



Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on September 14, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. at Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM Elisabeth (Schatzi) Gambrell, Russell Bierle, Brandy Wilbur, Kristy Evans, Tina Walters (Chair)

A Quorum was established. The meeting was called to order.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – Comment heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the agenda. The Citizen Advisory Board will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to three minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Board as a whole. (non-action item)

Gary Schmitt – One of the primary issues in town is the application by the GID on their 18 acres, just out of town here. We welcome County Manager Eric Brown to the meeting. I am glad he is here to see that property and the very serious issues with it. There are probably about 4 primary issues. Number one is its violation of state law and county ordinance, as well as the proposed change in property density. We need to know what we are building before we can determine how much capacity we need. You need to have an idea what you want to build. I can assure you, the GID is not going to be building anything. It is way out of their charter, and an absolute violation of state law. The proposed property density changes violate the charter.

Takes a poll of “By a show of hands. Who would like the GID, or anyone else, to have the right to build a 4-story, 108-unit apartment building?”

No hands raised.

“Who here would like a 2-acre industrial park, for the porta potties?”

No hands raised.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS OF AUGUST 10, 2023 (for possible action)

There were no minutes for approval.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES – A Washoe County Sheriff’s Deputy and/or members from the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Fire Department may be available to provide a general community update on public safety (non-action item)

Deputy Burns mentioned that there were no major issues during the recent event and everything went smoothly in town.

Kristy Evans – She would like to thank the officers for everything they do.

Elisabeth (Schatzi) Gambrell - There were concerns raised about the upcoming departure of Deputy Burns and Deputy Foxx, and the lack of training for the new deputies who will replace them. She is worried about the amount of land the new deputies will need to know and cover.

Johnathen Prichard - The speaker mentions receiving about 45 to 50 calls district-wide during the Burning Man event, with 25 of those calls in the Gerlach district. Johnathen discusses new business relationships formed with CrowdRx, MedicWest, and Persimmon County Sheriff's Office during the event. The speaker mentions positive feedback received from a sexual assault nurse who was housed at their station during the event. He expresses their intention to start planning for next year's Burning Man event.

6. NORTHERN NEVADA PUBLIC HEALTH – On Aug. 31, 2023, the Washoe County Health District changed its name to Northern Nevada Public Health. Communications Manager Scott Oxarart will give a brief update on what this change means, why it happened and what's next. (non-action item)

Scott Oxarart, the communications manager, announces the recent change in the organization's name from Washoe County Health District to Northern Nevada Public Health. He explains that the change brings a new look and feel to the branding and mentions the new website. He also assures that the services, employees, and phone numbers remain the same.

Scott discusses the various services offered by the health district, including clinic services, WIC program, back-to-school vaccines, permitting for air quality and environmental health, public health preparedness program, inspections for restaurants, pools, spas, child care centers, and land development.

Scott explains that the name change was initiated based on a request from the Washoe County Commission. The reason behind the request was to clarify that the health district is governed by the District Board of Health, not the County Commission. The decision to change the name was agreed upon by the District Board of Health.

A participant raises a concern about the name change and its implication on the geographic scope of Northern Nevada. Scott explains that the decision was based on survey results, which showed that people in Washoe County primarily associate Northern Nevada with Reno-Sparks. The health district's focus is on serving Washoe County residents, and they chose the name accordingly.

7. NEVADA LEGAL SERVICES - Case Manager Joseph Sullivan to provide information on how low-income Nevada residents can access free legal services through Nevada Legal Services, which provides a range of services, from telephone advice to representation in court. The level of representation depends on the type of problem, the merits of the case, and staff availability. (non-action item)

The speaker explains the various areas of legal assistance provided by Nevada Legal Services, including housing, criminal record sealing, consumer law, senior law, disability rights, and more. The office does not handle cases involving money, civil action lawsuits, or criminal cases. They provide outreach, resource coordination, and assistance to veterans. The office works with veterans, assists them in accessing resources, and helps with their legal issues.

The office provides services over the phone, through Zoom, and accepts documents through secure email to ensure accessibility. The office can send brochures to the Gerlach K-12 school library and

ensure that their attorneys have brochures when they visit the area. They can provide services over the phone, through Zoom, and even do court appearances over Zoom. They also accept documents through secure email.

The office is interested in setting up a legal kiosk at the Gerlach K-12 school library to provide accessibility to legal services. They are willing to work with the Gerlach K-12 school library to provide brochures and explore the possibility of setting up a legal kiosk.

8. DTS BROADBAND IN YOUR HOME - Jonathan Young, Chief Executive Officer, DTS Fiber, will provide information about the possibility of expanding broadband fiber internet capabilities to your home. (non-action item)

The speaker introduced DTS Fibers, a registered CLEC, and mentioned their fully optical network, 24x7 support, and the miles of fiber optic they have installed since 2019. Jonathan Young explained the advantages of fiber optic over wireless, including faster speeds, symmetrical upload and download speeds, and the ability to connect multiple devices.

The speaker discussed their plans to expand their services to residential homes and businesses in the community, including working with Washoe County and partnering with DirecTV for streaming services. Most individuals have taken surveys, and about 80 surveys have been received. Completing the survey helps Washoe County with funding.

Question from CAB member - A question is raised about businesses requesting service if they are not along main streets or government routes.

Answer - The response mentions that most of the aerial lead is already engineered, but if it's not, they would have to wait. It is clarified that businesses must be on commercial parcels, not residential ones.

Elisabeth (Schatzi) Gambrell - A question is raised about the noise level coming from a facility near the railroad tracks.

Answer - It is mentioned that there is a rattling noise from one of the AC fans, and they are calling the HVAC company to repair it.

Russell Bierle - A question is asked about getting a connection to the town shop located at 330 Short Street. The primary need for the connection is to have an ATM for public water sale during the Burning Man event.

Answer - The response indicates that they are waiting for funding from the County.

Residents can keep their phone numbers as it is an FCC mandate. The cost of home telephone service is \$59.99 for internet services, with an additional \$20 for a 1GB circuit. Routers are included for free if signed up at the beginning, otherwise, there is a \$5 a month lease program for the router.

The phone service costs \$9.99 for unlimited US calling. Additional taxes are associated with the phone service, typically around \$14. The internet fees for business accounts start at \$89.99. Enterprise accounts are quoted on a per-need basis.

The Pyramid Paiute Tribe uses Lincoln Air for managing their node buildings.

The ACP offers a \$30 discount on internet bills for non-tribal locations based on income. The installation process involves running fiber optic cables, setting up a premise box, installing a wall jack, and connecting the router. Leveraging resources from Pyramid and Burning Man individuals for assistance.

9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – Lauren Soulam, Program Coordinator, Washoe County Community Reinvestment Program, to provide information about the Community Development Block Grant with a presentation and project discussion. (non-action item)

The speaker provides an overview of past projects and seeks ideas from the community for future grant applications. The funding available for the CDBG program this year is approximately \$2.8 million. HUD's program outcomes focus on expanding economic opportunities, providing suitable living environments, and improving infrastructure and housing. CDBG is focused on meeting the needs of low to moderate income persons, with projects benefiting 51% or more LMI.

Projects can be eligible if they address the prevention or elimination of slum or blight, or if they fulfill an urgent community development need. Area benefit projects address the needs of the entire area, such as water systems, sidewalks, or community centers. Projects can also be eligible if they serve a specific population, such as homeless individuals or seniors. CDBG projects can include public facilities, community centers, water systems, and other eligible activities.

The participants discuss the administrative difficulties of CDBG projects and the need to ask for sufficient funding. The participants mention the community center and discuss the possibilities of renovations and construction using CDBG funding. The participants provide examples of past CDBG projects in Gerlach, including public facilities, water projects, planning projects, housing rehab, and public service projects.

The speaker explained that Washoe County would sponsor projects and sub-grant the funds. The speaker discussed the deadlines and timeline for the application process. She mentioned that the proposals would go to the board in February.

Christy Evans – She expressed the idea of creating a resiliency center at the community center. Christy Evans suggested bringing health services to the community. It was mentioned that Washoe County had previously funded a modular health clinic.

The administrative burden for grants and the eligibility of expenses are discussed. It is mentioned that the expense can be written into the grant application, including the cost of a contract administrator and staff time. Both of these expenses are considered eligible.

10. 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 and Manager Brown are mentioned as being present.

Manager Brown – The county has already approved the broadband for the area. There is a brief discussion about bringing healthcare to the area. The mention of a flu clinic and a COVID clinic with updated boosters is made.

The topic of road repairs is briefly discussed, mentioning the closure of Highway 34 for emergency repairs.

11. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – Comment heard under this item will be limited to three (3) minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the agenda. The public is encouraged to submit a “Request to Speak” form to the Board chairman. Comments are to be addressed to the Board as a whole. (non-action item)

Gary Schmitt – He makes a comment about road repair and praises the method of road repair by the tribal police during burning man. There is a discussion about the GID application and land use in Gerlach. He reads from the master plan. He mentioned that the cause of the buildable lot shortage in town is the GGID zoning for 54 lots. The participants expressed concern about the need to bring the GGID zoning to the market to avoid years of litigation.

Candee Ramos – The November meeting is going to be canceled due to a staffing shortage.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.