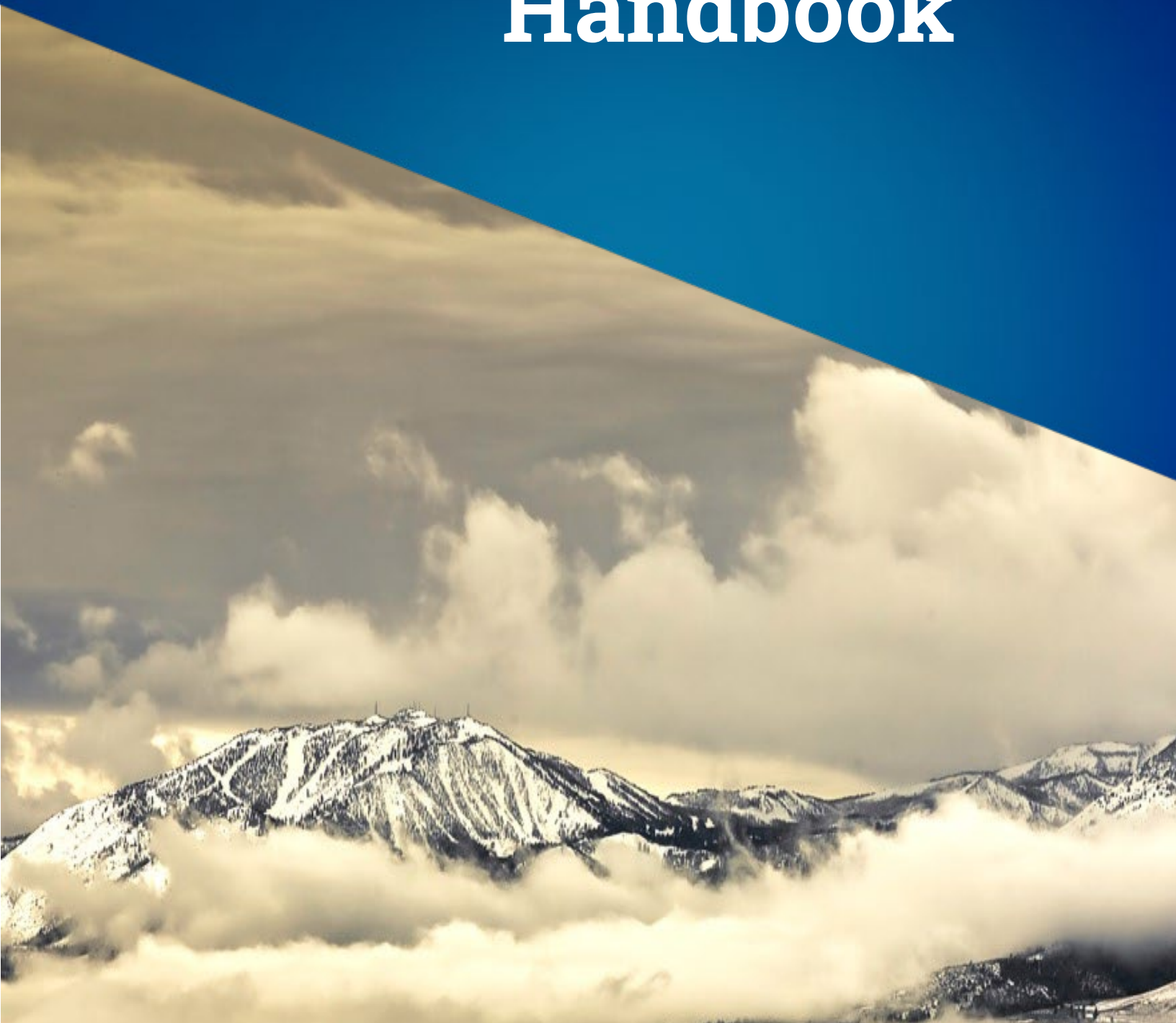




Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) Handbook





CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

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CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

WELCOME

Welcome members of the Washoe County Citizen Advisory Board program! Information in this handbook provides you with an overview of your role as a member of the CAB. It is by no means all-inclusive but introduces the program and additional resources.

The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) establishes a Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) in areas of the County where residents share similar concerns and where the community is distinct from other communities. The purpose of the Citizen Advisory Board is to provide an avenue for residents to have a closer connection to the County, provide advice on neighborhood concerns, and provide ideas specific to their community.

Washoe County Citizen Advisory Boards include: (Listed by Commission District)

Commission District One: Alexis Hill

Incline Village/Crystal Bay
West Truckee Meadows/Verdi

Commission District Two: Mike Clark

South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley

Commission District Three: Mariluz Garcia

Sun Valley

Commission District Four: Clara Andriola

Spanish Springs

Commission District Five: Jeanne Herman

North Valleys
Warm Springs/Rural
Gerlach/Empire

The area of responsibility for each CAB is defined by boundaries that have been established through a resolution adopted by the BCC when each CAB was formed.



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ABOUT CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARDS

The purpose of the Citizen Advisory Board is primarily to communicate ideas between the county and non-county presenters to the local community, and from the community back to the county in an advisory capacity. Citizen Advisory Boards hold regular meetings within their communities and develop the agenda based on what is pertinent in their community. CAB members are liaisons in their neighborhoods to Washoe County and maintain positive relationships with elected officials and Washoe County staff.

Benefits of Citizen Involvement

CABs are based on the premise that citizen involvement produces better-informed decisions by county government and begets better-informed citizens. How well the advisory system works in practice depends upon the individuals involved. A good advisory system relies on the working relationships established between CAB members, the residents and property owners of their communities, and the county government.

Legal Basis

- Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 244.1945 authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to establish CABs "for any purpose relating to the county about which the board desires study or advice."
- Washoe County Code, Section 5.425 through 5.435, sets forth the specific guidelines for the establishment and operation of CABs.

CABs are governed within this legal framework by a set of bylaws adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. The bylaws enable each CAB to follow a standard set of operating procedures while providing enough latitude to allow the CAB to conduct its affairs and meetings in a fashion which encourages public participation.

Citizen Advisory Board Membership

Members on CABs are selected with the intent to provide representation, to the extent reasonably possible, from a broad cross-section of the represented community. The idea is to ensure that all major viewpoints are examined, and that any faction or special interest group does not dominate the Citizen Advisory Board. Washoe County Commissioners select members and alternates who are residents from within a CAB's geographic area for staggered three-year terms beginning July 01.



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Role of the CAB Chair and Members

Both Citizen Advisory Board Officers and Members are responsible for creating positive experiences at public meetings, adherence to Nevada Open Meeting Law, and communicating with elected officials and Washoe County staff. Below are expectations of members and alternates.

CAB Chair and Vice Chair: Chairs are expected to follow both the roles of a CAB member and the following special roles:

- Facilitate productive meetings by engaging CAB board members to openly discuss issues, share in equal participation, and ensure all members have a chance to express their thoughts and opinions on an issue.
- Foster a platform that allows for a diversity of opinions to be expressed.
- Open and close the meeting facility.
- Work with Washoe County Manager's Office staff to prepare and address community concerns and presentations identified for each meeting agenda.

Vice Chair: Assumes the role of the Chair in their absence.

CAB Member: Roles of CAB members are:

- Identify issues of concern in the community through regularly scheduled advisory board meetings.
- Review minutes, reports, memorandums and other documentation regarding the issues which the board is researching.
- Study and give counsel on the identified public issues.
- Represent the views of your neighbors by communicating the range of options regarding the issues of concern to the County Commissioners and the Commission Support team.
- Operate in an advisory capacity, not a decision-making forum.
- Regularly attend meetings.
- Maintain good communications with your Commissioner and Commission Support team.
- Respectfully execute the duties as a CAB member using ordinary diligence and not taking unfair advantage of the position as CAB member.
- Understand and adhere to open meeting law requirements, CAB by-laws, and attend mandatory training.



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Information sharing and agenda creation

Citizen Advisory Board meetings are a venue in which residents in a community receive updates from presenters, and about regional and area initiatives and other events. Items on the agenda are added through the development process from Washoe County Commission Support. Agenda items may also be requested by members of the CAB and are scheduled by the Office of the County Manager staff. Information from meetings is then shared by meeting minutes. Agenda topics should be relevant to the community at large. One-off individual requests (i.e., the removal of an abandoned vehicle or the request to add a crosswalk) may be completed without agendizing the topic for a CAB meeting. The concerned CAB member should work individually with their Commission Support staff member to address these individual requests and concerns outside of actual CAB meetings.

Advocacy and the Citizen Advisory Board

CAB meetings should provide a forum that encourages candid and frank discussions of citizen concerns and issues. It is especially important that CAB meetings be conducted to allow a “neutral playing field” so all present feel comfortable presenting all sides of any issue. CAB members, in either preparing the agenda or in conducting a meeting, must be careful to avoid giving any perception that the meeting or discussion will be slanted or limited to the detriment of full and open discussion. Depending upon the issue under discussion, reasonable time limits or other rules may be imposed by a CAB Chair to ensure, to the extent possible, an orderly process and full discussion - both pro and con – on the issue or project being discussed. Outbursts and applause from the audience should be discouraged. CAB meetings are a form of business meeting designed to elicit input on pertinent county issues.

Disclosure: Any CAB member who has actively or visibly taken a position on a project or issue should:

- Disclose, as part of the record, his/her involvement with the issue or project and, if applicable, any financial relationship or involvement relating to or resulting from the project or issue.
- Recusal: Any CAB member who has a personal commitment or a direct financial interest in the particular issue or project being discussed should not only take the actions outlined above but should also consider excusing themselves from the Board and participating from the audience as a private citizen on the particular project or issue.
- The board members’ decision surrounding a topic should not be made ahead of a meeting; but rather made at the CAB meeting after hearing public comment and holding discussion among the CAB members.

It is important that feedback from issues and concerns of the community expressed in CAB meetings be shared with Washoe County.



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Representation of CAB

No CAB member may represent the CAB in other proceedings, orally or in writing, as advocating a particular position unless the specific topic under consideration was discussed and voted upon by the CAB. In making any representation, the CAB member must be careful to report on the issues and concerns - both pro and con - as presented to the CAB, in addition to any vote result.

Representation of County

Under no circumstances may a CAB member use their position as a CAB member to represent, advocate or imply, in non-County proceedings, a County of Washoe position on an issue unless specifically authorized to do so by the Board of County Commissioners.

THE CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Nevada Open Meeting Law

State law requires that meetings of public bodies must be open and public. Citizen Advisory Boards fall within the definition of public bodies and must follow Nevada Open Meeting Law. Open Meeting Law governs agenda creation, distribution, meeting management, quorum, minutes, and document management. All Citizen Advisory Board members receive training on open meeting law. CAB training materials are available on the Citizen Advisory Board website at www.WashoeCounty.gov/CABS. If at any time as a CAB member you are uncertain of a potential Open Meeting Law violation, please contact the Commission Support Team for clarification.

Room Layout

Typical room layout for a CAB meeting includes board members at the front of a room. Participants and alternates sit in seats in the audience. If a CAB member is absent for a meeting that prevents a quorum, an alternate may take his or her place as a member of the CAB at the front of the room.

Agenda

The agenda for each meeting includes presentations on topics of interest for that geographic region. The agenda is drafted, finalized, and posted by the Washoe County Commission Support Team, within the Office of the County Manager. Staff works closely with the CAB Chair to ensure that issues are addressed and that CAB members have received necessary information to host successful meetings, and that a reasonable number of topics (2-3 maximum) are agendaized. If you have agenda topics that you feel would be of interest to the *community at large*, please share those with the CAB Chair and/or the Commission Support Team for potential inclusion in future meetings.

REMEMBER: the number one rule of Open Meeting Law compliance is to stick to the agenda!



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Typical Order for Each Agenda

The typical order for each agenda includes:

- 1) Call to Order (roll call, aloud) and determination of quorum.
 - a. Please complete a verbal roll call for the purposes of minutes and identification of CAB members.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance.
- 3) Public Comment- Limited to 3 minutes per person.
- 4) Approval of Minutes of prior meeting. [For Possible Action]
- 5) Presentation from community partner(s) on topics of interest (i.e., water conservation, fire safety, law enforcement update.) [Non-Action Item]
 - a. Presenter accepts comments and questions from the Citizen Advisory Board members first.
 - b. Members of the public may ask questions of the presenter; however, we ask that the CAB Chair maintain a succinct and productive meeting by using good meeting management skills.
 - i. Including: Directing members of the public to be polite to guests and ask meaningful questions.
 - ii. The CAB Chair should not allow a member of the public to dominate the meeting by asking numerous or repetitive questions.
 - iii. Contact information for the presenter may be made available for specific, individualized questions or longer discussions outside of the CAB meeting.
 - c. Accept public comment from the audience directed to the Citizen Advisory Board.
 - d. If applicable, a member of the CAB may make a motion to approve or deny the topic at hand, so long as that topic is listed as an action item on that meeting's agenda.
 - i. CAB members vote on the motion based on board discussion and public comment.
 - ii. The CAB chair must call for both "in favor" and "opposed" and all board members must vote "aye" or "nay" aloud.
- 6) CAB member may wish to announce upcoming Neighborhood Development Meetings relating to community development for attendees to plan to visit and provide community input. [Non-Action Item]
 - a. While CAB meetings are no longer restricted to only development projects, Neighborhood Development Meetings serve as the ideal platform to share ideas and concerns with potential developers. This does not preclude the option for developers to present at CABs, should this be the best option.
- 7) Comments and requests from the Citizen Advisory Board and/or Commissioner for that CAB may be present to make comments.
- 8) Final Public Comment, limited to 3 minutes per person.
- 9) Adjournment.



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Role of the CAB Chair at a Meeting

Guidelines for the Chair are:

- The Chair controls the meeting.
 - This includes adhering to the set agenda and no items outside from the meeting agenda, shutting down public comment after 3 minutes per person, and requesting decorum.
 - If the Chair does not believe that courtesy and decorum are being used by attendees, they are able to warn the citizen(s) that the meeting will be adjourned if continuous outbursts occur.
 - If additional outbursts occur at that time, the Chair may adjourn the meeting and close all discussion and public comment.
 - If the meeting has already begun prior to a decision to end a meeting under this provision, it is important to remember that the Chair should make every reasonable effort to allow at least one period of general public comment prior to adjournment, with exceptions being limited to emergencies.
- The Chair should make sure everyone has a chance to speak under appropriate items, but limits the time to three minutes per person, per actionable item, as provided in the agenda.
 - Though it can be difficult to interrupt and end someone's public comment, it is important that the 3-minute period stated in the agenda be honored to be mindful of others' time and those that adhere to the 3-minutes period.
 - If the person speaking is repeating concerns already expressed by another, the Chair can so state and focus that person's comments. *Use courtesy and common sense.*
- The Chair can call a recess or adjourn the meeting.

Role of CAB Members at the Meeting

Guidelines for CAB members are:

- CAB members are not elected officials but represent an area of the community, not necessarily the residents of that area.
- CAB members share issues and concerns of the community with Washoe County decision-making bodies based on the motion of the CAB.
- CAB members have the right to have an opinion and to express that opinion.
- CAB members run the meeting; the audience does not.
- Actions by the CAB should represent both sides of any discussion and should list the issues and concerns of each position. The chief purpose of the CAB is not the vote of the members, but the generation of input on the issues and concerns expressed through the public meeting process.
- A call by a CAB member for a vote by the audience (i.e., non-CAB members) is not appropriate. Decisions made by the CAB should be made in response to public comment and discussion among the CAB, not by raised hands in the audience.



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Voting at a Citizen Advisory Board Meeting

Citizen Advisory Board members are expected to vote on procedural items (meeting minutes, elections) following open meeting law. This includes a motion to accept (approve as amended, modify etc.), a second, and a call to vote, with an option for both an “aye” and a “nay” provided for clarity. The process is led by the CAB Chair.

For every item that is noted as an "action item" on the agenda, CAB members may provide a recommendation to the decision-making body. This action is most beneficial when supported by a summary of what was heard at the meeting and the reasons for the decision.

Washoe County Commissioners will generally not consider a CAB vote based on approval or denial, but as advice on issues reviewed by the CAB. For this reason, it is often more helpful if CABs provide advice to County Commissioners and other County boards and commissions in the form of suggested alternatives or corrective actions, supporting or opposing opinions.

Quorum to Conduct a Meeting

The CAB must have a quorum of members present in order to conduct a meeting. State Law defines a quorum as a simple majority of the constituent membership of a public body. This translates for CABs as a simple majority of the total membership of the CAB. Alternates do not count toward a quorum unless they are actually serving at a meeting in place of an absent regular member. Vacant member positions, however, do count toward a quorum. Following are some examples of how quorums are calculated:

- The total membership of a CAB is five at-large members; three members must be present for a quorum.
- The total membership of a CAB is five at-large members and two alternates. There is one vacancy on the CAB and two members did not attend. An alternate may sit in for a member who did not attend. The quorum would be three members.

If a quorum of CAB members is not present at a noticed meeting, then the meeting cannot occur. The CAB Chair must announce to the audience that a quorum of CAB members is not present and, therefore, a CAB meeting will not occur. The professional recording secretary (or CAB secretary) will stop recording the meeting and depart. The minutes will reflect that a quorum of CAB members was not present and that the noticed meeting did not occur.

A quorum must be present for the entire CAB meeting. Should a member permanently excuse themselves from the CAB meeting during the meeting, and if the member's departure causes the total CAB members to be less than a quorum, then the meeting must immediately stop unless an alternate is available. The professional recording secretary (or CAB secretary) will stop recording the meeting and depart. The minutes will reflect that the member's departure created less than a quorum of members and that the meeting was subsequently stopped.

Again, if this does happen, it is important that the Chair make all reasonable efforts to ensure that there has been at least one period of general public comment before the meeting is adjourned, which could involve asking the departing member to delay departure briefly to allow public comment to occur before a quorum is lost.





Alternatively, CAB members should not meet as a quorum outside of a CAB meeting, particularly with the intent to discuss anything pertaining to CAB future agenda topics or to deliberate toward any action. All deliberation and discussions regarding a topic should be done at a CAB meeting for the purposes of maintaining a transparent government.

Alternates for CAB Members

The County Commission has established alternate positions on each of the CABs by resolution. Alternate positions do not count towards the total membership of a CAB when determining a quorum. Alternates should, however, temporarily replace a CAB member for a meeting should a member fail to attend the meeting or if a member must leave the meeting. The CAB Chair will formally designate the alternate and state for the record that the alternate is filling a specific member position (i.e., at-large or a specific sub area) for the meeting. After such recognition by the Chair, then the alternate counts towards the membership quorum. While substituting for a member, the alternate has the full authority of CAB membership during that meeting (e.g., voting on action items).

Election of Officers

Election of officers is typically held at the first CAB meeting of each new fiscal year after new members have been appointed as a result of CAB recruitment. Elections are held for the offices of Chair and Vice Chair from existing appointees on the CAB. Nominations of non-CAB members from the floor are not permitted. The terms of office for each officer are for one year or until a successor is elected. Newly elected officers assume office immediately upon election.

- If a new Chair is elected, the previous Chair will immediately relinquish chairmanship of the meeting to the new Chair, who will chair the remainder of the meeting.
- It is recommended that a CAB not elect a member who is not present at the meeting.
 - However, if an absent member is elected to an office, the election is contingent on the member agreeing to hold the office.
 - If the absent member is elected as the Chair, the current Chair will continue to chair the remainder of the meeting.

Staff will contact the absent elected member to see if they are willing to accept the office. If the absent member agrees to accept, that person assumes the responsibility immediately. If the absent member does not agree to accept, election of officers to fill the vacant office will be placed on the next CAB agenda.

Attendance

CAB Members are required to report an absence to the Chair for it to be an excused absence. Members having three unexcused absences are automatically removed from the CAB. To acknowledge presence and absences, the CAB completes a roll call at the beginning of the meeting. Approved absences, unexcused absences and alternates stepping in for missing members are acknowledged during roll call.

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CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING TIPS

Since the official business of a CAB can be conducted only at a meeting, it is important to make sure the CAB meeting is structured to encourage public participation. If your CAB meeting is long, complicated, and focused only on CAB members, then your meetings will eventually lose public participation.

The following are some guidelines to follow to help ensure smooth meetings:

- ✓ Start on time
- ✓ End at a reasonable hour with the goal of a two-hour time limit
- ✓ Follow the agenda (it is a violation of the open meeting law to discuss items not appearing on the agenda)
- ✓ Encourage the public to participate (clarify how they are able to do so)
- ✓ Ensure no one person dominates the discussion
- ✓ Actively listen
- ✓ Do your homework before the meeting (prepare)
- ✓ Do not hold unnecessary meetings
- ✓ Uphold decorum and adjourn the meeting should respectful discourse cease

Meeting Room Environment

In addition to these guidelines, the meeting room environment is also crucial to a smooth meeting. Here are some items to check:

- ✓ Room size is adequate for anticipated crowd
- ✓ Temperature is set at a comfortable level
- ✓ Enough seats and agendas are available
- ✓ Lighting and sound system are adequate
- ✓ Introduce yourself to community members prior to the meeting
- ✓ Ensure that health protocols are implemented

CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD COMMUNICATION

Effective communication between the Citizen Advisory Board, the public, and Washoe County staff and elected officials is essential to the Citizen Advisory Board program. Below is a summary of the exchange between members, the public, staff and elected officials.

Citizen Advisory Board and Public Communication

Citizen Advisory Boards must adhere to Nevada Open Meeting Law to notice the public on upcoming meetings and distribute meeting information. In addition, Washoe County staff augments this process through additional notification.



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Notification of Meetings

The best tool for residents to receive information about upcoming meetings is through the Washoe County Email Notification system at www.WashoeCounty.gov/cmail. Residents sign up to receive information in their district including Citizen Advisory Board agendas and meeting announcements by selecting the district that fits their CAB (i.e., Incline Village/Crystal Bay CAB would select District 1, Warm Springs/Rural CAB would select District 5, and so on.)

Agenda Distribution

- Posted at mandatory posting locations as indicated on the meeting agenda.
- Mailed to individuals requesting a physical copy.
- Emailed to individuals signed up to receive county updates through email at www.WashoeCounty.gov/cmail (Preferred method)
- Posted online at www.WashoeCounty.gov/CABS and notice.nv.gov

Receiving information on what happened at a meeting

Residents interested in learning more about what happened at a Citizen Advisory Board meeting can review meeting minutes online at www.WashoeCounty.gov/CABS. The minutes are also reviewed at the next available CAB meeting for accuracy and board approval.

Public Comment

Community members wishing to provide feedback at a Citizen Advisory Board meeting may do so under public comment at the beginning and end of the meeting. In addition, if an item is agendaized for possible action, public comment may be provided during that agenda item after CAB discussion and prior to a motion and vote by the CAB. Public comment may be submitted in writing through the Washoe County CAB Public Comment Cards or verbally. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes. There is no legal obligation to read written comments into the record. They are simply entered into the record and do not have to be read aloud.

Town Hall Meetings

Public Forums or Town Hall meetings are also available for the public to hear about relevant community issues and events. These forums are less rigid and are scheduled at a commissioner's request. They are also facilitated by Commissioners or staff and are designed to foster effective communication between residents and public officials. Please visit www.WashoeCounty.gov/cmail to receive additional information on events in your community.

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CAB Group Email Addresses

In an effort to provide the citizens of Washoe County a means of providing their comments and/or concerns to members of their community Citizen Advisory Board, Washoe County has established group email addresses for each CAB. The CAB email group consists of each CAB member of the respective CAB and Washoe County staff. *As CAB members, do not “reply all” to these messages to ensure compliance with Nevada Open Meeting Law. Staff will provide an initial response to the constituent, including a potential avenue to resolve the issue.* In addition, the information will be provided to the Citizen Advisory Board at the next meeting- for the public record.

Communicating with Washoe County Staff and Elected Officials

Information discussed at the Citizen Advisory Board meeting is communicated to Washoe County staff using a variety of tools including minutes and updates.

- Minutes are completed according to Nevada Open Meeting Law for each CAB meeting and are distributed to staff and the appropriate elected official as a review of the events of the meeting.
 - Minutes are a summary of the events of the meeting and are not completed verbatim. Only proposed amendments to minutes that change a misrepresentation of the sentiment of a statement will be changed by County staff.
 - Minor changes such as grammar will not be changed on the request of CAB members or the public, nor will comments made during a CAB meeting that accurately captured the sentiment of statement.
- It is essential Citizen Advisory Board members clearly state their name, every time, when speaking during a public meeting. This allows for an accurate record to be created.
- For topics not on a Citizen Advisory Board agenda, CAB members are encouraged to submit an email to CAB@WashoeCounty.gov highlighting their concerns, ideas and thoughts on the topic at hand. Information will be addressed by a member of the County staff.
- Updates, either verbal or written, are also provided to elected officials and senior staff immediately following the CAB meeting, highlighting issues raised, meeting management, attendance and opportunities for improvement.

Washoe County Manager’s Office staff also strives to maintain an active open communication channel with members to identify emerging issues and possible solutions. In addition, members are encouraged to communicate directly with their elected official.

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Safety

We realize there is a lot of information in play here, and it can at times feel overwhelming. We encourage you to communicate with Manager's Office staff to iron out any difficulties you're experiencing or to help gain a better understanding of any issues involved with your membership on the CAB. **MOST IMPORTANTLY!!!** Safety of you and others in attendance at CAB meetings is paramount. If you are aware of a dangerous situation or emergency, act accordingly. This may include calling 911, alerting others to the danger, or fleeing to an area that is safe from the dangerous situation or emergency. Further questions or concerns on any of these issues can be discussed with the county's Security Administrator, Ben West, who can be reached at bwest@washoecounty.gov or 775-328-2018. However, this contact should not be treated as a substitute for calling 911 or for taking any actions necessary to ensure safety in the face of an emergency or imminent danger.

For additional information on Citizen Advisory Boards, please contact the Washoe County Commission Support Team at 3-1-1 or at CAB@WashoeCounty.gov.



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