

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

MAY 18, 2009

PRESENT:

Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairperson
Bob Larkin, Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Commissioner
John Breternitz, Commissioner

Amy Harvey, County Clerk
Katy Simon, County Manager
Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel

ABSENT:

David Humke, Chairman

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:07 a.m. in special session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

County Manager Katy Simon stated: "The Chairman and the Board of County Commissioners intend that their proceedings should demonstrate the highest levels of decorum, civic responsibility, efficiency and mutual respect between citizens and their government. The Board respects the right of citizens to present differing opinions and views, even criticism, but our democracy cannot function effectively in an environment of personal attacks, slander, threats of violence, and willful disruption. To that end, the Nevada Open Meeting Law provides the authority for the Chair of a public body to maintain the decorum and to declare a recess if needed to remove any person who is disrupting the meeting, and notice is hereby provided of the intent of this body to preserve the decorum and remove anyone who disrupts the proceedings."

09-499 AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda Subject: "Public Comment. Comment heard under this item will be limited to two minutes per person and may pertain to matters both on and off the Commission agenda. The Commission will also hear public comment during individual action items, with comment limited to two minutes per person. Comments are to be made to the Commission as a whole."

Alice Iveson Gladwill talked about the importance of keeping the Vya Road Maintenance Station open. She placed a copy of a newspaper article on file with the Clerk.

Larry Canfield, a retired detective, and Marie Canfield, a victim of home invasion, spoke in favor of keeping the Victim Advocate's position in the Sheriff's Office.

10:18 a.m. The Board convened as the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Sierra Fire Protection District with Chairman Humke absent.

10:23 a.m. The Board convened as the Board of Trustees for the South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District with Chairman Humke absent.

10:30 a.m. The Board convened as the Board of Fire Commissioners for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District with Chairman Humke absent.

10:43 a.m. Vice Chairperson Weber declared a brief recess.

10:51 a.m. The Board reconvened as the Board of Washoe County Commissioners with Chairman Humke absent.

09-500 AGENDA ITEM 7 – ANNOUNCEMENTS

Agenda Subject: “Tentative Budget, as well as possible changes to adoption of the Final Budget, for Fiscal Year 2009/10.”

10:51 a.m. Vice Chairperson Weber opened the public hearing.

Public Works Director Dan St. John conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk. He briefly discussed the organizational chart, operation, budget summary and goals for Regional Animal Services (RAS). He stated an amendment to the lease agreement with the Nevada Humane Society (NHS) would come before the Board in June 2009, along with an update about operating conditions to be presented in partnership with the NHS and a discussion of no-kill policies as requested by Commissioner Jung.

Commissioner Jung asked about the licensing of dogs. Mr. St. John indicated licensing was required in congested areas. Commissioner Jung suggested consideration of licensing requirements for all dogs and cats. Vice Chairperson Weber requested incorporating some discussion as to how the RAS was working, with some focus on the relative impacts for Washoe County, the City of Reno and the City of Sparks. She said she was not certain the public understood how the regional facility all came together. Commissioner Jung asked staff to give recommendations about the potential creation of an oversight committee for RAS. Mr. St. John noted the Board of County Commissioners had done an excellent job as the oversight committee. He stated it

was important to remind the community the RAS Center was a regional facility and was a good example of successfully shared services.

In response to the call for public comment, Alice Iveson Gladwill asked the Commissioners to reconsider closure of the road maintenance station in Vya. She emphasized the importance of the station in a remote area that had few other resources.

Tony Clark, an employee in the Equipment Services Division of the Public Works Department, said he thought his position was inadvertently submitted for layoff.

Carla Fells, Executive Director of the Washoe County Employees Association (WCEA), said the employees understood the constraints of balancing the budget with shrinking revenues and recognized the reductions would shape how the County was designed for the future. She expressed disappointment at the number and severity of the job cuts, as well as the apparent lack of sacrifice by management. She suggested monitoring of supervisor to employee ratios, and questioned what would happen to those who managed and supervised positions that were to be outsourced. She emphasized the impacts of the layoffs on the rest of the organization. She placed written comments from the WCEA Board of Directors on file with the Clerk.

Marcus Hodges, President of the Washoe County District Attorney Investigators Association, spoke in favor of retaining six investigative assistant positions that were proposed for reduction and outsourcing.

Wes Steessi spoke in opposition to cutting the Library budget.

Stu Brown, a Vya rancher and resident of Washoe Valley, supported retention of the Vya Maintenance Station and discussed the importance of Road 8A.

Commissioner Larkin asked whether a reduction in road maintenance was being proposed in Vya. Mr. St. John clarified there had never been any intention to eliminate maintenance on any of the County's roads, but maintenance levels would be reduced on all roads. He indicated there was ongoing discussion as to whether the Vya Maintenance Station would be occupied on a year-round basis. He explained the tentative budget called for a reduction from 13 to 9 employees in the combined Gerlach/Vya road crew, but specific operational details were still being worked out. He assured Commissioner Larkin road maintenance would not be reduced below what was critical for public safety, and things such as snow and ice removal would be given priority.

Vice Chairperson Weber commended Mr. St. John and his crew for going out to Vya to assess the situation more directly. She stated her belief that the Vya Maintenance Station should remain open in some manner. Commissioner Jung agreed. She expressed concern that Vya residents paid property taxes to Washoe County, but sent their kids to California schools. She asked whether there was any attempt to work out some form of reimbursement from the Ruby Valley Pipeline for road maintenance. Mr. St. John said a meeting was recently held with representatives from the Ruby Valley

Pipeline, and engineering staff had been directed to look into the pertinent statutes and authorities. He noted the roads were located on BLM land and their status was different from that of other County roads. He commented the roads should be in better condition at the completion of the Pipeline project. Commissioner Jung pointed out one of the core principles in the budget strategy was to link community needs and balance them with what other local municipalities were cutting or preserving, but the Vya area had no other local governments. Mr. St. John said he shared the goals expressed by Vice Chairperson Weber and would continue working toward a solution. Commissioner Breternitz requested a status report to the Board after final decisions were made.

Commissioner Larkin asked whether the tentative budget factored in any impacts from possible actions of the State Legislature. Katy Simon, County Manager, indicated legislative impacts were contemplated, but not budgeted. She observed there were several wildly differing proposals, but it was currently unknown what the Legislature and the Supreme Court would do. She advocated careful management of ending fund balances and reserves. Commissioner Larkin indicated reserves had to be maintained in preparation for unknown impacts. Ms. Simon stated there was \$2.25 million in the Stabilization Fund (rainy day fund), and the Board had previously authorized the use of the Fund as emergency cash flow to meet payroll and expenses. She noted there was a two-month period during the summer when the County received no property tax revenues.

Vice Chairperson Weber asked the County Manager to comment on supervisor to employee ratios, as well as reductions taken by management personnel. Ms. Simon noted 3.3 percent of all funded positions in the County were classified as management positions, but 7 percent of the positions reduced through layoff or voluntary separation were in management. She acknowledged there were a few areas with limited spans of control, where one management position had responsibility for two to four employees. She stated all non-represented management employees and elected officials had taken a 2.5 percent salary reduction, and there was approximately \$400,000 in savings from additional voluntary reductions taken by many employees and managers.

Commissioner Jung said she agreed with some of the WCEA objections, and suggested the priority based tier reductions should be eliminated in future years in favor of a different type of reduction plan. She indicated funding for libraries and parks was particularly important during an economic downturn, and a new course needed to be charted for subsequent budget years. She recommended reevaluation of policies related to the rehiring of retired professionals, greater transparency in professional contracting services, and a look at parity in management to employee ratios after positions were reduced. Commissioner Jung commented that she and Vice Chairperson Weber held long and careful conversations with the County Manager and the Finance team, and determined that no stone went unturned in making budget reductions.

Ms. Simon pointed out all of the reserve balances had been provided to the labor associations and were included in the County's publically available financial statements. She itemized some of the financial impacts that might result from actions of

the State Legislature and State Supreme Court. She indicated the County's reserves were necessary to help cover the unknowns and try to avoid further cuts in programs or positions.

Commissioner Larkin pointed out the substantial revenue reductions projected from the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 to the new fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, as shown on page 1 of form 2 of the budget document to be submitted to the State Department of Taxation. He asked why there was a sharp increase shown in estimated General Government expenditures from the current year to the new fiscal year. John Sherman, Finance Director, noted the property tax revenue estimates were fairly precise. He stated an accelerated decline in property tax revenue was anticipated over the next two fiscal years due to declining property values. He estimated there would be a 30 percent decline in sales tax revenue, which was included in the budget document under Intergovernmental Resources. He explained much of the increase in overall spending, from approximately \$510 million in the current year to about \$580 million in the new fiscal year, was attributed to plans for the Truckee River Flood Project. He emphasized there were tax revenues in the budget that were specifically dedicated to the Flood Project that could not be used elsewhere.

Commissioner Jung noted there were Victim Advocate positions in the Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's Office, and it appeared they were all being eliminated. Ms. Simon confirmed that a Program Coordinator and Victim Advocate in the Sheriff's Office were both slated for layoffs. She stated the Victim Assistance Center in the District Attorney's Office would remain open. Commissioner Jung asked at what point in the process victims came to the District Attorney's Office for assistance. Lidia Osmetti of the District Attorney's Office indicated victims might receive a referral from law enforcement personnel, but usually came in when preparing for a court case. Commissioner Jung wondered whether it was possible to allow the District Attorney's Advocates to be the single point of contact after law enforcement was involved, thus leaving detectives and investigators free to do their jobs. Ms. Osmetti observed the Advocates were very busy with their current caseload.

Vice Chairperson Weber requested clarification about the Library system. Ms. Simon said the Board of County Commissioners had funding authority over the Library system, but the Library Board of Trustees was responsible for operational decisions. Although overall hours were being reduced, she indicated there would be library branches open seven days per week. She pointed out the budget recommendation was to extend the time period to October 2009 before Library Aide positions were terminated. She stated this was intended to grant time for the Friends of Washoe County Library to publicize a campaign and raise private funds.

Each of the Commissioners thanked the County Manager, Finance and Budget staff, WCEA and other labor organizations, employees and citizens for their efforts during the difficult budgeting process.

On motion by Commissioner Larkin, seconded by Commissioner Breternitz, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, Vice Chairperson Weber ordered that the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2009/10 be accepted and the Final Budget be sent to the State Department of Taxation as presented in the staff report.

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12:14 p.m. There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion by Commissioner Breternitz, seconded by Commissioner Larkin, which motion duly carried with Chairman Humke absent, the meeting was adjourned.

BONNIE WEBER, Vice Chairperson
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

AMY HARVEY, County Clerk and
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by
Lisa McNeill, Deputy County Clerk*