

**WASHOE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND
CITY OF RENO CITY COUNCIL**

JOINT MEETING

TUESDAY

2:30 P.M.

MARCH 20, 2001

PRESENT:

WASHOE COUNTY

Jim Shaw, Chairman
Pete Sferrazza, Vice-Chairman
Joanne Bond, Commissioner
Jim Galloway, Commissioner

Katy Singlaub, County Manager
Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel
Amy Harvey, County Clerk

CITY OF RENO

Jeff Griffin, Mayor
Dave Aiazzi, Councilmember
Pierre Hascheff, Councilmember
Toni Harsh, Councilmember
Dave Rigdon, Councilmember
Jessica Sferrazza-Hogan, Councilmember

Charles McNeely, City Manager
Michael Halley, Deputy City Attorney
Don Cook, City Clerk

ABSENT:

Ted Short, Commissioner

Sherri Doyle, Councilmember

The Boards met in joint 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 Clerks called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Galloway, seconded by Commissioner Bond, which motion duly carried, Chairman Shaw ordered that the agenda for the joint meeting of March 20, 2001, meeting be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, sang a song about the railroad trench.

Gary Schmidt, area resident, said in the next 30- to 40-years the downtown area will be developed as medium to high-rise casino and commercial. The County al-

ready owns property near the Administrative Complex at 9th & Wells and they should construct the court complex in this.

Betty Morris, area resident, expressed her appreciation as a community resident for the opportunity to serve as a volunteer for the City of Reno and Washoe County.

Martin Crowley, area resident, said he is not a resident of the City of Reno or of Washoe but is a resident of the community of Washoe County. He stated everyone needs to work together on all aspects of development in Washoe County to make this a better place for everyone regardless of which community you reside in. He said he is a member of the Justice Facilities Working Committee and encouraged the Board to consider their recommendations.

01-272 STATUS REPORT – COUNTY COURTS PROJECT – REVIEW OF JUSTICE FACILITIES WORKING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Dave Roundtree, Director, Washoe County Public Works, said the Board appointed the Justice Facilities Working Committee (JFWC) to make recommendations concerning the courts facilities now and in the future. He stated the JFWC has recommended the Municipal Court be constructed adjacent to the Justice Court located at 1 South Sierra Street, based in part on the Rose report. He advised that the Rose report was issued initially in 1984 and updated in 2000 and points to future consolidation of justice and municipal courts. No one anticipates that this will happen immediately, but there is a strong potential for this to happen in the future. Mr. Roundtree said the JFWC felt that by collocating the Municipal and Justice Courts, it offered an opportunity to manage future consolidation more easily and in the interim save on operational costs. The direction from the January meeting was to look at the potential for additional floors at 1 South Sierra Street. Staff believe the proposal for construction adjacent to 1 South Sierra Street does offer a number of advantages, and there would be considerable savings in both the initial costs and future operating costs.

Chairman Shaw expressed his appreciation to all of the members of the JFWC for their hard work on this difficult task.

Chuck Weller, Chairman of the Justice Facilities Working Committee, said there has not been very active participation by Reno staff or the Municipal Court Judges. He said the issues being reviewed are largely Reno issues, for example, the District Attorney's caseload is 60 percent Reno cases. There is no question that the Municipal and Justice Courts should be merged, based on the Rose Commission Report. They also met with Chuck Short, Clark County Court Administrator, who shared his experience in collocating their Municipal and Justice Court in Clark County. He said Mr. Short emphasized that it is a matter of public service, primarily to collocate the courts. One of the reasons the JFWC has recommended the courts be collocated is the arithmetic involved i.e., land acquisition costs, construction savings, prisoner holding facility, etc. Mr. Weller reviewed the potential savings concerning prisoner transports. The master

plan also identified cost savings of \$415,000 over 10 years from the elimination of a 3-person entry screening unit; these are the people who stand by the metal detectors. If the City of Reno chooses to build anywhere other than next door to the existing Justice Court, then logic dictates that the existing Justice Court will need to be abandoned in favor of construction next to the new Municipal Court. He said if the Municipal Court is constructed adjacent to 1 South Sierra Street, they are reasonably certain there are no significant environmental hazards underground that need to be addressed, where as if they built on the Pioneer site, there was previously a gas station on the site. No one knows what will be found once demolition begins to occur and what remediation will need to happen to make that site buildable. The JFWC has not determined whether they will recommend that a new District Courthouse be constructed because, at this time, there are no funds to do so. The bond issue, last November, was convincingly defeated and building a Municipal Court separately from the existing Justice Court would lock the community in to the inefficiencies and expenses of having separate buildings. The co-siting of these courts at 1 South Sierra Street would be a permanent solution and has plenty of expansion space for future needs.

Steve Varela, City of Reno, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, said one thing missing from the terms of agreement that would allow Washoe County and the City of Reno to develop the Municipal Court on the Pioneer Inn site is the potential for future parking to be developed by Washoe County and the possibility for the City of Reno to lose their 58 parking spaces and have to pay for additional parking in a future structure. Reno and County staff discussed this and the County agreed to 58 parking spaces on the Pioneer Inn site would remain as long as the City of Reno needs them. He reviewed development costs for the Municipal Court if it was constructed on the Pioneer Inn site and the existing 1 South Sierra Street. Mr. Varella said the City of Reno is not interested in the concept of the RP3 proposal because they have the money to build their Municipal Court without financing.

Councilmember Sferrazza-Hogan said staff was previously directed to review the RP3 proposal and she would like to hear from that group on their proposal.

Mayor Griffin asked whether staff had reviewed the JFWC's recommendation to construct the Municipal Court adjacent to the existing Justice Court. Mr. Varella stated that in addition to Mr. Roundtree's estimate of \$13.2 million for construction, there was an additional expense of \$600,000 for expanding the secured basement parking.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, said the JFWC is a very good committee, but he believes the courts should stay at status quo. He said there was no justification for the County to purchase the Pioneer Inn site.

Gary Schmidt, area resident, said the JFWC has done a very good job but he supports the courts being built near the County's Administrative Complex for the ultimate consolidation of governments and government services. Although, if a new Municipal Court is going to be built, they should collocate it with the existing Justice Court.

Mr. Schmidt stated he opposes any court being built on the Pioneer Inn site and believes the County should sell the Pioneer Inn site.

01-273 STAFF REPORT – INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT – RENO
MUNICIPAL COURT

Steve Varela, City of Reno, Director of Public Works/City Engineer, said he stands by what he said earlier in the meeting.

Mayor Griffin said Reno staff has only reviewed the alternatives discussed and directed at the January 9, 2001 meeting, and the alternative suggested by the JFWC is something new and they have not had a chance to discuss or review it.

Councilmember Aiazzi said collocation of the courts is the direction both Boards have determined is the best alternative. He inquired where the County Commissioners see the location of the courts in 20 years.

Mayor Griffin said he does not want Reno to approve building the Municipal Court adjacent to 1 South Sierra Street and then find out the County is going to build the District Court on the Pioneer Inn site. Chairman Shaw said it was his understanding that after Mr. Weller had provided reports to both Boards, Reno would consider their recommendations, and discuss them at this meeting to determine if they were viable.

Mr. Weller advised that the JFWC has recommended that the Justice Court stay where it is, forever, and not be moved. The JFWC has not yet determined whether they will recommend construction of a new District Court, and said Reno should view the Municipal Court as a stand-alone building.

Councilmember Sferrazza-Hogan said she does not want the City of Reno to build a Municipal Court adjacent to the existing Justice Court, and then find out in 30 years they have reached capacity with no room for expansion. Mr. Weller said, presently the Justice Court only uses one full floor and part of another floor, which leaves an additional floor for expansion within the existing building, aside from the Municipal Court. Mr. Weller advised that the Justice Court was designed for expansion, not only up, but also out.

Councilmember Sferrazza-Hogan asked how parking would be determined. Mr. Weller said Reno has requested 42 parking spaces be located under the Municipal Court. He advised the JFWC also recommended the Pioneer Casino building be razed. He noted there are currently 60 unappropriated parking spaces on the Pioneer Inn site with more additional spaces when the Pioneer is razed. The JFWC anticipated all of the Municipal Court parking needs could be fulfilled on the Pioneer site, and they did not recommend the County revise its offer to Reno concerning parking.

Councilmember Hascheff said it was his understanding the County had reviewed the master plan, considered a variety of sites and options, and concluded that

the Pioneer Inn site was the best site for collocation of courts. He said, on that basis, the City of Reno proceeded with their decision to collocate the Municipal Court on that site. Mr. Roundtree responded that, within the master plan, the preferred alternative was the location of all of the justice facilities on the Pioneer Inn site. By placing all of the courts in one location the community would experience the greatest overall savings both in the near term and future operational costs. Notwithstanding the defeat of the bond that would have supported that proposal, they now have to look at "what are the options." Another option included in the master plan was exactly what the JFWC has recommended regarding the Municipal and Justice Courts. He said at some future point when the option becomes available to the County, the District Court could be constructed on the Pioneer Inn site in conjunction with certain office facilities and parking facilities, to support the District Attorney, Public Defender and others.

Councilmember Harsh said she believes the time is right to move on this recommendation, and she can see a lot of advantages for the Municipal Court. They could put out a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) immediately and start looking at architects. She stated that this would serve the community to have the Municipal Court located adjacent to the existing Justice Court.

Commissioner Bond said she would like to move forward with this concept as it really has been analyzed to death.

Katy Singlaub, County Manager, reviewed the previous offer by the County for parking, as well as the land being provided at appraised value per Washoe County ordinance.

Judge Paul Hickman, Reno Municipal Court, said it is the position of the judges and continues to be, that the Pioneer Inn site is the most preferable. If the Municipal Court is built on 195 South Sierra Street, all surface parking would be lost, including handicap parking. The Boards need to decide what they are going to do today, otherwise they will continue to have this same discussion over and over. He said Reno could issue an RFQ today without even citing the eventual site of the Municipal Court.

Richard Gammick, District Attorney, reminded the Boards that 195 South Sierra Street is the County's one parking lot with County cars being parked there. He said he hopes the 195 South Sierra Street building will not be razed to build the Municipal Court, because that would cause a big problem for him as many of his staff are located in that building. Mr. Gammick consented that the building at 195 South Sierra Street is not a long term building, as it is old and is starting to feel the effects of its age.

In response to Commissioner Hascheff's inquiry, Mr. Gammick said there are so many variables with this whole concept; the Family Court testified in front of the Senate's Finance Committee to request another Family Court Judge. He does not know where a new judge would go because currently they do not have a courtroom for that judge.

Mrs. Singlaub said the Court Consultants, Dan Wiley and Tate & Snyder Architects looked at the long-term plans for the courts. The reunification of the Family Court and the District Court was the highest priority to those consultants because of the transporting of files, caseloads, etc. She clarified that the Family Court is requesting a new judge to start in 2003, which will give the County time to prepare space for that possibility.

Sam Dehne, Reno citizen, said last November the voters turned down the proposed courts complex, and now the Boards are scheming and conniving to get some type of new court complex anyway. He said courthouses and jails should not be things of beauty; people should look at those buildings and say they do not want to be in there.

Gary Schmidt, area resident, said he agrees with Mr. Dehne, the citizens voted against a regional court facility. He stated the Conklin Building could be turned into offices for the District Attorney's staff, and the County Commission Clerks and the District Attorney's Civil Division could be moved from 195 South Sierra Street to the County's Administrative Complex at 9th & Wells.

Mayor Griffin said the County Commissioners appointed the JFWC but Judge Hickman, and maybe the District Attorney, believe that 195 South Sierra Street is not the place for the Municipal Court. Mayor Griffin said he is concerned about a court facility being built on the Pioneer Inn site in the future. He asked what would happen if the City of Reno determined they still wanted to go forward with constructing their Municipal Court on the Pioneer Inn site. Mr. Weller said the ultimate decision is up to the City of Reno because they are the controlling body of where the court will be built. He said the parking lot at 195 South Sierra Street is 35,000 square feet and Reno's proposed construction for their Municipal Court is 17,000 square feet, which leaves 17,000 square feet of existing parking spaces left in the parking lot. He said the existing building at 195 South Sierra Street has about run its useful life. Mr. Weller reviewed cost savings based on where the Municipal Court would be built.

John Breternitz, Justice Facilities Working Committee, said the RFQ is a good idea. During the period of time it would take to complete RFQ's, the JFWC would meet several more times and firm up some numbers.

Councilmember Aiazzi said the City of Reno should have the option of where to construct their Municipal Court. He requested the County keep these two parcels available for sale.

Michael Halley, Deputy City Attorney, said the City of Reno could move forward with the execution of the Interlocal Agreement.

Paul Lipparelli, Legal Counsel, said the Boards could indicate what they want to see included in the interlocal agreement.

Following further discussion, Mr. Weller stated that the JFWC has more or less been boycotted by the Municipal Court judges, and there has not been much participation from the District Court judges. If the Boards could encourage those groups to attend the meetings, the JFWC could turn out a better product that would be more responsive to their needs.

On motion by Mayor Griffin, seconded by Councilmember Hascheff, which motion duly carried, it was ordered that staff from the City of Reno and Washoe County draft an interlocal agreement for collocating the Reno Municipal Court with the Washoe County courts facility at 1 South Sierra Street, and draft an interlocal agreement for a stand-alone facility at the Pioneer Inn site. It was further ordered that staff begin the process to enter into an interlocal agreement with a joint meeting scheduled before the end of April 2001, to finalize all issues.

On motion by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion duly carried with Commissioner Sferrazza voting "no," it was ordered that staff from the City of Reno and Washoe County draft an interlocal agreement for collocating the Reno Municipal Court with the Washoe County courts facility at 1 South Sierra Street, and draft an interlocal agreement for a stand-alone facility at the Pioneer Inn site. It was further ordered that staff begin the process to enter into an interlocal agreement with a joint meeting scheduled before the end of April 2001, to finalize all issues.

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There being no further business to come before the Boards, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

JAMES M. SHAW, Chairman
Washoe County Commission

JEFF GRIFFIN, Mayor
City of Reno

ATTEST: AMY HARVEY, County Clerk

ATTEST: DON COOK, City Clerk

*Minutes Prepared By:
Jeraldine Magee
Deputy County Clerk*