

**COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

MONDAY

8:30 A.M.

JULY 8, 2019

PRESENT:

Bob Lucey, Chair
Neoma Jardon, Vice Chair
Vaughn Hartung, Alternate Member
Kristopher Dahir, Member
Ed Lawson, Member

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
Paul Lipparelli, Assistant District Attorney

ABSENT:

Oscar Delgado, Member

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 8:30 a.m. in the Washoe County 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:

AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Mr. Jeff Church distributed a handout to the Board, a copy of which was placed on record by the Clerk. He opined homelessness was not caused by a lack of jobs or affordable housing. He stated laws needed to be enforced, the mentally ill needed to be helped via the court system, and a facility was needed for the homeless. The facility would need to be in a remote location and it should be able to accommodate camping. He suggested a community forum should be held, all services should be moved to Galletti Way, and said he would be okay with a tax increase if it would solve the issue.

AGENDA ITEM 4 Approval of minutes of the June 3, 2019 meeting.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Jardon, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote with Member Delgado absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

AGENDA ITEM 5 Update, discussion, and possible direction regarding the Downtown Business Improvement Ambassador Program. Alex Stettinski, Executive Director of the Downtown Reno Partnership.

Alex Stettinski, Executive Director of the Downtown Reno Partnership (DRP), conducted a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed slides with the following titles: ReImagine Reno Vision Board; Petition Drive; Basic Concept; Services; BID Boundary & Service Zones; BID Vision and Mission; Ambassador highlights; Ambassador statistics; Ambassador training (2 slides); Ongoing training; We collect abandoned carts; Cleaning up the streets (3 slides); Testimonials (2 slides); Hospitality and visitor services; Make downtown feel approachable; Helping people navigate; Ambassadors at special events; Economic & community development; What we've done so far; Marketing downtown; What we've done so far; Next steps; Future plans (3 slides); and Questions?

Mr. Stettinski noted the DRP was the first business improvement district (BID) in Nevada. He explained DRP services included marketing and economic development but his presentation would focus on the work of the Ambassadors. He stated BIDs were established at the request of property owners to make changes in the community; cities often approved them. He said the ReImagine Reno Vision Board was a unique endeavor to have all stakeholders make decisions about Reno. A BID was created to address the issues brought up through ReImagine Reno. He said a majority of property holders needed to agree to the BID because a mandatory assessment was attached to it.

Mr. Stettinski said the two special assessment districts which existed before the BID had been around for more than a decade. They merged into the BID, reducing the contributions for most property owners. He reviewed the boundaries of the BID, noting the three service levels within had been assigned based on the needs of certain areas. Regarding the stabilization of downtown streets, he remarked that concerned both the transient community and visitors to the area.

Mr. Stettinski indicated the program began with 14 Ambassadors but four more including an operations manager had since been hired. He commented the Ambassador statistics covered the period of time between November 2018 and May 2019. He explained wellness checks involved checking on someone whose status was uncertain and offering help. 25 people had been placed into long-term care services. He felt this was important as it disputed the claim that Ambassadors merely moved homeless individuals around; Ambassadors forged relationships with some of them. He mentioned Ambassadors performed quality control that the City of Reno was not able to perform due to a lack of resources. He added all Ambassadors carried a counter to log any activities they performed into a database. He said outreach to business owners was an important part of Ambassadors' jobs.

Mr. Stettinski stated Ambassadors received de-escalation training from various organizations and were also trained in laws and regulations. He clarified Ambassadors did not enforce anything; that was left to police departments. He pointed

out the Ambassadors' job was not just about connecting people to social services. They also offered insight on geography and history, and made recommendations. Additionally, Ambassadors received invitations to local businesses so they could learn more about which services were available.

Mr. Stettinski highlighted the program where the DRP collected shopping carts and returned them to the stores from which they were taken. He said this set a new standard for the downtown area. He reviewed several before-and-after pictures showing the outcome of their efforts. He remarked the downtown plaza was an asset to the town and he wanted to ensure the plaza remained enjoyable for all demographics. He pointed out Ambassadors had bus schedules in their bags and occasionally offered gift tickets in urgent situations.

Mr. Stettinski indicated 4,000 brochures would be sent to downtown addresses to educate people about the services provided by the BID. He noted the DRP would soon hire an economic development manager to enhance its economic development services. With a net worth under \$3 million, the DRP acknowledged they could not develop themselves but they were a resource for developers and investors. He spoke about a Mother's Day campaign they ran, including a segment on a local news station, to promote local businesses. He hoped to promote businesses as well as events happening downtown. One of the Ambassadors made monthly trips to the jail to connect with inmates just before they were released so they could learn more about resources that would be available to them.

Mr. Stettinski promoted a town hall meeting on August 1 and invited anyone with a stake in the downtown area. He planned to continue all marketing campaigns so the downtown area could be branded as a viable destination beyond just the Truckee River.

Vice Chair Jardon noted she had seen the impacts of the DRP firsthand. She asked whether Ambassadors collected the demographics of those individuals with whom they interacted. Mr. Stettinski said they did and they had discussions with Washoe County about connecting to the Good Grid community database system. Ambassador Grant Denton added they collected whatever data they were given, although individuals did not always offer very much information.

Vice Chair Jardon asked whether Ambassadors saw one particular demographic over another. Mr. Denton replied they saw all demographics. Vice Chair Jardon asked about the brochure referenced in the presentation, to which Mr. Stettinski responded 8,000 were printed, half of which would be mailed out to people in the downtown vicinity. The brochure focused on the BID's work and the assessment structure, and it would have applicability for one to two years.

Member Hartung asked what would be done with the statistics collected about individuals. Mr. Stettinski replied that information stayed with the DRP but it could

be compiled into reports if needed. Mr. Denton added the name given regarding an incident could simply be a street name.

Member Hartung admitted it could possibly be a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), but he wondered whether people's information could be shared with emergency rooms to let them know if they already received medical care. Mr. Stettinski pointed out Ambassadors often accompanied individuals to facilities at which point they would exchange whatever information they could with the individual's consent. Member Hartung wondered whether Ambassadors could be informed if a patient received narcotics. Mr. Stettinski agreed with the idea but felt it would be a HIPAA violation.

Chair Lucey acknowledged the work being done by the DRP was challenging but the results were clear. He asked what Mr. Stettinski felt the DRP's role should be in addressing homelessness issues. Mr. Stettinski clarified the DRP was a BID and not a social service agency; it was not their job to take care of homeless individuals. Similarly, they were not the visitor's center although they offered recommendations to visitors. He emphasized his pleasure that the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) existed because the community needed a centralized hub to gather information from various agencies and create a master plan. That plan would guide organizations to do the correct things. Mr. Denton added the DRP would not address homelessness problems but it would address behavior. He thought building relationships with the population would set the expectation of acceptable behavior.

Chair Lucey said he appreciated the BID's goal of improving business downtown but he expressed concern that other areas further along the river would see an increase in displaced individuals. Mr. Stettinski agreed but stressed people were not leaving the downtown area because Ambassadors asked them to leave; many left because they did not want to live where there was any supervision. He thought one solution would be having BIDs everywhere to uphold a minimal standard of conduct so everyone would feel comfortable cohabitating.

Member Lawson asked whether the CHAB would receive demographic information from the DRP's database. He expressed interest in seeing the entire continuum of care from spotting a homeless individual to helping them be a productive member of society. Mr. Stettinski said he would be happy to share whatever he was legally allowed to. Member Lawson said individuals' names would not be necessary but he wanted to know information about age demographics and veteran status. Mr. Stettinski said he would provide what he could when he knew exactly what type of information the CHAB sought.

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Member Lawson, seconded by Vice Chair Jardon, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote with Member Delgado absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be accepted.

AGENDA ITEM 6 Update, discussion, and possible direction a request for proposal process for Community Assistance Center and homeless operations and services. Elaine Wiseman, City of Reno.

Reno City Manager Bill Thomas stated City of Reno staff agreed with the Volunteers of America (VOA) on a budget which would be presented to the Reno City Council on July 31. The plan was for the VOA to run the Community Assistance Center (CAC) for another year, during which time they would work on a request for proposal (RFP) to determine whether the provision of services to the CAC needed to change. He noted Reno was the lead agency for managing the CAC. He mentioned Elaine Wiseman left the City of Reno and Management Analyst Hettie Ploeger would help him on this project.

Ms. Ploeger introduced herself, stating she had been with the City of Reno since April. Before that she worked at Catholic Charities on housing resources and at Social Entrepreneurs, a consulting firm.

Mr. Thomas noted he would return to the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) with details of the RFP when they had some.

Chair Lucey mentioned he received a packet from the VOA through a Freedom of Information Act request. He contested the VOA should fill out a packet with basic data on each individual that came to the CAC. He wanted to know whether that practice was happening upon intake. He pointed out those individuals were not charged a fee but wondered whether fees gathered from individuals with social security income (SSI) were being used to cover some of the costs. He said it would be impossible to know if people had SSI without collecting data packets. He asked the City of Reno to enforce certain requirements like this if they planned to extend the VOA contract. He expressed frustration that the VOA was not doing that type of work because data was necessary when discussing budgets.

Member Dahir added he did not want to wait a year or two to get that process started. He felt it was already part of their contract and it should happen as soon as possible. He felt the CHAB should continue to focus on steps where the City of Reno was not the lead agency and the County was.

Mr. Thomas confirmed Vice Chair Jardon's understanding that Ms. Ploeger would be the City of Reno's main contact on these issues. Regarding individuals who had some form of monthly income, Vice Chair Jardon thought they should be asked to set a portion of that aside for when they entered into a new living situation. She wondered whether other facilities had best practices in this regard.

Vice Chair Jardon agreed some intake information was necessary to make decisions, particularly data about the point in time count, the Downtown Reno Partnership, the VOA, and baseline demographic information. This data would be critical in understanding where to apply resources. Additionally, operational benchmarks and

goals should be determined so the agency could be judged at the end of a year, which she did not believe had ever happened with any agency running the CAC.

Member Dahir mentioned he did not hear an update about what was happening with the mental health wellness group, which Mr. Thomas clarified as the triage center. Chair Lucey noted there was no update at this time but they should have one during August's meeting.

Member Lawson expressed frustration that it seemed like the CHAB had not actually done anything yet. He thought getting help to veterans was important because the rate at which they got out of homelessness was between 70 and 80 percent. He thought veterans could be helped while information was being gathered and a plan was developed.

Vice Chair Jardon asked when the Board would receive the report from OrgCode Consulting, Inc. about homelessness. Chair Lucey suggested that could be requested during the member announcements item.

There was no public comment on this item.

AGENDA ITEM 7 Update, discussion and possible direction on the Regional Community Outreach Team. Sheriff Darin Balaam, Washoe County.

Sheriff Darin Balaam recalled the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) had requested an assessment of the Record Street shelter. He read and reviewed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He mentioned the medication room had camera surveillance and it was unlabeled so visitors would not know medications were kept there. With regard to times when queues formed for food, he mentioned it coincided with an increase in calls made to the Reno Police Department (RPD), the Reno Fire Department (RFD), and the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). Those calls increased from around 1:00 p.m. until about 8:00 p.m. Sheriff Balaam summarized those entities visited the center 866 times over a 15-month span. He mentioned the RPD saw the highest number of self-initiated calls on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays because Reno had more personnel available during those shifts.

Vice Chair Jardon wondered how some of these issues might be mitigated with the utilization of alternate nutrition sites. Sheriff Balaam indicated the average number of calls received from 1:00 a.m. to noon was around 35 but it increased significantly at that point. He noted each agency had teams or units which patrolled the food site as a show of police presence. He mentioned Reno Police Chief Jason Soto compared the number of calls received before and after there was an armed security guard on campus, and the number of calls had decreased a bit except during food service times. He anticipated sending patrol units to the new locations.

Member Hartung commented there had been discussion at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to give up one of their sites on Fourth Street for a nutrition site. He praised Sheriff Balaam for taking into account when calls were received and knowing what to expect when large groups of people congregated.

Member Hartung asked whether there should be an internal security team to address these issues. Sheriff Balaam mentioned site security had been brought up but it did not progress because specific sites had not yet been determined. He said fencing around sites had been suggested as well as ways to patrol and clean the sites. Member Hartung felt it was important to consider how much would be spent by each agency on full-time employees as opposed to having an internal security team. Sheriff Balaam said those conversations would happen as the project developed. Member Hartung opined this was an instance where having data would help with resource allocation.

Chair Lucey expressed concern about enforcement, especially considering the RPD visited the site an average of three times a day. He pointed out there had been 140 incidents of assault at the Record Street buildings but he expressed uncertainty that data was being tracked to enforce bans on the offenders. He mentioned Foundation Communities, a program in Texas which offered an encompassed ideology for fiduciary responsibility, and the level of enforcement they administered. He stated there were no standards in this area, as was evident by the number of visits made to the site. He felt it was a waste of resources to have the RPD bring people to the County jail and release them, only to have them go back to the site. He acknowledged aggressive steps had been made in the right direction but there were still encampments near the river whose inhabitants used it as a bathroom. He felt that, without enforcement, the problem would continue. Sheriff Balaam admitted this was the number one reason for calls to the RPD and the RFD.

Vice Chair Jardon asked whether this report had been given to the Volunteers of America (VOA). Sheriff Balaam said he would check on that. Vice Chair Jardon asserted four of the five vulnerabilities on the Sheriff's report could be mitigated quickly. She wanted to know that the VOA received the report and when those vulnerabilities would be corrected. She asked who would follow up with them and report to the Board about the corrections. Sheriff Balaam indicated he would converse with all parties.

Sheriff Balaam noted Sheriff's Office (SO) representatives joined RPD Sergeant Jason Stallcop to learn about an ordinance and ways to work collaboratively to avoid simply relocating populations to other jurisdictions. Additionally they worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to interact with individuals who were dumping things in BLM water. He said syringes were a major problem and he anticipated a News 4 team would accompany them when they returned to a specific BLM site. Additionally, he and Sparks Police Chief Pete Krall would assemble a team to work on issues along the river and illegal dumping in Sun Valley. They were working on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the agencies to offer services to individuals without merely displacing them.

Member Dahir thanked Sheriff Balaam for making this a priority. He wanted to ensure that homeless individuals did not simply move across jurisdictional boundaries when a different jurisdiction enforced the rules. He opined it was not about enforcement, it was about building relationships with enforcement behind them.

Sheriff Balaam pointed out they were currently working on the MOU and discussions between the agencies incorporated Member Dahir's concerns. The agencies would offer services to those who wanted them and would bring the enforcement element in other situations. The community outreach team, which included a dumping task force, would address issues in the entire region.

Chair Lucey felt the Members of the CHAB could help motivate their respective boards to move quicker. He thought the topic of resources for this issue should be discussed at every Commission and Council meeting. Also, the CHAB could help determine where to allocate resources as a regional outreach effort. He stated he wanted to help those that wanted to be helped but those that did not want help could not be allowed to destroy assets that were important to the community.

Member Lawson mentioned Chief Krall assigned two officers to the issue and the Councilmember felt the river task force was a great idea. He said the City of Sparks had collected 830 containers of debris from the river, but acknowledged it did no good for the City of Sparks to simply push the issue over to the City of Reno and vice versa. He thought the MOU was important and Sparks assigning two officers to the problem was key. He offered to help push the MOU if there was a delay in finalizing it.

Vice Chair Jardon remarked the Nevada Department of Transportation had spent significant resources addressing habitual camps and had since dedicated resources to prevention. As a result, there were no longer encampments under any freeways. She believed coordinating with the Downtown Reno Partnership on prevention was critical. She understood there could be resources available from a flood bill that passed. She wanted the MOU to be returned quickly.

Member Hartung pointed out the Sheriff had multi-jurisdictional authority within Washoe County. He asked whether the MOU involved swearing officers in to the task force because the City of Reno did not have jurisdiction in the City of Sparks, as an example. Sheriff Balaam confirmed that was the case, but it was also to allow each entity to work together. He planned to use the repeat offender unit MOU as a template for pooling all resources and cross-deputizing those involved.

Chair Lucey asked whether incarcerated individuals were used to clean up sites along the river and if they could incorporate the Reno Works or Crossroads programs to help. Sheriff Balaam responded incarcerated individuals had been used but they had to be cautious because some sites such as Quartz Lane involved biohazardous material. He added the City of Sparks paid the SO for one of its work program leaders and they could shift those work crews to where they were needed. Chair Lucey requested

an update on the MOU and the formation of the outreach team at the next CHAB meeting.

There was no public comment on this item.

AGENDA ITEM 8 Update, discussion and possible direction on the Nutrition site establishment. Bill Thomas and Elaine Wiseman, City of Reno.

Reno City Manager Bill Thomas announced they might have found a site which belonged to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) on Fourth Street. The site was fenced and level. He expected a lease agreement to be produced soon and that TMWA would place performance standards on the use of their property. He thought this place would be available only to people who followed the rules; the rules would be designed to address known issues in the current situation. He anticipated working with Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam and Reno Police Chief Jason Soto to create an active security plan to lay out expectations for those who used the facility. He believed it would be successful with this in mind. He commented they were still exploring other potential locations.

Vice Chair Jardon asked whether people would queue up inside the fence. Mr. Thomas replied that was the hope to avoid people blocking sidewalks and streets. He anticipated specific details would be worked out once the lease with TMWA was completed. He believed resources were available through partnerships with faith-based organizations to have the site ready, including the availability of temporary toilets. He anticipated the site being operational before the next Community Homelessness Advisory Board meeting, though a second site was still being pursued.

Chair Lucey expressed frustration that they had been trying to establish this since April but it was still not a reality. He stressed the importance of producing a safe and secure place for those individuals because the Community Assistance Center continued to create issues.

Member Hartung said TMWA had reached out to him regarding a potential agreement because he was the Chair of their board. He did not expect to get any pushback from the TMWA board since they did not use the site often, though he expected TMWA would have some requests of the City of Reno. He was confident an agreement amenable to both entities would be reached.

Member Dahir urged the City to continue to work with faith-based organizations and communicate as much as possible. Though he wanted the process to move quickly, he did not want there to be a misstep. He mentioned he often spoke to members of the faith community about other ways to serve the homeless and he suggested working with the Eddy House, youth services, and veterans' services. Mr. Thomas agreed the participation of faith-based groups would be critical because there could be backlash against the government trying to establish those operations.

Member Dahir pointed out health code permits were required to feed anybody. Guaranteeing that was in place would be essential, in part to ensure the food served was nutritious.

Vice Chair Jardon thanked City of Reno staff and acknowledged it was difficult to obtain sites specifically for the homeless. She appreciated that TMWA was open to addressing this critical need and hoped a second site could be found to help both the population and law enforcement.

There was no public comment on this item.

AGENDA ITEM 9 Board members announcements, reports and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Vice Chair Jardon summarized the Community Homelessness Advisory Board (CHAB) would receive an update from the Washoe County Sheriff on the efforts to mitigate the vulnerabilities of the Record Street facility. Additionally, she requested a report on the findings of OrgCode Consulting, Inc. which had already been paid for. Chair Lucey added he wished to know more about the cancellation of the visioning statement.

Mr. Thomas responded they were attempting to schedule a time for OrgCode to provide an update. Vice Chair Jardon asked whether the visioning session would come before or after that presentation. Mr. Thomas confirmed the visioning statement should be done next because, before the creation of the CHAB, there had been no regional guidance on this topic. He thought the visioning session should involve CHAB Members working with their individual boards to provide direction to the community. These strategies would go out to both government agencies and non-profit organizations. In response to Vice Chair Jardon's query, Mr. Thomas said he was not aware of any set date for that session.

Member Dahir requested an update on triage.

Chair Lucey congratulated the Eddy House for opening a new facility to help teens within the community. He wanted staff to return at the next meeting with an in-depth presentation about Good Grid and some of the data that had been captured. He requested a presentation on the Integrating Nevada, Supporting Partnerships, Improving Results, Effectuating Successes (INSPIRES) program. Referencing a Texas-based organization called Foundation Communities, which helped communities offer healthcare, education, and financial stability, he said some businesses and individuals already performed some of these functions locally. He wanted a master plan, perhaps through the visioning statement, to bring these groups together to address relationship building and enforcement. He sought suggestions on how to achieve this.

Vice Chair Jardon inquired why there were no representatives from Volunteers of America (VOA) at the meeting. She felt it was important to invite anyone

to CHAB meetings who was or could be a potential stakeholder, including people from the mental health field, the Regional Transportation Commission, and service providers. She felt there was much to be learned with all those people in the same room.

Chair Lucey asked for a report from VOA about their intake forms and statistics regarding what information they collected.

There was no public comment on this item.

AGENDA ITEM 10 Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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10:05 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

BOB LUCEY, Chair
Community Homelessness Advisory Board

ATTEST:

NANCY PARENT, County Clerk

*Minutes Prepared by:
Derek Sonderfan, Deputy County Clerk*