main issue is domestic wells, but in Diamond Valley domestic and municipal use represents only 5% of total water use.

SB65 originally included a definition of perennial yield, which currently does not exist in statute, but the definition has now been pulled from the bill. The County has advocated that legislation should reflect the same definition used by the State Engineer in his rulings. Many other changes to SB65 have been positive. Another issue is interbasin transfers. Current law requires an inventory of the basin of origin when a transfer of 250 AF (acre feet) or more is considered. The State Engineer proposes changing that to 25% or more of perennial yield. Amounts of up to 1,000 AF are being debated. Many feel 500 AF would be a good compromise.

SB173 has to do with evaporation from pit lakes and requirement of a water right. Mr. Tibbitts and the Chairman are working on some alternate proposals that are being shared with the mining industry and will be submitted as comment.

SB202 would prohibit hydraulic fracturing in the state. Although the County had a concern over the need for monitoring wells, the State has developed robust regulations and it would be extreme to prohibit all hydraulic fracturing.

SB235 is language the County put forward related to the definition of wildlife. Since it is creating some issues behind the scenes, the County believes it may be best not to pursue it at this time. SB227 would develop State level environmental policies in addition to NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act). SB387 provides revisions related to wild horses and burros. The County will watch this legislation.

Michael Mears provided an update on other legislation. SB95 would allow counties to provide their respective tax rolls on their websites. Current legislation requires annual publication. Mr. Mears explained how he watched this cost increase \$1,000.00 per year until his last newspaper publication several years earlier cost \$9,000.00. He then began publishing and mailing the tax roll in booklet form, at a cost of \$2,500.00. The newspaper offered to negotiate the price and the roll is now published for \$3,000.00. The cost to larger counties is astronomical. The publishers' lobby is fighting to add requirements to SB95 involving publication of notices, but these cost nearly as much as publishing the roll itself.

Other legislation on the Assembly side includes a BDR that proposes making all County offices nonpartisan. The Sheriff is already nonpartisan, but this would include County Assessors, Clerks, Records, Treasurers, and even County Commissioners.

The salary bill for elected officials is supported by NACO. It has been amended to propose a 3% salary increase each year over a period of three or four years, which would be less of an impact to local governments than the first proposal with an initial increase of 8%.

SJR12 and SJR13 were very similar proposals and the Senators have agreed to combine them. This legislation would deal with how property is valued and assessed (based on actual sales) and would address abatement issues. This proposal would have to pass the Legislature twice and then be placed on the ballot for a vote of the people.

### **PLAIN TALK NEWSLETTER**

Content of Next Issue: Abby Johnson, Editor of *Plain Talk*, relayed publication plans and asked for suggestions for the next issue. It was agreed that articles will cover the following topics: brief biography on Commissioner Fred Etchegaray; retirement of Commissioner Jim Ithurralde; barrel races in Crescent Valley; sage grouse issues and Western Energy Alliance and the Data Quality Act challenge; and current water legislation.

### **YUCCA MOUNTAIN**

Update on Yucca Mountain Activities: Abby Johnson, Nuclear Waste Advisor, gave a brief update on Yucca Mountain activities. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced they feel the Department of Energy's EIS on the Yucca Mountain Repository is not adequate in relation to impacts on groundwater, so they will do a Supplemental EIS. This will be a secondary supplemental since the DOE completed the final EIS in 2002 and a supplemental in 2008. Meetings will be held in Nevada and in Washington, DC, this fall. The Supplemental EIS is expected to be published in 12 to 15 months. Members of Congress plan to tour the Yucca Mountain site in April. A bill has been introduced by four of the five members of the Nevada Congressional Delegation regarding a state's right to have a consent process for a nuclear waste repository.

Rex Massey of Research & Consulting Services Inc., is working on the 2015 update of the Socioeconomic Conditions & Trends Report. The annual updates focus on areas that haven't been updated for a while or areas where additional information is needed. Archiving of Yucca Mountain documents and information is nearly complete and will be stored on three external hard drives. A major overhaul has been done on the yuccamountain.org website, which continues to receive a huge number of visits.

### **AMBULANCE & EMS**

Activity Report: EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan, was called away from the meeting on an emergency, but provided a written report with information since his last update on February 20<sup>th</sup>. Eureka had 10 calls for service (31 year-to-date) and Crescent Valley had 10 calls for service (14 year-to-date). Volunteer staffing level remains mostly stable, but two EMTs are on medical leave. While existing EMTs in Crescent Valley are active and responsive, the area is critically understaffed and Mr. Sullivan encourages residents to consider becoming a volunteer. Continuing education training was held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, and March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Training is scheduled in in Crescent Valley on March 26<sup>th</sup> and in Eureka on March 30<sup>th</sup>.

The MPTV (multi-patient transport vehicle) is progressing well, with the County being reimbursed for all funds expended. At the request of Security Supervisor, Anthony Petroff, Mr. Sullivan traveled to the Pine Valley Lodge man camp to discuss mutual response plans. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, he met with Donnie Bement, Safety Coordinator for the Midway Gold Pan Mine, to discuss medical response.

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

Update on Public Works Projects: Public Works Director, Ron Damele, reported on recent projects and activities. Next SLAG Meeting: The next SLAG Working Group meeting, originally scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> had to be postponed to later in the month, pending receipt of documents from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Test Wells: Specifications have been completed for the proposed test wells in Stevens Basin and Kobeh Valley. Those were done by Day Engineering with assistance from Consulting Hydrogeologist, Dale Bugenig. Annual Red Card Training: The annual Red Card refresher course for wildland firefighting was completed on March 17<sup>th</sup>. This training will be offered for Crescent Valley and Beowawe firefighters on April 11<sup>th</sup> and for Pine Valley firefighters on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Crescent Valley Arsenic Treatment Plant: The arsenic removal media was replaced in the arsenic treatment plant in Crescent Valley on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The plant was completed and began treating water in December 2011. This is the first media replacement since that time, at a cost of approximately \$50,000.00. During the period from December 2011 to March 2015, a total of 171 million gallons were treated. One-fifth of the treated water was used at the Crescent Valley Town Park. Roberts Creek Ranch Road Re-Route: A suitable gravel source has been located on private ground and Public Works is working on acquiring construction water in the area; once located this project can begin. Record of Survey: The Record of Survey on the Biale property should be completed next week. Meter Readings: Base meter readings are being done in Eureka, Devil's Gate, and Crescent Valley.

## **CLERK & TREASURER**

**Treasurer's Report:** The Treasurer's Report for February was provided by Clerk & Treasurer, Beverly Conley. Ms. Conley noted that she is adjusting how monthly ending balances will be reported, focusing on ending fund balance for the County's General Fund. Although the overall ending balance for February was \$52,283,831.37, the majority is encumbered in enterprise, proprietary, or reserve funds, and is restricted in some fashion. The true ending fund balance in the General Fund, reflecting monies available to the County, is \$10,200,699.76.

## **COUNTY FACILITIES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Update Report:** Cultural, Tourism, & Economic Development Director, Andrea Rossman, reported on activities for the Opera House, Sentinel Museum, and Economic Development. Ms. Rossman provided the Opera House meeting schedule, which is quite busy with various meetings, trainings, and occasional events. The evening of March 20<sup>th</sup>, Eureka County High School Principal, Dan Wold, will perform with his band, the Scarlet Verbs. The dinner theater performance will be on March 21<sup>st</sup> and will feature Silver Stage Players from Elko. Museum Director, Ree Taylor, is in the process of updating exhibits throughout County buildings. The historical biography book on Nevada women, part of Nevada Women's Legacy Project, is now on sale at the Sentinel Museum and features several women from Eureka County. Department Assistant, Cindy Beutel, has begun plans for the upcoming May car show. The next meeting of the Economic Development Program Board is April 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Waiver of Fees for Benefit Dinner:** Chairman Goicoechea motioned to waive facility fees at the Opera House for the April 16<sup>th</sup> benefit spaghetti dinner for Rhonda Garaventa: Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

## **MEDICAL CLINICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**NVHC Contract & Budget Consideration:** MCAC Chair, Garney Damele, submitted the Committee's recommendations related to the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Nevada Health Centers contract. Minor changes were made to the contract language and have been forwarded to the District Attorney for review. Ms. Damele explained that NVHC did not forward their annual contract consideration or budget requests by the February 1<sup>st</sup> deadline outlined in the contract, so the Committee recommended continuing with the same contract amount. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to accept the MCAC's recommendation to move forward with the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 contract with Nevada Health Centers, Inc., in the amount of \$778,500.00; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0. Chairman Goicoechea clarified that the actual contract will be approved by the Board following Mr. Beutel's review.

**Meeting with NVHC COO:** The Committee will meet with NVHC representatives on March 25<sup>th</sup> to meet new Chief Operations Officer, Karl Sundberg, who is replacing Monica Taylor.

**Housing Lease with NVHC:** Ms. Damele spoke with Public Works regarding the two medical provider houses and the plan is to continue the housing lease with NVHC. The Committee supports this plan. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to accept the Committee's recommendation to continue with the housing lease with Nevada Health Centers; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

**Rehab Services of Nevada:** The Committee recommended renewing the two-year physical therapy services contract with Rehab Services of Nevada with the same terms and conditions. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to accept the MCAC's recommendation to move forward with a two-year contract with Rehab Services of Nevada under the same terms and conditions as the current contract; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0. The final contract will be presented for approval at a later meeting.

## **GREAT BASIN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**Update & Regional Focus:** Jim Garza, Acting Executive Director of the Great Basin Regional Development Authority, provided an update on the GBRDA. Since inception, the Authority has been comprised of White Pine, Eureka, and Lander Counties, but Lander County recently announced their intent to leave the Authority and join with Elko County. Esmeralda County has asked to join the GBRDA. Though not connected geographically, there are a lot of commonalities, and Mr. Garza believes it may be looked upon favorably by the State. Esmeralda County will provide a presentation at the next GBRDA meeting.

Mr. Garza reviewed GBRDA's main areas of focus over the next two years: regional drought, wild horse issues, sage grouse issues, transfer of public lands, natural resources including water and grazing issues, utilization of renewable energy, support and improvement of local industries, and food deserts (areas without ready access to fresh, healthy, affordable food) and hydroponics in cooperation with US Department of Agriculture programs. Mr. Garza detailed work to date in these areas and what is planned over the next couple of years.

Mr. Garza will attend the April 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eureka County Economic Development Program Board to share these regional initiatives with the local group. He plans on providing more regular updates to the Commissioners in the future.

## **EUREKA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Annual Scholarship Drive:** Eureka County High School Guidance Counselor, Winnona Eversgerd, sent a letter requesting a donation for the annual scholarship drive. Monies donated by the County go into the general scholarship fund and the County or its employees do not participate in the selection/award process. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to contribute \$2,000.00 to Eureka County High School for the annual scholarship drive for the Class of 2015; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

## **DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES**

**Special Assessments for Fiscal Year 2015-2016:** Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the Division of Water Resources budget for special assessments collected by Eureka County on behalf of the Division for necessary expenses related to supervision over the following waters in Eureka County: Diamond Valley Groundwater Basin, Crescent Valley Groundwater Basin, Maggie Creek Groundwater Basin, Lower Reese River Valley Groundwater Basin, Boulder Flat Groundwater Basin, Humboldt River Distribution, Whirlwind Valley Groundwater Basin, Pine Valley Groundwater Basin, and Kobeh Valley Groundwater Basin. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Report on Activities:** Natural Resources Manager, Jake Tibbitts, reported on activities since his last report over a month earlier. Mr. Tibbitts attended the Mount Hope 3M Plan TAC (Technical Advisory Committee) meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup>; attended the Eureka Conservation District meeting the evening of February 24<sup>th</sup>; traveled to Winnemucca on February 27<sup>th</sup> for the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority meeting; attended the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>; attended the Diamond Natural Resources Protection & Conservation Association meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>; had a constructive meeting with members of the Baumann family and BLM Battle Mountain District Manager, Doug Furtado, on March 11<sup>th</sup> (the BLM agreed to allow drill seeding in some of the mow strip areas in Diamond Valley); attended the Midway Gold Rock EIS Open House in Eureka the afternoon of March 11<sup>th</sup>; attended the Natural Resources Advisory Commission meeting the evening of March 11<sup>th</sup>; along with Consulting Hydrogeologist, Dale Bugenig, visited with Midway Gold representatives the morning of March 12<sup>th</sup> regarding some outstanding issues with the Gold Rock Project EIS; participated in a conference call on March 12<sup>th</sup> with the Nevada Department of Conservation & Natural Resources; attended the County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife meeting the evening of March 12<sup>th</sup>; traveled to Carson City on March 16<sup>th</sup> to attend the legislative hearing for SB157 to enact the State & Local Government Cooperation Act; and attended the Eureka Conservation District meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Upcoming meetings include the legislative working group meetings on SB65 and SB81 in Carson City on March 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>; the State Conservation Commission meeting in Reno on March 27<sup>th</sup>; a Town Hall meeting sponsored by the BLM in Elko on March 31<sup>st</sup>; Agriculture Day at the Nevada Legislature on April 2<sup>nd</sup>; an irrigation and water use efficiency workshop sponsored by the Conservation District at the Opera House on April 21<sup>st</sup>; and a Nevada Weed Management Association meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>. The Conservation District is engaging Steve Lewis, Extension Educator, to facilitate the governance structure of the Diamond Valley Groundwater Management Plan; and he should be in Eureka April 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>.

**BLM Fish Creek Herd Management Area:** Attorney, Mark Pollot, filed a response to the BLM's initial filings on the Notice of Appeal and Petition for Stay filed with Administrative Appeals, US Department of the Interior, in relation to the BLM Fish Creek Herd Management Area wild horse gather and fertility control treatment. An 11-day extension was granted for filing the Statement of Reasons for the appeal, moving that deadline to March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Plan Amendment Final EIS:** The final EIS is expected soon, but has not yet been released.

**Gold Rock Project Draft EIS:** Midway Gold held the Open House for the Gold Rock Project Draft EIS on March 11<sup>th</sup>. The County is focused on three issues in this EIS - socioeconomic, water, and grazing. Although the project is located outside of Eureka County, Eureka is the closest community and County citizens share the affected resources. Previous comments submitted by the County have not yet been addressed and this was noted at the Open House on March 11<sup>th</sup> and during the follow-up meeting with Midway Gold on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Commitment was received from the BLM and EIS contractor, Arcadis, that the County's concerns and comments will be addressed before the Final EIS is published.

Mr. Tibbitts expressed disappointment that the Draft EIS didn't deem the AUM loss significant, arguing that it was minimal. The County continues to emphasize the impact from any loss and to reiterate the danger of setting this negative precedent. The only new points the County has are related to the analysis of pumping drawdown. More data is available than was utilized for this EIS and a range of values should be given rather than including an estimate that may prove inaccurate. Socioeconomic estimates should also be a range, rather than

guestimates of population increases and the socioeconomic needs that may result. The Board agreed that these ranges are important and should be encouraged in the final product.

Mount Hope Project Amendment EA: There are no new comments, but previous comments will be submitted for the Mount Hope Project Amendment Environmental Assessment. Mr. Tibbitts reviewed outstanding issues. Eureka Moly made a change to the water resources monitoring plan (the BLM plan, not the State Engineer plan) and this change was submitted as part of their Plan of Operations Amendment. The procedure outlined in the EIS, which requires establishment of a Technical Advisory Panel to review any changes, was not followed. Also, Eureka County has always advocated for a single water monitoring plan, which Eureka Moly was against through the entire EIS process, but they now state they do not want to have two similar but slightly different monitoring plans. Other comments raise concerns with BLM and Nevada Department of Wildlife involvement in water issues that are really under the State Engineer's jurisdiction.

The Amendment adds 365 acres of disturbance that are currently permitted, in essence doing analysis on disturbance that has already occurred. The bulk of this disturbance is for roads which weren't analyzed in the first EIS. Further, the Air Quality Permit from the State has been modified to reduce particulate matter by about 5%, despite the increase of these roads, since the additional acreage is outside the area that the State permits.

Another issue is increase of the PAG (potentially acid generating) waste rock footprint by 27%, with no analysis. Eureka Moly argues there is no need for analysis since the overall dimension of PAG and LGO (low grade ore) stockpiles are not changing.

The original EIS says fresh makeup water will be supplied from water wells located in the Kobeh Valley well field. Specific well locations may change over the life of the project, but they would all remain within Kobeh Valley. The EIS states, "...any change in the number of wells or the location of wells outside of the corridor shown on Figure 2.1.7 would be considered by the BLM as a modification of the plan and would be subject to an appropriate level of environmental review under NEPA." Elsewhere in the EIS it states that any water needed from Diamond Valley would be solely for dewatering and only required during the mining phase of the project. Yet in the last few years, Eureka Moly has applied for and received temporary permits from the State Engineer for drilling wells and installing water distribution systems in Diamond Valley for potable water, construction use, and dust suppression. The County again points out that this is inconsistent with the Plan of Operations and should be analyzed under NEPA.

The Board concurred and agreed that Mr. Tibbitts should proceed with resubmitting the comments as presented.

## **RECESS FOR LUNCH**

The Board recessed for lunch from 12:03 to 1:10 p.m.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was received from: Natural Resources, Jake Tibbitts (2); Eureka County Economic Development Program; Health Insurance Committee (2); Medical Clinics Advisory Committee; Eureka County Television District; Eureka Business Network; Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board; Barrick Gold, Cortez Mine; Nevada Assoc. of Counties; White Pine County; White Pine County Commission; White Pine County Finance Office; Lander County Commission; Rehab Services of Nevada, Greg Barker; Allison, MacKenzie, Ltd.; Nevada Div. of Water Resources; Nevada Div. of Environmental Protection; Nevada Rural Housing Authority; and Western Counties Alliance (2).

## **FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 TENTATIVE BUDGET**

Revenue Projections: Budget Director, Michael Mears, provided the Board with an electronic document detailing revenue projections for the upcoming fiscal year. The latest projections show a slight improvement from the initial forecast. Although, based on conversations with Barrick Gold and Newmont Mining, he believes the States projections for net proceeds are high.

Ad Valorem Tax Rate: For reference, Mr. Mears provided breakdowns of the ad valorem tax rate for current and recent years. Certain elements are static and cannot be changed, but portions of the rate provide some flexibility. There was a brief discussion on allocation of rates, which will be determined at a tax rate hearing on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Eureka Activities: There have been recent observations that the duties assigned the Economic Development Department Assistant really don't align with economic development and are more social in function and activity. Mr. Mears indicated it would be appropriate to move these activities into a separate category within the budget and it would also be appropriate to move this position out of the current department. With no Human Resources department and no other obvious fit, Mr. Mears offered to take on supervision of this position and the activities.

The Commissioners stated they had no problem with this suggestion. They asked Mr. Mears to make the appropriate budgetary changes and directed him to bring an amended job description forward at a future meeting for approval.

Retiree Health Insurance Benefit: Mr. Mears noted that the retiree health insurance benefit is a long-term expense that Eureka County has elected to provide, but it is not mandatory. There are currently a handful of participants. He felt it was worth having a conversation about possibly determining a sunset date in the distant future. This would allow employees, who may be counting on that benefit, time to plan for an alternative. There was discussion that this benefit is already sunsetted in the respect that employees hired after a certain date are not eligible. The Board agreed to research this further as they undertake long-term budget planning in the near future.

Capital Projects: Public Works Director, Ron Damele, joined the discussion as Mr. Mears asked for direction on which capital projects should be included in the upcoming budget. Mr. Damele indicated that recoating the interior of one of the water tanks in Crescent Valley, at an estimated cost of \$100,000.00, is a top priority.

Contingencies will be budgeted in reserve funds strictly to replace or repair existing items. There was discussion that any remaining capital projects will be dependent upon level of net proceeds received. Mr. Mears recommended identifying dollar amounts in the budget for projects that may be completed if net proceeds prove favorable. Balances for funds supporting roads, buildings, and water systems were discussed. The Board adjusted the overall Capital Improvement Plan and several items were removed or reduced.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments. He stated that staff in the Recorder/Auditor's office pointed out there may be some inconsistencies in how credit cards are being used for travel expenses. District Attorney Beutel suggested it might be time to review all credit cards being paid by the County. The Board agreed to address this at a later meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

*Approved by vote of the Board this 6<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2015.*

/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 March 20, 2015, meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.*

/s/ Jackie Berg  
Jackie Berg, Executive Assistant

*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