



Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board held on March 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Spanish Springs Library.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Bruce Parks, Brandon Partain, Bradley Young, Bonnie Billings, Shannon Martell – Present

Sharon Thygesen (Absent), Adam De Merit (Absent)

A quorum was established, and the meeting was brought to order.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - The pledge of allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Neumann, a lifelong Washoe County resident, highlighted May as Older Americans Month, promoting a May 1st event at the Senior Center with vendors providing senior resources. He distributed Senior Spectrum Magazine, guides, and pamphlets on elderly services. Neumann mentioned RTC's \$60 monthly transport program for seniors, offering free taxi or Uber rides, and a \$3 bus service. He concluded by announcing his candidacy for State Senator for District 15.

Diana addresses several community concerns. She highlights the lack of widespread notification about meetings, praises Commissioner Andriola for using Facebook to inform residents, and emphasizes the importance of diverse religious representation in invocations. Diana supports the local library and suggests a program where children read to dogs. She debunks myths about illegal voting and out-of-state voters based on her experience working at polls. Diana criticizes a community member for derogatory labeling of officials and outlines key issues in the neighborhood, including infrastructure, traffic, homelessness, crime, veteran support, affordable childcare, and education.

Janet Butcher expresses her frustration about unexpected changes in local government meeting schedules. She mentions the Washoe County School Board changing their meeting time from 2:00 PM to 9:00 AM and the last-minute cancellation of the county commissioners' meeting, speculating it was due to a lack of quorum or insufficient business. Janet suspects the school board's time change is related to a lawsuit involving Trustee Church seeking information. She also shares her concerns about election integrity, stating that her historical voting records have disappeared and implies data manipulation, while clarifying her respect for the workers involved.

Valerie Fiannaca focuses on a situation involving a community member, Bruce Parks, who proposed a program to teach the Constitution at the local library. Despite submitting all necessary forms and following procedures, Parks has not received any response for almost a year. Valerie reads an email chain showing Commissioner Clara Andriola's efforts to follow up on Parks' proposal with County

Manager Eric Brown and Library Director Jeff Scott, who stated they were still working on the approval process. Valerie criticizes the lengthy delay and implies it reflects poorly on the management, particularly if one holds conservative views.

4. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES

Chief Joe Schum reported on Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue's (TMFR) January-February call statistics, highlighting a reduction in February's call volume. He discussed medical and fire response activities, collaboration with Sparks for mutual aid, and upcoming green waste disposal dates. Schum announced the onboarding of Brett Taylor as the new Wildland Urban Interface Coordinator and the progress of three new recruits in the Regional Academy. He also updated on the strategic plan and the department's response during a recent snowstorm, emphasizing successful coordination and no serious injuries.

Captain Brandon Zirkle provides an update on recent activities and changes within the Washoe County Sheriff's Office, particularly in Spanish Springs. He mentions a retirement in the Special Operations Division and addresses the area's increase in burglaries, advising residents to show signs of activity around homes to deter criminals. He reports a rise in dispatch calls, reflecting growth in the community, and highlights proactive policing efforts with a significant increase in self-initiated calls. Staffing improvements have led to enhanced coverage during peak times. Assault offenses have notably increased, while other crimes remain stable. Captain Zirkle also discusses the impact of a recent snowstorm, detailing the department's response and overall minimal disruption to law enforcement operations. Zirkle reviewed the Sheriff's Office's goals for 2023, noting successes in reducing vehicle burglaries and property destruction by 10% and 30% respectively. However, they fell short in reducing aggravated assaults and residential burglaries. The increase in residential burglaries, particularly in rural areas like Deep Spanish Springs and Rancho Haven, was linked to suspects using snow to identify vacant properties. He advised residents to be vigilant by maintaining visible signs of activity at their homes and checking on neighbors' properties. This approach helps deter criminals who exploit unoccupied homes, especially in snow-covered areas where tracks and footprints are minimal.

Mr. Newman inquired about a conversation with Sheriff Balaam and which they talked about some new grant for license plate readers and not having to pay for them like in the past, the Sheriff's would be installing them for free. Mr. Newman was wondering if there was any new information on the license plate reading project. In response to Mr. Newman's question about the new grant for license plate readers, Captain Zirkle confirmed that the Washoe County Sheriff's Office has been working on a license plate reading project for some time. He mentioned a new contract with Flock, a company that provides automatic license plate reader technology, which will allow access to a different database alongside the existing vigilant cameras. These technologies have been instrumental in solving crimes, such as locating homicide vehicles and missing persons.

Tracy Thomas inquired about a rough estimate of the average number of calls that are dispatched to the CARES campus per day. Captain responded by saying 6 to 7 calls a day.

5. WASHOE COUNTY MANAGER UPDATE

Manager Eric Brown began by summarizing key points from his end-of-year review presentation given to the Board of County Commissioners. He highlighted that the county's strategic planning involves regular workshops where progress is reviewed, and new priorities are set. This year's focus includes several significant achievements and ongoing projects. One major accomplishment is the regionalization of dispatch, EMS, and fire services. This two-year process aims to implement a unified computer-aided dispatch system across various agencies, which will streamline operations and improve response times by allowing dispatchers to see and deploy the nearest available resources more effectively. Manager Brown also touched on improvements in election management, noting efforts to enhance the administration of elections and transition to a new platform. Despite some delays, the county is preparing to manage elections smoothly, including a contingency plan if the state's new platform isn't ready on time. Additionally, he introduced a climate resilience initiative in response to employee feedback about valuing the county's natural beauty. This effort is aimed at preserving environmental quality and enhancing sustainability. Finally, Manager Brown invited feedback on the CAB concept and encouraged discussion about any desired changes or improvements.

Gary Books Butcher asked when the commissioners are going to start placing requested items from Jeannie Herman and himself on the agenda. He noted that his question doesn't directly pertain to Spanish Springs. Manager Brown responded that he is the county manager, not a commissioner, and therefore he does not have a vote or the authority to block items from the agenda. He explained that setting the agenda is the responsibility of the presiding officer or chair.

Tracy Thomas asked if it is still current that the board of county commissioners meets on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tuesdays of every month and if that is their normal schedule. Manager Brown responded that it's a normal schedule, but the presiding officer can make a change to the calendar.

Valerie Fiannaca mentioned that Gerlach pays \$49.00 a month for their fiber optic service while she pays \$90.00 a month without having fiber optic. She asked for an explanation of the difference in cost. Manager Brown responded that the difference in cost between fiber optic services in Gerlach and Spanish Springs was explained by noting that Gerlach's fiber optic circuit was made possible through collaboration with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. This project was completed at no cost to the county, funded entirely by federal dollars. This allowed the county to negotiate affordable rates with the provider, ensuring affordable broadband for Gerlach residents who previously lacked such services.

6. WASHOE COUNTY COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

Ms. Alexandra Wilson provided an update on the various tools and resources available to the community for staying informed and engaged with county activities. She explained how to navigate the county website, highlighting features like the meeting schedule, which lists upcoming meetings and provides access to agendas. Alex Wilson also introduced Feedbackify,

a tool for residents to provide feedback on the website or other county services, and described the news and announcements section, which keeps the public informed about the latest county updates. Additionally, she mentioned the option to sign up for newsletters through the website to receive regular updates via email. Alex Wilson encouraged attendees to provide feedback on how these tools could be improved or better utilized to increase engagement and attendance at community advisory board (CAB) meetings.

7. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB

Ms. Wilson provided an overview of the Neighborhood Development Hub, highlighting its purpose and functionality. The Neighborhood Development Hub was instituted to address frustrations from the community regarding the timing of development feedback. Previously, development issues were presented too late in the process at Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings, making it difficult for feedback to be incorporated. The Neighborhood Development Hub, managed by the Washoe County Community Services Development, requires developers to hold a neighborhood development meeting before they can submit their application. This ensures that community feedback is considered early in the planning stages, particularly for special use permits and master plan updates.

Ms. Wilson explained that there had been no recent neighborhood development meetings but emphasized the importance of the hub for early community engagement. She demonstrated how to navigate online tools, including the process for providing feedback and accessing information about upcoming and current development applications. She encouraged the community to sign up for notifications about development meetings and explained how to access detailed information about each application, including contacts for planners and the status of approvals.

Ms. Wilson invited questions and feedback on how the Neighborhood Development Hub could be improved to serve the community's needs better.

8. CAB MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

During the CAB member announcements, Bonnie Billings inquired about the community response to online click analysis compared to in-person meeting attendance, emphasizing the shift towards more online engagement due to the abundance of accessible information. Mr. Brandon confirmed that the next CAB meeting would be held on April 3rd, resuming the regular cycle.

9. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Tracy Hilton Thomas announced her candidacy for County Commissioner District 4 and invited attendees to meet her for discussions at the library on Sundays at 2:00 PM, also offering yard signs for those interested. No other members made announcements.

10. ADJOURNMENT - Adjourned at 8:21 p.m.