



Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on January 12, 2023, 6 p.m. at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM – Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell (arrived late), Andy Moore, Tina Walters, Brandy Wilbur (alternate), Kristy Evans (zoom), Allen Nash (zoom). Absent: Russell Bierle (alternate)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – There were no requests for public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS OF [DECEMBER 15, 2022](#) (for possible action) – Andy Moore moved to approve the minutes of December 15, 2022 which were seconded by Tina Walters and passed unanimously in favor.

5. ELECTION OF A NEW VICE CHAIR – Gerlach-Empire CAB member Elisabeth Gambrell wishes to sit as an at-large member. An election of a new Vice Chair will be necessary. (for possible action)

MOTION: Tina Walters nominated Andy Moore to serve as the Vice Chair. Allen Nash seconded the motion which carried unanimously in favor. Andy Moore accepted the position.

There were no requests for public comment.

6. WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE – A WCSO deputy may be available to provide a general community update (non-action item)

Deputy Burns wasn't available as he had to be present in court.

7. PAIUTE TRIBE FIRE CHIEF – Don Pelt, Fire Chief of the Paiute Tribe Fire Department, General Community Update (non-action item)

Chief Don Pelt provided an update. He said we have a new chairman this week. He said the atmospheric river had kept us busy. Things are going well. CERT is awesome, but we also provide CPR and Fire Extinguisher Training for the community. You have options. He said it had been an interesting start to the new year. He said we didn't have power for four days. He said we have been watching for flooding issues.

For December, our numbers looked a lot better. He said we are receiving a lot of interest. We responded to 18 calls in Gerlach. Eight medical calls, four people were transported to the hospital, five calls were for medical advice form, and one control fire call, one vehicle crash, and one search and rescue call. Things are going great. Everyone enjoys working at the station. He said Jonathan spends time up there, and it's going well. We met with Ormat and went over their emergency operations plan. They call us instead of TMFPD. He said I'm working with TMFPD on getting the serial numbers for the Knock Boxes. They will re-key to Paiute Tribe specific key. The Knocks Box allows us to access property without causing damage. The County's list of Knock Boxes isn't as defined, and we will have to track them down.

Ms. Evans said the school has Knocks Boxes has been a multi-year saga. We would love for you guys to have the keys. Please meet with our assistant Principal. The Sheriff's department has its own key.

Chief Pelt said we held an open house on the 3rd. A tribal board member attended. We served a spaghetti dinner. Andy Moore said we are happy to have you here.

8. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING HUB – Candee Ramos, Washoe County Community Outreach Coordinator, to share the latest community information on the Neighborhood Meeting HUB featuring development community meetings. (non-action item)

Ms. Ramos provided an overview of the HUB website.

Mr. Nash asked which department reviews the audio/video from the neighborhood meetings. Ms. Ramos said our Planning Department. She noted there is a specific Planner and developer listed for the project.

Ms. Evans asked about the requirements to host the meetings. Ms. Ramos said the developer is required to have these meetings. We encourage them to host the meeting as close as possible to the development site, but they may host via zoom. They are required to send meeting notices weeks in advance.

Mr. Moore asked about Ormat and this process. He said he doesn't see their proposal, nor do I see the proposed gold mine up by Squaw on there either. Ms. Ramos said they aren't an official project yet. They are exploratory phase on BLM land. When it's a proposed project, that's when this would be mandatory to host a meeting. Mr. Moore said they have a permit to drill this month. Ms. Ramos said she would look into that for him as she is not on the planning team. She said the HUB site started in April 2022, so if something was approved prior to that, it wouldn't appear here.

Mr. Nash asked if it's an administrative permit they were applying for that is required to have a meeting. Ms. Ramos said she wasn't certain about that but would find that out. Mr. Nash said the Washoe County Board of Adjustments approved the Administrative permit.

Washoe County Manager Eric Brown noted the administrative permit is not part of the development process. It gives a name and description of what you are trying to do but not giving you approval for drilling. He said he doesn't believe it triggers being on the development HUB. Mr. Moore said they don't have to have a neighborhood meeting. Mr. Brown said the Administrative permit doesn't trigger a neighborhood meeting. He said the Administrative permit outlines the needs such as water, power, and environmental.

Ms. Evans said Ormat has had meetings over the year and a half, but not sure those fall into the neighborhood meeting. She said projects that take place on BLM, would a neighborhood meeting be required? She is curious how it being on BLM within Washoe County plan into neighborhood meetings. Ms. Ramos said she would find these answers as we discuss this HUB site every month since it will be a standing agenda item.

Ms. Gambrell said Ormat was not on that because the process started three years ago. There were meetings with Ormat with current processes. They have changed their processes. It's a backtracking, catching up. She said they lied about the processes.

9. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) – WCSO Support Specialist - Citizen Corps Wade Campbell will give an overview of the CERT program, which provides a wide range of disaster preparedness and response training classes designed for the "general citizen." These classes cover disaster preparedness, light search and rescue, disaster medical, fire safety, and many other aspects of preparation and response. [non-action item]

Mr. Campbell provided an overview of the CERT program.

Public member Greg Nelson asked if first responders could join the CERT team. Mr. Campbell said anyone could join the CERT team. He said we have a retired nurse or EMTs. He said our monthly meetings allow us to learn our strengths and weaknesses and work together as a team.

Ms. Gambrell said we have an emergency van set up and ready for catastrophies. Mr. Campbell said he would like to have a better relationship with Gerlach.

Ms. Evans said this would be beneficial to the Gerlach community. She asked about the training and how many people would be interested in providing training up in Gerlach. Mr. Campbell said the training is 24 hours, two long days. He said he didn't want to say no to anyone interested. He said he isn't the program coordinator. He encouraged them to email to coordinate. Ms. Evans asked if the monthly meetings are in-person and what day. Mr. Campbell said we could form a team in Gerlach. Ms. Evans said if we get a team up here, could we host training for the community, such as fire extinguisher training? Mr. Campbell said there are possibilities to provide training for the community.

10. ORMAT STANDING AGENDA ITEM – Board Members may wish to speak on updates pertaining to Ormat exploratory activity. This time is limited to 10 minutes of general discussion. (non-action item)

Mr. Moore said we held a public meeting yesterday. He said we had 70 attendees to that meeting. We are not being included in the conversation. We are redirecting conversation. There is a community here. He said there was a lawsuit. He said there is more information coming tomorrow.

Ms. Gambrell thanked everyone for putting that meeting together. We started this process years ago. We have been dealing with this. We've been lied to. Ormat projects have been drying up water sources and endangering species. Since the beginning, we've been requesting they keep our area pristine, ensuring tourism isn't impacted, and each time they said there isn't a problem. I feel we were lied to by BLM. It's my backyard. I agree this needs to be a standing item, but I disagree with 10-minute limits. There were 70 people here last night – 3 minutes per person is more than 10 minutes.

Mike Garcia said I want to talk about our watershed, our two water sources. He said I disagreed with the finding that it has no significant impact.

Ms. Evans said that given we are Washoe County and have no specific influence over BLM as a CAB, but want to know about the approved permit for this proposed plan. Does the CAB influence that permit? Manager Brown said the Board of Adjustment reviews these and has guidelines that dictate what they can approve and can't. This is an administrative permit that outlines what is involved and required to execute it and provisions for the applicant. There isn't anything the County can do at this point. It will not go before the Board of County Commissioners. If the applicant doesn't comply with what is in the permit, we can step in.

Mr. Nash asked if they misrepresented what was included in the application, can the Board of Adjustment review again. They were seeking to have over 150,000 yards of grading with cut and fill. That was approved. From what we read in their permit, it looked like the GGID was misrepresented.

Mr. Brown said he received emails from attendees last night, which were forwarded to the Board of Adjustment. We can call in the question of whether they comply.

Marnee Benson said it was my understanding that part of Ormat has presented was intention to, or agreement with GGID to purchase water (42,000 gallons of water per day). Their operational plan for the proposed action listed three options for acquiring water – purchase from GGID; purchase from a local ranch, or trucking water to the project each day. She said we learned last night that there is no agreement with GGID. She asked how that was represented to the Board of Adjustment regarding purchasing from GGID.

Dave said there are adverse impacts that will occur as results of this proposed Ormat segment of project. He said they said they would drill a few wells, but we know they want to develop geothermal plants out there and an industrial center larger than Gelrach. It will have a negative impact. We cannot talk about it because they have segmented the project. There are numerous flaws, including inaccurate answers to questions or non-answers. We are being ignored. This would change the character of this community. It has the potential to change and impact the quality of life due to the sights and sounds of industrial operations. Last night's meeting was awesome. We are looking at a small piece of the project by design. He said there are letters to federal, state, and local. You don't have to be a resident to provide comments. It's a federal matter. Andy and I will talk to SF Gate. We are looking for national media sources. They need to be doing an Environmental Impact State. There are impacts that cannot be mitigated. It's controversial and has potential long-term impacts.

The Zoom cut out in the meeting room.

11. COMMISSIONER AND BOARD MEMBER ITEMS — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members and potential general announcements from the county commissioner and county manager. (non-action item)

Commissioner Herman attended via zoom and noted she was listening.

Ms. Gambrell apologized for having lobbied for the second Thursday and forgetting her nametag. She congratulated Mr. Moore for his vice presidency. He thanked her for all of her efforts.

12. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –

There were no requests for public comment.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

DRAFT