

EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 20, 2017

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COUNTY OF EUREKA)

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on October 20, 2017. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea; Vice Chairman Michael Sharkozy; Commissioner Fred Etchegaray; District Attorney, Ted Beutel; 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 the Natural Resources item concerning wildfires from the agenda. Also, the Natural Resources items will be addressed earlier than the posted time to allow Mr. Tibbitts to attend the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority meeting via telephone. With those changes, Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve the agenda; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments. There was nothing from the public. The Chairman has a scheduling conflict for the December 6th meeting, as there is a Cattlemen’s Association meeting that same day with plans to address some serious issues. He may place something on the next agenda to adjust the Commissioners’ meeting date.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 6, 2017: Chairman Goicoechea requested that the October 6th minutes clarify that monies being moved from the Sheriff’s Office budget to cover extra staff hours for the District Attorney’s office are funds specifically budgeted for salaries and benefits that haven’t been expended due to vacancies. With that change, Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve minutes of the October 6, 2017, Commission meeting; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

COUNTY COMPTRROLLER

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Comptroller, Maureen Torres. An old voucher was presented for a contractual payment (for Human Resources services) to Pooling Resources, Inc., that was missed for August 2016. Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the August 2016 payment to Pooling Resources, Inc., in the amount of \$2,500.00; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$625,065.37 for accounts payable, \$340,474.23 for payroll, \$35,605.54 for a pass through to the School District, and \$97.41 in Yucca Mountain expenditures, for a grand total of \$1,001,242.55. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0. *(This grand total includes the payment to Pooling Resources, Inc.).*

Fund Balances Report: The Board reviewed a print-out of current fund balances.

Interdepartmental Transfer of Salaries/Benefits: At the October 6th meeting, District Attorney Beutel was granted authority to add 700 casual hours and to hire an additional full-time employee. This is necessary to cover the transition and training time needed due to the

upcoming retirement of a key employee in his office. He hopes to hire as early as November and estimated the salaries and wages portion of his budget would need to be increased by \$96,380.00 for the remainder of this fiscal year.

The Commissioners had asked the Comptroller's office to investigate wage and benefit savings realized in the Sheriff's budget for the first four months of the fiscal year. This was a result of Sheriff Keith Logan's offer on October 6th that his budget contained unexpended wages and benefits due to four vacant budgeted positions.

Assistant Comptroller, Kim Todd, presented a worksheet showing that the savings realized for wages and benefits from July through October in the Sheriff's budget totaled \$138,230.48. Since the District Attorney requested \$96,380.00, she recommended a transfer of \$97,000.00. Transfer of General Fund monies that will be used for the same purpose simply requires a motion by the Board.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to transfer \$97,000.00 from the savings realized in the wages/benefits portion of the Sheriff's Office budget for additional wages/benefits needed in the District Attorney's budget for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 to cover an additional full-time employee for training purposes and an additional 700 casual hours. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Groundwater Management Plan for Diamond Valley: The Groundwater Management Plan full group meeting was held on October 9th, but had a very low turnout so another meeting has been scheduled for November 15th. Those in attendance proposed some substantial, but positive, changes.

Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board: Mr. Tibbitts spent time over the last couple of days listening to the BLM's Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board meeting, held in Colorado but broadcast online. The Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board reasserted their recommendation from last year for full implementation of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses & Burros Act as amended. This was requested in a letter from Eureka County and by many others as well.

Gold Rock Mine Project & Pan Mine Project: GRP Mineral Corp. and Fiore Exploration Ltd. (to be collectively called Fiore Gold) are merging for production of the Gold Rock Mine Project and the Pan Mine Project. The Final EIS for the Gold Rock Mine Project will continue under the GRP name and has been submitted to the State BLM Office for review. From there it will go to Washington, DC, where it typically takes three to four months to be published in the Federal Register. Notice of Availability is expected around March 2018 and the Record of Decision should be issued around April 2018.

Upcoming Meetings: Upcoming meetings include the Eureka County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife on October 26th; the Conservation District's annual dinner on November 2nd; and the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority meeting in Winnemucca on November 3rd.

Sage Grouse Issues: After the BLM and US Forest Service issued their Greater Sage Grouse Land Use Plan Amendments, industry joined with several Nevada counties (including Eureka County) to challenge and appeal the decision in US District Court in Reno. The Judge's Order, issued earlier this year, resulted in the Record of Decision being partially remanded back to the BLM to prepare a Supplemental EIS.

The Notice of Intent for the Supplemental EIS was just published in the Federal Register the previous week with a 45-day scoping period, which will run through November 27th.

Mr. Tibbitts recommended that the Board submit a letter outlining the County's special expertise and seeking Cooperating Agency status. The letter should also request that the

Memorandum of Understanding (for Cooperating Agency status) be fashioned after the last MOU, rather than starting from scratch.

He has begun preparing scoping comments and will bring those before the Board for approval on November 20th, prior to the November 27th deadline. The multiple pages of previous comments will be attached to the scoping package, since many of the items were never addressed.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to prepare a letter to the BLM requesting Cooperating Agency status on the court-ordered Supplemental EIS in the sage grouse case and requesting that the Memorandum of Understanding be modeled after the previous MOU. Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

COMMISSIONERS

Update Reports: Commissioner Sharkozy attended the Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting on October 6th; attended a Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority meeting via telephone on October 10th (Executive Director, Pam Borda, announced her retirement in December); attended a NevadaWorks meeting in Reno on October 13th; participated in the candlelight dinner at the Fannie Komp Senior Center on October 17th; and attended the quarterly Newmont Mining Community Breakfast in Elko on October 19th.

Purchase of Retirement Credit: A request was received from EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan, for the County to match purchase of retirement credit for four months of PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) service time in exchange for forever opting out of the County's retiree health insurance subsidy. This process is outlined in Eureka County Personnel Policy, Section 7.6. The Board agreed that a one-time payout made sense in lieu of paying years or decades of an insurance subsidy.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve purchase of four months of retirement credit for Michael Sullivan, estimated by PERS to be a match of approximately \$8,573.28, in exchange for Mr. Sullivan forever relinquishing the retiree health insurance subsidy, and authorized the Chairman to sign any documentation outside of the meeting. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Grace Period for William Bee Ririe Hospital: Following a successful bid, William Bee Ririe took over operation and administration of the two medical clinics in Eureka County as of July 10th. The one-year contract included a 45-day grace period to allow WBR to work with the County to reasonably modify service expectations.

The Medical Clinics Advisory Committee met on October 12th to review WBR invoices for July and August. At that time, they decided to recommend that the Commissioners extend the grace period from 45-days to 90-days and to begin reconciling invoices beginning with the November invoice.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to accept the recommendation and agreed to extend William Bee Ririe's 45-day grace period to a 90-day grace period (to October 10th) with reconciliation of monthly invoices beginning with the November 2017 invoice. Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-0.

Sagebrush Ecosystem Program and Nevada Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan: The Sagebrush Ecosystem Council will also be submitting comments on the Supplemental EIS ordered by the US District Court in the sage grouse case. Their next meeting is November 9th.

Chairman Goicoechea announced that he has been invited by the US House of Representatives, Committee on Natural Resources, to speak at an oversight hearing titled, "*Empowering State Based Management Solutions for Greater Sage Grouse Recovery.*" This is October 25th in Washington, DC, and the Chairman has accepted the invitation to speak on this important topic. He will emphasize that the SEC is established by statute and is not simply an advisory group.

Plain Talk Newsletter: Abby Johnson, *Plain Talk* Editor, was in attendance to discuss the next edition of *Plain Talk*. Content was briefly discussed and the newsletter will report on ongoing issues and events. Ms. Johnson proposed a deadline of November 1st for submission of information and/or articles. Depending on Public Works' schedule for printing and mailing, she believes the newsletter will be ready for distribution shortly after Thanksgiving.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

Project Update: Nuclear Waste Advisor, Abby Johnson, gave an update on current developments with the Yucca Mountain Project. She noted that over 650,000 hits on the yuccamountain.org website last month indicates a renewed interest in the project.

HR3053, introduced by Congressman John Shimkus, is expected to be heard before the full House of Representatives in the coming week. Among other things, this legislation would revive the Yucca Mountain Project. The Senate side prefers a more consent-based approach for storage of nuclear waste.

There has been a recent surge in interest by communities with closed nuclear power plants and they are beginning to apply some pressure about when the waste will be moved.

Subcontractor, Richard Moore, PE, continues to monitor the transportation issues and will attend the Western Interstate Energy Board meeting next week.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is reactivating the Licensing Support Network Advisory Review Panel (LSNARP), which last met in December of 2003. The purpose of the Panel was to determine the best means of handling all of the electronic documents related to the repository licensing process. Ms. Johnson was a member of the original panel and has been asked to participate again. Subcontractor, Loreen Pitchford, is a member of the Panel as well. Preliminary webinars have been set up in November and December, with a full meeting of the Panel scheduled in January. Most members will participate electronically.

HEALTH INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Calendar Year 2018 Recommendations: Health Insurance Advisory Committee representatives, Jayme Halpin, Vice Chair, and Joyce Jeppesen, Secretary, reported on recent meetings. After meeting with the broker, followed by another intense meeting, the Committee felt they were close to formulating some recommendations. They were then provided some historical information by Assistant Comptroller, Kim Todd, based on her previous experience on the HIAC, and they now need to take a different approach. Another meeting has been scheduled for October 23rd so they hope to return with recommendations on November 6th.

Comparison of Retiree Insurance Subsidy Rates: Per Commission request, the HIAC provided information on the Nevada Public Employee Benefits Program (PEBP) subsidy rates for retirees in comparison to what Eureka County offers. Some changes were made to PEBP during the 2017 Legislative Session and additional changes are expected. The State's current subsidy calculation involves a complicated formula. Subsidies available to their retirees are lower than what Eureka County offers.

The County's current retiree subsidy has a base rate of \$469.58. Years of service are added, thus increasing the rate the longer you were employed by the County. The subsidy has a sunset date and only employees hired before July 1, 2009, are eligible for the subsidy.

The County's benefited pool is made up of 28% retirees. The percentage of insured retirees in most other Nevada counties is closer to 5% (most counties don't offer a subsidy). This high number of retirees on Eureka County's plans makes the overall insurance rates higher and also results in most insurance companies declining to even submit a bid.

There was a lengthy discussion on ways to control this monumental expense. The Board agreed to look at certain options at the next meeting, including taking a look at the current rate chart and considering mandatory enrollment in Medicare upon eligibility. In considering options,

they agreed they are hesitant to make changes that would affect existing retirees. The overall conversation on retiree costs will likely continue into the coming year's budget discussions.

Flu Shot Clinic: Ms. Jeppesen was pleased to report that a flu shot clinic will be provided for County benefited employees, dependents, and retirees. The vaccines are covered by Prominence Health Plan and will be administered by William Bee Ririe at the County medical clinics. Vaccinations are available in Eureka October 30th through November 3rd (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and in Crescent Valley on November 2nd (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). There is no cost to the recipient, but a Prominence membership card must be provided as proof of coverage. No appointments are necessary.

AMBULANCE & EMS

Report on Activities: EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan, reported on activities since his last report on September 20th. Eureka had 16 calls for service (107 year-to-date) and Crescent Valley had five calls for service (66 year-to-date). Continuing education classes are scheduled in Eureka on October 30th and in Crescent Valley on November 9th.

Eureka Ambulance Service has been providing standby coverage for the High School and Junior High football games without incident. A water leak at the Crescent Valley Ambulance Bay has been repaired and there was no damage to the building.

At the request of interested Courthouse staff, Mr. Sullivan provided first-aid and AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training on September 21st. On October 9th, he traveled to Carson City for the annual Board of Directors meeting for Nevada Project Heartbeat. Mr. Sullivan met with the Elko EMS Director on October 13th and arranged for the annual EMT Refresher Course November 10th-12th. While in Elko, he met with Eureka County EMS Medical Director, Dr. Robert Stefanko.

As requested, Mr. Sullivan provided information for the *Plain Talk* newsletter regarding air ambulance providers and memberships. He cautioned the public that, similar to ground ambulance, air ambulance transport must be medically necessary to be covered by insurance. Enrollment in the air carrier's membership plan is the same – flights are only covered if deemed medically necessary.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Update: Public Works Director, Ron Damele, reported on Public Works projects and activities. Retentions were released for both the Streets Maintenance Project and the Airport Pavement Maintenance & Striping Project. All utility systems are in good working order and a solution is planned to address failure of one of the Devil's Gate GID wells. There are two Saturdays left for the October free dump days and there has been moderate participation. All parks have been winterized. The furnace and air conditioner condenser were replaced at one of the medical provider houses. Most of the equipment and furniture for the medical clinics has arrived and been installed.

Devil's Gate Water Upgrades: To address failure of one of the wells that serviced the Devil's Gate water system, Mr. Damele obtained quotes for equipment to configure the Hog Pen booster station to supply the tank at the junction of US Highway 50 and State Route 278.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the quote from Western Nevada Supply for a Singer S106-2SC-PCO-AC valve with a magnetic flow meter in the amount of \$26,208.00; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the quote from Sierra Controls, LLC, in the amount of \$7,860.00, to connect and integrate the new Singer smart valve and flow meter at the Devil's Gate junction storage tank; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to approve the quote of \$2,900.00 from Parsons Drilling Inc. to plug and abandon Devil's Gate GID Well Log No. 68577 (commonly known as the Gourley Well) located in the NE¼ NW¼, Section 21, T20N, R53E; due to a casing failure; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Mr. Damele explained that Parsons Drilling will be able to complete this by the first of the year. Once done, the well house and all other infrastructure will be removed and the area will be reclaimed. Public Works has already submitted paperwork to the State Engineer to begin the process of transferring the four water permits associated with this well.

CLERK & TREASURER

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's Report for September was presented by Clerk & Treasurer, Beverly Conley, showing an ending General Fund balance of \$20,334,751.62. This was an increase of nearly \$1 million over the previous month.

QUARTERLY REPORTS

Justice Court Quarterly: The Justice Court quarterly report showed that \$17,497.54 in court and other fees (including \$1,125.00 in bail holding, subject to refund) and \$10,117.00 in administrative assessments were collected for July, August, and September. These figures represent combined totals from Eureka and Beowawe/Crescent Valley.

Clerk Quarterly: Clerk & Treasurer, Beverly Conley, provided a statistical report showing Clerk and court revenues. Fees collected for the quarter totaled \$2,728.00.

Sheriff Quarterly: Sheriff Keith Logan provided a report showing jail and patrol statistics. The Detention Facility had 16 new bookings, a total of 16 inmates, and 71 inmate days for the first quarter of the fiscal year. Patrol statistics showed a total of 2,803 incidents for the quarter.

Quarterly Ambulance Bill Write-Offs: EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan, reported that federally mandated write-offs of Medicaid and Medicare balances totaled \$3,426.00 for the quarter.

IT / NETWORK

Server for AS400 Conversion: IT Manager, Misty Rowley, explained that the number and types of servers needed is determined by the vendors and software selected as each department completes conversion from the AS400 system. A second physical server is needed to house software from vendors selected to-date (DEVNET, VOTEC, Tyler, Helion, and it should also support whichever vendor/software is selected for the court case management system).

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to authorize purchase of a new server for the AS400 conversion, not to exceed \$32,000.00, to be funded from the Capital Projects Fund; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Server/Software Licenses: Licenses are required for new program software and for database servers. Additional funding may be needed depending on programs yet to be selected, but Ms. Rowley estimates \$11,000.00 will cover the required licenses.

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve purchase of necessary licenses related to the AS400 conversion, not to exceed \$11,000.00, to be funded from the Capital Projects Fund; Commissioner Etchegaray seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from: Crystal Hubbard; Jim Wise; Natural Resources, Jake Tibbitts; EMS Coordinator, Mike Sullivan (3); IT Manager, Misty Rowley; Assessor Appraisal Supervisor, Garney Damele; Public Works Administrative Assistant, Joyce Jeppesen; Natural Resources Advisory Commission; Medical Clinics Advisory Committee (2); Eureka County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife; Flyer: Eureka County Employee Halloween Pot Luck; Television District;

Eureka Dental Care; Eureka Business Network; Eureka Owl Club; Crescent Valley Volunteer Fire Department; Legal Shield/ID Shield enrollment flyer; Nevada Assoc. of Counties (2); Northeastern Nevada Regional Development Authority, Pam Borda; Central Nevada Regional Water Authority; Kelly Brown, PLLC; Humboldt River Basin Water Authority; Newmont Mining; Australian Mining Technology Trade Mission (Elko invite); Allison MacKenzie, Ltd.; Nevada Div. of Environmental Protection (2); Nevada Div. of Water Resources; Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners; appreciation card for Opera House/Courthouse tour from Leslee & Phil (last name unknown); US Navy, Facilities Engineer Command Southwest; US House of Representatives, Committee on Natural Resources, and US Bankruptcy Court.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Goicoechea called for public comments.

Sheriff Logan commented on the high cost of law enforcement physicals now that the County no longer has a contractual price with the new provider at the local clinics. His budget will not support this increase, so he has researched an alternative and will place this on the next agenda for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Etchegaray motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:52 a.m.; Commissioner Sharkozy seconded the motion; motion carried 3-0.

Approved by vote of the Board this 6th day of November, 2017.

/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 October 20th, 2017, meeting of the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.

/s/ Jackie Berg

Jackie Berg, Commissioner Clerk

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

/s/ Beverly Conley

Beverly Conley, Clerk & Treasurer