****  **Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board**

**Minutes of the special meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on**

**January 23, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood,**

**Gerlach, NV 89412**

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Present- Tina Walters, Kristy Evans, Russell Bierle, Schatzi Gambrell, Brandy Wilbur
Absent –

1. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT** –

Carl Copek thanked Brian Beffort for his letter and the effort he put into that and the project.
2. **DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY COMMUNITY MICROGRID ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP LETTER OF SUPPORT –**

Tina Walters, chair of the Gerlach Citizens Advisory Board, wrote to Kendall Jackson to express support for Washoe County's application for the DOE Community Microgrid Assistance Partnership (CMAP). Walters highlights that Gerlach, a small, isolated town with limited power infrastructure, faces frequent power outages. She emphasizes the town's potential to utilize renewable energy resources like solar, wind, and geothermal to build a resilient microgrid. CMAP support would help Gerlach move forward with technical planning and financing for the project, making the community more energy resilient and setting an example for others. Walters concludes by thanking Jackson for considering the application and asked the board for their thoughts on the letter.

Kristy Evans expressed approval of the letter. She motioned that Tina Walters sign the letter on behalf of the Gerlach/Empire CAB and that Brian Beffort can submit it with the application. Schatzi Gambrell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and Kristy Evans signed the letter.

Brian Beffort told the CAB he will submit the application with the letter which is due by the end of the month. He did warn the CAB that it may be a challenge with the new presidential administration taking action to deny funding of this type.

The CAB expressed overall appreciation for Brian Beffort.

1. **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT-**

Pete Dronkers asked Brian Beffort about the potential for multiple microgrid systems in Gerlach. In response, Beffort explained that there is potential for both an electric microgrid and a geothermal district heating microgrid. He expressed interest in pursuing both options if possible and planned to advocate for this with the Department of Energy and National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). Beffort acknowledged that electric microgrids are more closely aligned with the project’s goals but emphasized the importance of considering both options. He suggested that the town should first secure the grant and then engage in further discussions with technical advisors to determine the best path forward. Dronkers thanked him for the information.

Schatzi Gambrell thanked Brian for his efforts and then shifted focus to the local fire department’s ongoing issues. She shared that there had been discussions with Paiute tribe leaders regarding the fire department's operations, which have faced difficulties. While some funding has been secured to extend the service, Gambrell noted that the tribe is dissatisfied with the current contract. She is preparing to submit an application for Gerlach residents to meet with the tribe to improve coordination. Gambrell emphasized the need for better communication between Gerlach and neighboring areas, as the fire department serves a large, shared district. She hopes these conversations will lead to better collaboration and efficient fire services for everyone in the region.

Pete Dronkers asked for clarification on if the application to the Paiute tribe is procedural. She answered that when one wants an item on the GGID agenda, it must be on their agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

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