

EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 20, 2020

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, 2020. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy (via interactive video from Crescent Valley); Commissioner Rich McKay; and Deputy Commissioner Clerk Jackie Berg. District Attorney Ted Beutel was absent. 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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments.

Thanks to Senior Center Employees: Commissioner Sharkozy thanked Senior Centers Program Director Millie Oram for the great job she and her staff are doing delivering meals to the seniors during this time.

Partial Closure of Cooperative Extension: Extension Educator Gary McCuin explained that, per direction of Governor Sisolak and University of Nevada President, the Cooperative Extension offices are temporarily closed but are not completely shut down. Staff will be working remotely and are available at the office by appointment.

Abbreviated Commission Meetings: Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Chairman announced that Commission meetings will be kept short and will only address essential business until further notice. He shared that confirmation was just received of a second confirmed Coronavirus case in Elko County in the past 24 hours. The person has a recent history of extensive international travel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 6, 2020: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve minutes of the March 6, 2020, Commission meeting; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

COUNTY COMPTROLLER

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Comptroller Kim Todd. An invoice from Nevada Public Agency Insurance Pool required special approval. Ms. Todd explained that several insurance invoices were received and one exceeded the six-month limit.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to authorize payment to Nevada Public Agency Insurance Pool for an August invoice in the amount of \$2,500.00; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0. This amount was included in the total expenditures for the day.

Commissioner McKay motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$397,770.06 for accounts payable; \$320,382.36 for payroll and benefit related expenses (including employee paid deductions); and \$79.95 in Yucca Mountain expenses, for a grand total of \$718,237.37. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

COMMISSIONERS

Response to COVID-19: On March 16th, Chairman Goicoechea called a meeting of the Emergency Management Council to discuss Eureka County's response to the Coronavirus and

what local authorities can do to best protect the County and its citizens. Council members include Chairman Goicoechea, Emergency Management Officer Ron Damele, Sheriff Jesse Watts, EMS Director Kenny Sanders, and School District Superintendent Tate Else. District Attorney Ted Beutel also sits on the Council, but was away on family business.

The Council met again on the morning of March 18th, met with County department heads on the afternoon of March 18th, and met again on March 20th prior to the Commission meeting. It is working hard to take a proactive approach and does not yet feel it is necessary to declare a State of Emergency in Eureka County (as several other Nevada counties have done). Chairman Goicoechea shared that he initially felt the virus was just another flu, but after doing research he has learned this is a very aggressive and highly contagious virus.

The Council's press release, issued on Monday, was read into the record.

**EUREKA COUNTY, NEVADA
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2020

The Eureka County Emergency Management Council announced on March 16, 2020, the immediate implementation of proactive measures to safeguard the citizens of Eureka County against health threats related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). These measures will remain in place until further notice.

Following Governor Sisolak's announcement of a State of Emergency, followed by action on March 15th to temporarily close all Nevada schools and certain State Offices, and with confirmed cases of Coronavirus in the State (including one related death), Eureka County is taking the following steps to immediately suppress spread of the infectious Coronavirus into and within Eureka County.

Due to this rapidly evolving threat, effective immediately, the following Eureka County facilities will be closed until further notice: Eureka Swimming Pool; Eureka Opera House; Eureka Sentinel Museum, and Eureka County Senior Centers in both Eureka and Crescent Valley. (The Senior Centers will continue serving the senior citizens by delivering meals during this time.) All other county offices will remain open.

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners will continue to meet at its regularly scheduled times to conduct essential business only. Under direction of the Eureka County Emergency Management Council, all non-critical meetings of other boards and committees within the county will be temporarily suspended. In addition, all non-essential travel by all county employees is suspended until further notice.

In order to limit spread of this pandemic, the Eureka County Emergency Management Council encourages the citizens of Eureka County to remain home if you are sick, limit travel, avoid social interactions, and practice public health measures and recommendations, particularly related to hygiene.

The Eureka County Emergency Management Council will continue to work with State agencies, Nevada Association of Counties, and Eureka County officials to determine the best course of action to protect the citizens of Eureka County.

For more information, please call 775-237-5372 (Public Works/Emergency Management of 775-237-7211 (County Commissioners).

Members of the Eureka County Emergency Management Council include: County Commission Chairman JJ Goicoechea, Emergency Management Officer Ron Damele, Sheriff Jesse Watts, EMS Director Kenny Sanders, District Attorney Ted Beutel, and Eureka County School District Superintendent Tate Else.

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Emergency Management: Emergency Management Officer Ron Damele reported that, as of that morning, there were no confirmed cases of Coronavirus in Eureka County. All meetings within the County are suspended except for the Board of County Commissioners. Travel for County employees has been restricted to emergencies only. Several County facilities, where groups typically gather, have been closed, and the Courts have restricted their duties. He stated the County has no exceptional requests and there are no critical shortages at this time.

Senior Centers: Chairman Goicoechea has heard a lot of good feedback regarding the home-delivered meals by the Senior Centers in Eureka and Crescent Valley, as well as distribution of Food Bank supplies. He and Commissioner McKay added their appreciation to Commissioner Sharkozy's thanks earlier in the day. The Chairman inquired about any needs the Centers may have. Program Director Millie Oram replied that they have been able to receive all orders, except for bottled water and toilet paper, but the Centers have an adequate supply of those items and plenty of food.

Ambulance & EMS: EMS Director Kenny Sanders stated that individuals experiencing flu-like symptoms are encouraged to go to the local clinic or hospital themselves rather than calling for an ambulance. Clinics and hospitals are asking individuals to call first for special instructions, as patients with flu symptoms may be asked to use an alternate entrance and other measures to minimize the chance of infecting others.

Chairman Goicoechea explained that if a patient with respiratory symptoms is transported by ambulance, the vehicle is out of service for two hours for UV sterilization. Transporting patients with flu systems also puts a strain on the already limited emergency response staff.

County Offices: County offices remain open, but workers are encouraged to work electronically and telephonically as much as possible. The Council asked Treasurer Pernecia Johnson to implement measures that will encourage the public to conduct business without physically going to County offices.

Ms. Johnson explained that County offices that accept payments are: Treasurer, Clerk Recorder, Assessor, District Court, Justice Court, Public Works, Sheriff's Office, and Juvenile Probation. At the request of the Emergency Management Council, she is working to have the 2.5% bank fee absorbed by the County when parties pay by credit card either online or by phone. Credit card fees still apply to in-person payments at County offices. On a case by case basis, her office will consider waiving a portion or all of the interest and penalties on personal and real property taxes when parties pay online, by phone, or by mail.

Chairman Goicoechea requested that the Board ratify the decision for the County to absorb credit card fees to limit interaction between staff and the public as a means to prevent exposure to the Coronavirus.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to waive the 2.5% credit card bank fee on a temporary basis, with the fee absorbed by Eureka County, when parties pay for any charges collected by Eureka County, so long as they pay online or over the phone. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

School District: School Superintendent Tate Else reported that all Superintendents in Nevada participated in a conference call earlier that morning with Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. The question being asked by all schools within the State, which were closed effective March 16th, is whether the anticipated back-to-school date of April 6th will hold. There are concerns because the Governor's 30-day closure of non-essential businesses, announced March 17th, will extend beyond April 6th. The State Superintendent did assure schools that a week's notice will be given before classes resume, whether that is April 6th or not.

Easter Activities: Most religious organizations have agreed to forego Easter celebrations, and Easter Egg Hunts have been cancelled.

Testing Concerns: There is a shortage of testing kits for COVID-19, but the Emergency Management Council is working with State partners and the Congressional delegation on accelerated solutions.

County Website: Changes occur almost hourly, but updates will be posted on the County website: www.co.eureka.nv.us. The Chairman thanked Sheriff Watts for dispelling rumors that were starting to circulate on social media. He encouraged the public to contact Emergency Management or the Commissioners to confirm facts or if there are questions.

Questions & Answers: Jim & Donna Moyer, local restaurant owners, were concerned how the Governor's directive affected them.

Chairman Goicoechea commented that the Governor's press release asked restaurants to close for sit-down meals, but food may be offered for takeout or home delivery. The Governor asked that bars and restaurants suspend sales of retail liquor and that only packaged beer and liquor be sold. Some are questioning the legality of directing private business owners to close their businesses, and a more definitive order may be forthcoming from the Governor. The Chairman encouraged all businesses to practice social distancing when serving the public.

On the night of the Governor's press release (March 17th), Chairman Goicoechea, reached out to the Governor's office by phone requesting a variance for Eureka County as an underserved area, noting the restaurants are meeting a tremendous need with the influx of new workers into the area, many of whom are residing in motels, campers, etc. The Governor's office acknowledged the concerns, but no variance was granted.

County employee Ashley Adams felt it is only a matter of time before Eureka is affected first-hand by the Coronavirus. She asked if employees, who miss work due to illness or to care for sick children, must use sick leave and other paid leave or if the County will offer an alternative.

Chairman Goicoechea responded that County officials are very aware of this concern and there are already County employees who may be affected. The County is trying to make the right decisions at the right time. Paid administrative leave is not being offered at this time, but as conditions change officials will consider those hard decisions. This is precisely why the Council is working with staff to limit exposure and to limit risk.

County Board of Health: Chairman Goicoechea clarified that this agenda item had no correlation with the Coronavirus. It was recently discovered that appointments on the County Board of Health (pursuant to NRS 439) had expired and current appointments had not been made. The Commissioners and Sheriff are all members of the County Board of Health by default. Statute outlines that a local health professional should be selected as the County Health Officer, and this person serves as the Chairperson and must be paid a minimum stipend of \$25.00 per month.

Tamisha Pena, Advanced Practice Nurse at the Eureka Clinic, has agreed to serve as the County Health Officer and Chairman Goicoechea nominated EMS Director Kenny Sanders as Deputy County Health Officer.

Commissioner McKay motioned to confirm appointments to the County Board of Health as follows: Tamisha Pena as County Health Officer for a two-year term to be paid a stipend of \$25.00 per month; Kenny Sanders as Deputy County Health Officer for a two-year term; Chairman Goicoechea, Commissioner Sharkozy, Commissioner McKay, and Sheriff Watts as members, with service concurrent with elected terms. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Budget for NNEMSC Donation: Correspondence was received from Executive Director Sue Herrman on behalf of Northern Nevada EMS Consortium requesting a donation for the upcoming fiscal year. NNEMSC is a nonprofit organization that collaborates with MedX AirOne to provide air medical transports to residents of member counties. The Consortium is supported by donations from member counties and other sources. MedX AirOne accepts commercial insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare as payment in full for residents of member counties. Non-insured residents are also covered and patients will never receive a bill.

The letter referenced Eureka County's donation of \$6,000.00 for the current fiscal year. The following statistics were also provided: In Calendar Year 2019, MedX AirOne transported 82 patients from Eureka County and, in addition, transported 20 Eureka County residents from hospitals in Elko and Ely to other care facilities.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to budget \$6,000.00 to be paid to Northern Nevada EMS Consortium in Fiscal Year 2020-2021; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Protest Change Application on 89458: Jake Tibbitts explained that this change application before the State Engineer raises some concerns. It doesn't appear to be in accordance with the permit terms for the underlying water right. And under Nevada Water Law, water must now be delivered in accordance with the final Order of Determination in the Relative Rights in & to All Waters of the Diamond Valley Hydrographic Basin (issued January 31st). The water rights holder is requesting more water in this change application than granted in the Order. This is coupled with ongoing legal issues related to these same water rights, including an appeal by Eureka County pending before the Nevada Supreme Court.

Commissioner McKay motioned to file a formal protest on water right Application to Change 89458, and authorized the Chairman to sign the protest outside of the meeting; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Letter Supporting JOIN: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to send a letter to Nevadaworks supporting JOIN Inc. as part of JOIN's proposal to Nevadaworks requesting funding for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Out-of-School Youth Programs. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

JUVENILE PROBATION

Grad Nite 2020: Juvenile Probation Officer Steve Zimmerman said the 2020 Grad Nite is tentatively scheduled for June 5th, but it is not clear yet if it will be cancelled due to the Coronavirus threat. The Commissioners have donated \$500.00 in previous years for the event, and Mr. Zimmerman requested the same amount should the event go forward.

Commissioner McKay motioned to donate \$500.00 to the 2020 Eureka County High School Grad Nite event scheduled for June 5th, to be paid from miscellaneous grants in the Commissioners' budget. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

SHERIFF

Advanced Step Hire: Sheriff Jesse Watts requested authorization to hire a Deputy Sheriff III at an advanced step due to his previous training and experience. Commissioner McKay motioned to authorize an advanced step hire for a Deputy Sheriff III, pursuant to Personnel Policy 5.7.3; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

ASSESSOR

Government Assurance Software Inc.: Assessor Michael Mears reported in earlier meetings the deficiencies that multiple Nevada counties are experiencing with the Devnet CAMA (computer assisted mass appraisal) software. After seriously considering his options, the Assessor decided to enter into a software contract with another vendor, Government Assurance Software Inc., whose capabilities have been proven in another Nevada county. An agreement and work plan were signed with GSA on March 9th, and the contract with Devnet was terminated that same day.

The work plan schedules software conversion to begin July 1st, but Mr. Mears will work with the company to begin conversion as early as possible. The current budget has funds to support any milestones reached before the end of the fiscal year, and Mr. Mears requested authority to expend funds that are budgeted both in the current fiscal year and the upcoming fiscal year for this software conversion.

Commissioner McKay motioned to authorize expenditure of funds budgeted for data processing conversions in the Capital Projects Fund in both Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (current) and Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (upcoming) for conversion to CAMA software with Government Assurance Software Inc. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

CLERK RECORDER

Map Cabinet: Clerk Recorder Lisa Hoehne originally budgeted funds to purchase a map cabinet in the next fiscal year, but has available funds to purchase one in the current fiscal year. She explained the cabinet will allow staff to access maps individually rather than looking through large heavy books to find a map.

Commissioner McKay motioned to approve purchase of a map cabinet for the Clerk Recorder's office in an amount not to exceed \$4,000.00 to be paid with monies budgeted for capital outlay in the Clerk Recorder budget. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Voter Registration Security: Staff from the Nevada Secretary of State's office visited Ms. Hoehne's office on February 28th as part of the process to implement a multi-factor authentication process to protect voter registration data. This was discussed at the last meeting and the Board requested more information on who will own the hardware and how soon expenditures will be reimbursed.

Ms. Hoehne confirmed that Eureka County will own any related hardware and the Secretary of State will reimburse the costs with HAVA (Help America Vote Act) funds as soon as receipts are submitted. Total estimated cost for Eureka County is \$30,208.80.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve expenditure of funds, not to exceed \$31,000.00, to establish a segregated domain to secure voter registration data, with all monies reimbursed from the Nevada Secretary of State with funds budgeted for the Help America Vote Act. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Consideration of Paper-Only Primary Election: Ms. Hoehne informed that, coinciding with the State's efforts to control spread of the Coronavirus, the Secretary of State and County Clerks are discussing the possibility of an all-paper Primary Election, whereby all voters will receive paper ballots by mail rather than voting at the polling place on Election Day. A final decision has not been made by Secretary Cegavske, but the Clerks are considering this as a possible option.

PUBLIC WORKS

Hiring Freeze Waiver – Senior Facilities Operations Assistant: Assistant Public Works Director-Administration Joyce Jeppesen informed that Patricia Peek's last official day working for the County will be June 2nd. Future plans for this position include an initial reduction in tourism efforts to allow the new employee to focus on Opera House operations and scheduling.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to waive the hiring freeze and authorize Public Works to hire a Senior Facilities Operations Assistant for the Eureka Opera House; Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Landfill Building Expenses: A new office building for the Eureka Landfill was approved in November at a cost of \$19,000.00. Upon arrival, the utility crew completed all upgrades in-house at a savings to the County. This included installation of a generator, heating, and light fixture upgrades. Public Works requested that the Board approve these expenses.

Commissioner McKay motioned to ratify additional expenses related to the new office building at the Eureka Landfill, in the amount of \$5,965.49, to be paid with monies budgeted for capital outlay in the Capital Projects Fund. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Portable Flow Meter: Natural Resources Manager, Jake Tibbitts, provided a quote from Corbin Knowles, LLC, for a portable flow meter. This purchase can be made under a reduced-price quote to the State of Nevada for the same meter. It will be used by County departments, producers under the Diamond Valley Groundwater Management Plan, and other County residents.

Mr. Tibbitts relayed that Corbin Knowles is a specialist with the Idaho Division of Water Resources who is responsible for creating the current water measuring system utilized by the State of Idaho. Mr. Knowles will provide continued support to the County for this meter.

The Diamond Valley Groundwater Management Plan requires calculation of net irrigation water requirements, and this portable meter can be used to fill in data gaps when a permanently installed meter fails due to a power bump or other issue. Parties wishing to use the portable flow meter will be required to work with Consulting Hydrogeologist Dale Bugenig or Water Manager Bryce Vorwaller, since a certain level of expertise and knowledge is required for operation.

Commissioner McKay motioned to approve purchase of a Fuji Porta Flow C Ultrasonic Portable Flow Meter from Corbin Knowles, LLC, under a reduced-price quote in an amount not to exceed \$8,300.00, to be paid from the Water Mitigation Fund. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 BUDGET

Status of Current Year Budget: This item was included on the agenda to ensure that departments are cognizant of budget status as the County approaches final months of the current fiscal year. Chairman Goicoechea acknowledged that some departments are experiencing unanticipated costs as Emergency Management ramps up and officials work to address concerns and take proactive health and safety measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EMS Director Kenny Sanders noted that suppliers and vendors are dramatically increasing prices, especially for health and medical supplies, in response to the crisis and the increased demand for these items.

The Chairman asked the Comptroller to notify the Commissioners if any departmental budgets drop below the 25% threshold and, if so, this item can be placed on subsequent agendas for further discussion.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from: Eureka County Emergency Management; Eureka County Detention Center; Sheriff Jesse Watts (3); Eureka County Treasurer; Planning Commission; Natural Resources Advisory Commission; County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife; Recreation Board; Juvenile Probation; Seventh Judicial District Court; Eureka County Justice Court; Television District; Eureka Field Office, Dept. of Motor Vehicles; Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board (2); Northern Nevada EMS Consortium (2); Nevada Assoc. of Counties (including temporary Open Meeting Law guidance, and multiple attachments of Declarations of Emergency and/or Coronavirus guidelines from other counties) (2); Central Nevada Regional Water Authority; Tri-County Meeting; Elko County Press Release; Nevada Dept. of Health; Governor's Conference on Agriculture; Nevada Attorney General; Nevada Dept. of Transportation; Nevada Div. of Water Resources; Nevada Gold Mines (2); Nevada Occupational Safety & Health Admin.; Nevada POOL/PACT; Nevada Dept. of Agriculture; National Assoc. of Counties (4); US Dept. of Agriculture, Austin-Tonopah Ranger Dist.; USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service; US Forest Service; Greenwire E&E News; County News email; Governing News email (2); White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (3); US Dept. of Homeland Security (5); US Navy (2); US Small Business Admin.; and US Census Bureau (2).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments.

Thanks for NNEMSC Commitment: EMS Director Kenny Sanders serves on the Board of Directors for Northern Nevada EMS Consortium. He thanked the County for committing to a donation stating that, not only do donations keep the flights free for residents, they are also used to purchase necessary equipment for fire and EMS agencies within the jurisdiction.

DMV Services Suspended: Assessor Michael Mears reported that all DMV offices in the State, including field offices, are closed indefinitely. He planned to offer DMV services all week

through Friday, but the State closed the field office on March 17th and staff cannot access the DMV system. Mr. Mears encouraged people to use online options (<https://dmvny.com/>) until services resume.

District Court Software: In January, Clerk Recorder Lisa Hoehne informed that Pioneer Technology Group was charging each County Clerk an additional \$5,000.00 to build a required report into the new software. When the invoice arrived, it was for \$6,000.00. Another Clerk has found grant funds that may cover these costs, but applications won't be accepted until July.

CVTAB Business: Nona Kellerman, Chair of the Crescent Valley Town Advisory Board, referenced the moratorium on meetings and asked for direction on several items.

Chairman Goicoechea said donation requests for a scholarship and graduation festivities (for Eureka County students who attend Battle Mountain High School) should be sent directly to the Commissioners. Concerning dates for activities and events to be published in *Plain Talk*, the Chairman agreed with Ms. Kellerman's suggestion to publish tentative dates with a note that they are subject to change or cancellation due to the Coronavirus.

Tentative Budgets: Kim Todd reminded the Commissioners that they will sign Tentative Budgets at the next meeting on April 6th.

Chairman Goicoechea responded that many counties are scrambling to rebuild budgets and find funding to accommodate costs they are now facing due to COVID-19. Eureka County is not facing the same financial hurdles and the Chairman commented, "*You might get tired of hearing me say it, but I'm damn proud of the money we've put in the bank.*" He added that having financial security when facing a crisis is exactly the reason the Board has worked so hard over the past several years to reduce budgets, reduce spending, and ensure that the County has healthy fund balances.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner McKay motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Approved by vote of the Board this 6th day of April, 2020.

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

I, Jackie Berg, Deputy Commissioner Clerk, attest that these are a true, correct, and duly approved minutes of the March 20, 2020, meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.

/s/ Jackie Berg
Jackie Berg, Deputy 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 Deputy Commissioner Clerk.

/s/ Lisa Hoehne
Lisa Hoehne, Clerk Recorder