

DRAFT MINUTES
Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission
January 28, 2026

The Washoe County Open Space and Regional Parks Commission met in a scheduled session on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. The meeting was televised live and replayed on Washoe Channel at <https://www.washoecounty.us/mgrsoff/Communications/wctv-live.php> and also on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WashoeCountyTV>.

Chair Jones called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

1:31 p.m. **The Commission recessed for technical reasons.**

1:40 p.m. **The Commission reconvened.**

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Chair Jones acknowledged new Commissioner Nicole Flangas, who introduced herself and briefly spoke about her professional and public service history.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Kevin Joell, Chris Baker, Timothy Dake, Neal Jones, Tracy Kuczenski (via Zoom), Sean Hill (Zoom), Jennifer Uvira, Nicole Flangas, Miles Gurtler* (Zoom), Mariluz Garcia

Staff Present: Brandon Roman, Stephanie D’Arcy, Aaron Smith, Chaz Lehman, Eric Crump

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was led by Vice Chair Dake.

3. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

4. Election of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Chair and Vice Chair for a term of January 28, 2026, through January 26, 2027.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Motion by Vice Chair Dake that Neal Jones be reappointed as Chair of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission for another year, seconded by Commissioner Joell.

The motion passed with a vote of nine for, zero against, with Commissioner Gurtler absent.

Motion by Vice Chair Dake that Sean Hill be appointed as Vice Chair of the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission for a term of January 28, 2026, through January 26, 2027, seconded by Commissioner Joell.

The motion passed with a vote of nine for, zero against, with Commissioner Gurtler absent.

5. Approval of the Draft Minutes for the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission Meeting of November 19, 2025, meeting.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Motion by Commissioner Joell to approve the November 19, 2025, Open Space and Regional Parks Commission minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Baker.

The motion passed with a vote of nine for, zero against, with Commissioner Gurtler absent.

6. Acknowledgement and recognition of Park Operations staff Bryan Harrower and Joanna Schultz for their outstanding service and contributions to Washoe County.

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy read a statement recognizing Mr. Harrower's 20 years of service with the department and detailing his professional experience with the County. The County's parks and community were stronger because of him, and she presented him with a certificate. She read a statement laying out the ways in which Ms. Schultz shaped the culture of the department, and she relayed how Ms. Schultz made her feel supported. She praised her for her institutional knowledge and personality and thanked her for her dedication.

7. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of the Special Event policy.

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy noted a correction in the staff report, which stated that this would be the first time this event came before the Commission for approval. However, the policy went to the Board of County Commissioners in 2004 for approval, so this is an update and not a new policy.

Deputy District Attorney Chaz Lehman opined that this item was properly agendaized, and a small error in the staff report should not impact the Commission's ability to move forward with this item.

District Manager Andy Brown conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Special Events and Activities in Parks (2 slides); Purpose of the Policy; What is considered a Special Event (3 slides); What is considered a Special Activity; Special Event Application Process (5 slides); and Additional Requirements. He noted the 75 decibel (dB) threshold required in the policy is in line with the maximum imposed by the City of Reno. The department puts the onus on larger events to keep staff apprised of event expectations to allow them to stay ahead of community concerns.

Responding to the Chair's question, Mr. Brown indicated the 75 dB limit would be measured at the boundary defined in the application for the event, and in smaller parks that could mean the park boundary.

Commissioner Hill suggested that staff include procedures in the backup materials when policies are discussed so new Commissioners can become familiar with them.

In response to Commissioner Joell's query about insurance requirements for smaller events, Mr. Brown said insurance is typically required for events where alcohol is expected to be served to eventgoers and can be required depending on the number of people expected to attend the event. However, the County provides several options for people to obtain insurance, whether through their own homeowners' policies or a pre-fab policy through the County.

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, added that Risk Management provides the Community Services Department with a list of insurance requirements depending on the size and type of event, and the department engages with Risk Management on events that fall outside of that list. Risk Management is directly involved in drafting contracts for larger events. He said event applications include language about insurance requirements. He was unsure whether insurance would be needed for a funeral with 50 attendees without checking Risk Management's list.

Responding to Commissioner Flangas' follow-up question about appealing insurance requirements, Mr. Crump responded that such requirements are often waived for non-profit partners, and he has not come across an appeal from an individual applicant.

Commissioner Joell inquired about scenarios such as a yoga instructor wanting to reserve a park for a class or a small photography shoot.

Ms. D'Arcy recognized that the County has an informal system for those types of smaller commercial ventures and plans to draft a policy and bring it back to the Commission for review.

Mr. Crump remarked that the County's fee policy addresses those types of uses, which would not be classified as special activities. There is a specific commercial photography policy.

Mr. Brown explained that a specific complaint that he had discussed with Commissioner Joell had been resolved. He spoke about staff's consideration of a recent application for a dog trainer.

Regarding whether the County offers something like the Bureau of Land Management where certain events are automatically approved without application if they meet certain criteria, Mr. Brown said any event with more than 25 attendees requires a permit, and it must take place in reservable County areas. Events in different areas can apply as a special activity. Commissioner Joell saw value in the County having carve-outs to encourage community activities, particularly for events that do not charge fees or impact other park users.

In response to Commissioner Kuczenski's request for clarification about insurance, Mr. Brown said the reservations team can answer any questions that potential applicants may have about their events.

Ms. D'Arcy clarified that insurance is required for the majority of events, but waivers are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Joell inquired whether the organizers of recurring events had been contacted about these changes.

Ms. D'Arcy stated the regular special event organizers are aware that staff is working on solidifying the policy, and she did not expect anything to impact any of the regular events. They were aware that the policy would be discussed at this meeting and could have provided input if they wished.

Mr. Brown indicated that the decision to hold post-event meetings was the result of concerns voiced about earlier events. Most meetings were intended for recurring events and provided a learning experience for both organizers and the County. He spoke about a recent event which

featured inappropriate sound levels, prompting the County to model its decibel threshold after the City of Reno's, which featured more urban settings.

Commissioner Flangas felt that a run club would fall under the recreational use immunity and wondered whether the County has ever waived insurance requirements due to that state statute.

Ms. D'Arcy responded that an organized activity held by a run club would be reviewed by Risk Management. The County never aimed to be punitive, only to educate. Discussion ensued regarding the example of a run club event attended by more than 40 people.

Commissioner Joell suggested reviewing that element the next time Chapter 95 of the County Code came up for review so residents' quality of life was not impacted, a suggestion Ms. D'Arcy indicated staff could consider.

Mr. Brown noted that small events like those hosted by run clubs could request fee waivers if they applied for event permits.

Commissioner Joell thought a simple online application and brief education could be provided for small events like this, similar to those used by the Forest Service for campfires. He wanted government to be efficient, and some of the County's applications are sometimes still difficult to fill out.

Motion by Commissioner Joell to approve the Special Event Policy, to be in effect January 28, 2026, seconded by Vice Chair Dake.

The motion passed with a vote of nine for, zero against, with Commissioner Gurtler absent.

8. Presentation and discussion of Special Event Subsidy Framework

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy indicated her proposed framework was intended to be a starting point for conversation so the Commission could weigh in on what was important to them. She conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Special Event Subsidy Framework; Eligibility Requirements; Criteria for Consideration; Community Impact (2 slides); Economic Impact (2 slides); Financial Need (2 slides); Operational Impact (2 slides); and Final Questions to Consider.

***2:38 p.m. Commissioner Gurtler arrived.**

Chair Jones pointed out that some large event organizers had requested large fee waivers, and it was incumbent upon the Commission to evaluate those requests. He felt the organizers of those events should provide detailed information about their organizations' financial situations.

Commissioner Joell noted he reviewed the financial information of every non-profit organization who requested large fee waivers using the Internal Revenue Service's website. He wondered who was able to grant fee waivers.

Ms. D'Arcy replied that the fee waiver process she described pertained only to large events, and the Commission would deliberate on those. Staff typically does not see fee waivers for smaller events like special activities, but that could be assessed if it happens. Responding to Commissioner Joell's suggestion to create a waiver threshold below which staff would decide, Ms. D'Arcy said this was not a formal document but only a framework to help the Commission in its deliberations.

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, clarified that this framework was specific to special events, which have their own definition. The fee waivers referenced would appear in fee agreements that come before the Commission for approval.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Replying to Commissioner Kuczenski's query, Ms. D'Arcy indicated the framework itself would not be shared with applicants, though she was happy to share the criteria with them.

9. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of a Special Event Agreement with Reno Street Food, LLC for the Food Truck North Valleys events to be held at North Valleys Regional Park on Thursdays, June 11 – August 6, 2026, at a cost of \$6,600 paid to Washoe County for the current year and corresponding dates in both 2027 and 2028.

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy stated the Food Truck Thursday event was held as a trial event in 2025 as an extension of the Food Truck Friday event. Due to its success, Reno Street Food was interested in continuing the event.

Steve Schroeder, owner of Reno Street Food conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: The Beginning; Jan 2012; A free to attend event for locals; Community Gathering; Food brings people together; North Valleys Regional Park – Challenges; The event was a success...; North Valleys Regional Park – The Solution; North Valleys Regional Park is the solution (2 slides); Highlights; and Benefits to the Business Community.

Mr. Schroeder noted the City of Reno was also interested in the growth of this event to provide additional food choices for their constituents. He said they did not plan to increase the number of food trucks to ensure those that participated could be sustained by the attendees. The food trucks who do business on Buck Drive would not make as much money there as they would at an event.

Responding to Commissioner questions, Mr. Schroeder stated live music was intended to keep patrons in the park, but it did not work in the North Valleys. As such, live music would not be included there going forward, and those finances would be used in other areas to make the event better. Though food truck vendors were charged a percentage in past years, many are reluctant to share the amount of money they make, so a flat fee is now charged to truck operators. He said the revenues and expenses for the organization were about even.

Regarding North Valleys residents' tendency to use food trucks as take-out restaurants, Mr. Schroeder said the parking lot provides great ingress and egress, though it would be wise to consider how to optimize his operations there. He tries not to dictate how food truck operators should run their businesses. He noted he was already in the application process for the June events, and the application includes questions about point-of-sale systems and online ordering. He discussed his background in small business development and seminars he has planned about nationwide food truck industry trends. He wished all trucks had online ordering capabilities. He said each event features 12 to 14 food trucks that rotate so consumers have opportunities to try new vendors, noting that some customers attended every event in the South Valleys.

Commissioner Garcia pointed out that Washoe County had both food deserts and community engagement deserts, and these events address those. She described Reno Street Food as a great community partner, and she appreciated how they adapted to each regional park.

Regarding a query about fire safety, Ms. D'Arcy indicated that North Valleys was in a County pocket surrounded by the City of Reno.

Mr. Schroeder expounded that food trucks cannot participate unless they have passed fire inspections as part of the health permit process. He sends weekly vendor lists to both Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue and the Reno Fire Department so those agencies can ensure the vendors are current on their propane and fire certificates, and both agencies have performed multiple on-site inspections.

Commissioner Joell thought the original Food Truck Friday events helped incentivize unlicensed trucks to follow the rules so they could participate in them. He pointed out that any food truck which receives approval by any one of the three local jurisdictions can operate in all three.

Mr. Schroeder said the City of Reno did not have a municipal code addressing mobile food vendors until 2012, and the formation of Reno Street Food helped aggregate mobile businesses so permits could be tracked and public safety could be improved. His organization interfaces with 13 City, County, and State agencies to hold the events.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Commissioner Hill moved to approve a Special Event Agreement with Reno Street Food, LLC, for the Food Truck North Valleys events to be held at North Valleys Regional Park, at a cost of \$6,600 annually paid to Washoe County, for a 3 year term ending in 2028, and consisting of 9 events per year during June, July, and August, seconded by Commissioner Flangas.

The motion passed unanimously with a vote of ten for, zero against.

3:16 p.m. **The Commission recessed.**

3:24 p.m. **The Commission reconvened with all Commissioners present.**

10. Presentation, discussion and possible approval of the Athletic Field Use policy.

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy indicated the proposed Athletic Field Use policy was new and only portions of it were ever approved by the Board of County Commissioners. This policy was important given recent changes in youth and adult athletics in the community. She introduced Recreation Coordinator Jason Albery, who reviewed slides with the following titles: Purpose; Locations; Challenges and Goals; and Policy Updates and Additions (5 slides).

Responding to Commissioner questions, Mr. Albery confirmed that the priorities in Section 4.2 of the policy are listed in priority order, though language was added clarifying that a higher priority does not guarantee full allocation of all fields requested. Instead, higher-priority organizations may get a higher proportion of requested fields than lower-priority organizations.

Chair Jones wondered about the possibility of a 20- or 30-year master plan to handle the increase in requests.

Ms. D'Arcy responded that a master plan was adopted in 2019, and updates to it are completed regularly at individual parks. By reviewing Lazy 5 Regional Park's Master Plan, the next one to be addressed by the County, they will be able to determine the appetite for additional fields at that

location. The problem of limited field availability was a community and regional concern, not just one for Washoe County.

Responding to additional queries, Mr. Albery said a moveable fence was implemented at Eagle Canyon Park to solve a problem involving baseball and lacrosse teams. Baseball was given priority because of the original intended use of the field. With respect to one field that was reserved as a placeholder for the next year but never used, he said one of the goals for the new recreation staff was to track field usage and note empty field space. Organizations who reserve fields but do not use them could lose their good standing. He noted there was no formal process to take fields away from a league; that would likely be handled via email and a rescission of that league's permit.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Vice Chair Dake moved to approve the Athletic Field Use Policy to be in place for athletic play to begin on March 1, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Joell.

The motion passed unanimously with a vote of ten for, zero against.

11. Update on PROS Consulting's work to develop a Service Plan for the possible creation of a Park District.

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, announced that the statistically valid survey being performed by the consultant will be closed in the next week or two. The County is working with the Cities of Reno and Sparks on a joint webpage to drive residents from each jurisdiction, and that page is expected to go live on February 6. The page will feature the same statistically valid survey, but it will be open to the entire community. The City of Reno has worked to ensure the website will be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Crump indicated PROS Consulting will host a virtual meeting with the Reno Youth Sports Association which will include all the leagues permitted by the three agencies. That meeting is scheduled for February 12.

12. Parks Reports

Park Operations Superintendent Stephanie D'Arcy reviewed the materials included in the agenda packet for this item, highlighting the number of hours volunteered over the past year and its financial equivalent, the contract awarded to Kimley Horn for an update to the Lazy 5 Regional Park Master Plan, updates on the completion of a multi-use trail from the Michael D. Thompson Trailhead to Hunter Lake Road, the submission of grant applications for trail improvements at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, and a Christmas tree harvesting event which was part of a fuel mitigation effort in Galena Creek Regional Park. She also spoke about a Christmas Tree recycling program and provided statistics about the trees and lights collected. She promoted the Toytopia event at the Wilbur D. May Center which will be open until April 26. The Dragon Lights Reno event, which recently concluded, saw a 4 percent increase in attendance, and she anticipated that the event would run at roughly the same time next year.

Regarding the Davis Creek Regional Park Restoration Project, she expected several important details to be solidified in the next month or so. The plans are 90 percent complete, though one delay was the need to replace the entire electrical system in the park. Risk Management was in negotiations with the insurance company to determine coverage, and once that funding is

secured, final design, permitting, and bidding will proceed in the next three months. Construction would hopefully take four additional months. So far, hazardous trees have been removed, the park has been reopened except for the campground, and multiple volunteer plantings and seedings have taken place. Discussion about reopening the campground, she continued, will take place once restoration plans have been solidified.

Responding to Commissioner questions, Ms. D'Arcy said staff was waiting to receive the final insurance estimate so they can determine the need and possible sources for additional funding if necessary.

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, indicated staff would engage with the budget and finance team if there was a shortfall. The County manages a Contingency Fund which that team may suggest using, but there could be other options. He expected to be able to find a solution.

Commissioner Joell said the Commission was eager to help ensure that the park is reopened quickly however it could.

Ms. D'Arcy encouraged any members of the public looking to get involved in that endeavor to visit the department's website and social media pages, or to email her.

13. Director's Report

Eric Crump, Director of Community Services, stated the Board of County Commissioner (BCC) accepted \$37,000 in cash donations at its October 28 meeting, and it approved the Orr Ditch/Wildcreek maintenance agreement during its December 9 meeting, the last part in the full transition of responsibility for the golf course. He noted the BCC reappointed Commissioner Hill to this Commission at its December 16 meeting. It also approved an easement to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) at Lazy 5 Regional Park on January 13 and accepted a separate easement from TMWA. He concluded by saying that Commissioner Flangas was appointed to the Commission at its January 20 meeting, and he welcomed her.

14. Commissioner Request for future agenda items.

There were no requests.

15. Public Comment

There was no response to the call for public comment.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Derek Sonderfan

Chair Neal Jones