



Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on January 20, 2022, at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

1. *CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM – The meeting was called to order at **6:01 p.m.** A quorum was determined.

CAB MEMBERS Present Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell, Tina Walters, Andy Moore, Kristy Evans, Allen Nash

2. *PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The pledge of allegiance was recited.

3. *GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION THEREOF – There were no requests for public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF THE APPROVAL OF THE [MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 16, 2021](#) (for Possible Action) – Andy Moore moved to approve the minutes of December 1, 2021. Allen Nash seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. OVERVIEW OF UPCOMING WASHOE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY – Candee Ramos, Community Outreach Coordinator, Washoe County Manager's Office (Non-Action Item)

Candee Ramos provided an overview of the Leadership Academy class. It will be held one Friday a month for six to eight months to learn about the aspects of local government and how people can get more involved. She said she would share more information once things get solidified.

Ms. Gambrell asked if they are looking for a representative from Gerlach to participate each Friday of every month. Ms. Ramos said yes, we are looking for a couple of community leaders to participate every month for this inaugural class 2022. It's a great opportunity to meet other leaders throughout the County. She encouraged everyone to reach out to her for more information.

6. FIRE PERSONNEL NEGOTIATION UPDATE – Eric Brown, Washoe County Manager and Alex Kukulius, Deputy Fire Chief Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue (Non-Action Item)

Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager, said he is working with Mr. Kukulius and Chief Pelt. He provided an overview of the proposal for Chief's Pelt's crew to service the Gerlach area. It would cost approximately \$460,000 a year. He said we are working on getting it before the Commissioner and Paiute Tribe in early March. The goal is to provide 24-hour coverage for the Gerlach area. He said we have a total budget for fire and ambulance services of \$366,325. We pay TMPFD to manage the fire districts north of District 22. They do quite a bit of work for the County. We are committed to providing the service you need.

Andy Moore asked what we could do to help get this before the Commissioners. Mr. Solaro said the ball is rolling on this, and we have been working on this for a while. He said the hiccup we have is the current budget is less than the requested service. He said he is working on the upcoming budget cycle. He said you could lend support by sending an email to your Commissioner about the proposal by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Ms. Gambrell said he mentioned Gerlach north and asked if Empire Farms have a letter of agreement

with Paiute already or will our Fire Department still be responsible for Empire Farms, which is south of us? Mr. Solaro said it would cover the whole area that the volunteer station currently serves; all of our residents.

Mr. Nash asked the total amount in the budget for TMFPD oversight. Mr. Solaro said the total is \$638,883; they cover a substantial amount of work for Washoe County with service agreements, mutual aid, partners in California, and government agencies.

Deputy Fire Chief Kukulus said there are two budgets; Gerlach has its own operating budget, but it's not part of Truckee Meadows. It's earmarked to Gerlach. Truckee Meadows oversight and responses to Palomino and Red rock. We are far from Gerlach. We respond to brush fires. We don't respond to routine medical calls. He said Truckee Meadows services 1000 miles of Washoe County. There is about 6,000 square miles in Washoe county, 5,000 square miles of which we assist with large-scale events such as brush fires. It's a ready charge. We bring the dozers and fuels crews for attack and response. He said Gerlach budget is still County, separate from Truckee Meadows. Mr. Nash asked the portion of the \$600,000 is services in Gerlach. Deputy Chief Kukulus said it's a blanket charge; it's in-kind costs. Washoe County also provides TMFPD services such as IT, Human Resources, Comptroller. It's not broken out. He said it's a relatively small portion.

Ms. Evans asked what the plan is between now and the end of June when the proposal goes into effect. Mr. Solaro said they are providing services when we don't have volunteer hours or coverage. It takes a little longer than we would like. You are being provided services through Pyramid Lake. He commended Chief Pelt for the services. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe is doing a great job.

Cameron Hall asked if that means people will be staying up here? And what level of care will it be? Mr. Solaro said the proposal is to have two individuals, full-time, EMT or advance, staged at their location 24/7. He said those resources may be pulled down to assist if Pyramid Lake needs them.

Eric Brown said our intermittent is currently working in Gerlach. Mr. Solaro said the schedule is fluid; we had every day covered with some intermittent. Mr. Brown said it's his goal to get this in front of the Commissioner. If you want to send letters to Commissioners, please copy the County Manager. He said he would make sure the communication went to all the Commissioners. Send it to Commissioner Herman and Mr. Brown, and he can amplify it.

7. WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE PERSONNEL UPDATE – Lt. Frank Eubanks, Washoe County Sheriff's Office (Non-Action Item)

Lt. Eubanks introduced himself. He said he is the new Lt. in Gerlach. He provided an update on staffing in Gerlach. Ms. Walters said we need coverage after 5 p.m. He said it's his goal to get resident deputies. Ms. Evans said it's hard when the deputy goes on vacation and we don't have anyone. Ms. Gambrell complimented Deputy Burns and Fox. Replacing them will be difficult. They have done a fantastic job. Lt. Eubanks said the goal is to have a resident deputy. Ms. Evans said she would love to have an annual meeting with the deputies to hear our concerns during Burning Man. The public, Lt. Eubanks, and the CAB spoke about concerns about speeding.

8. UPDATE OF GERLACH COMMUNITY TRAIL & LETTER OF SUPPORT – Dave Cooper

Dave Cooper provided an update. He said Washoe County volunteered to take the lead with the project. He said he met with Gabrielle Enfield from Washoe County and with Kristin and Barbara with the National Park Service Pacific Northwest Parks Service and Trails Conservation Assistance Program. Gabrielle will put the application together with their assistance. They are interested in this project. It needs to be a community-driven project. The application needs a letter of support. The GID

will provide a letter of support. We will get other letters from Friends of Black Rock. It would be nice to get one from Ormat. There will be a spur into the Burning Man art park and ties into the Art Trail.

Gabriel Enfield, Community Reinvestment Manager of Washoe County, said this application is for planning. The idea and information provided as far as what we want to do is the idea and will be decided through the process and by the community members. As far as letters of support, it's a commitment from key stakeholders to make decisions to make this a community-driven process. We have a grant consulting team. They looked through the application. There is a webinar that they will participate in to develop a timeline and plan for us. She said she would schedule a virtual meeting with stakeholders to ask questions before getting started. The application is due March 1; we want the application done by mid-February. We seek a letter of commitment and participation in the community planning process. The webinar is on January 27. She said she could put that in the chat if anyone is interested in participating.

Ms. Ramos asked about a letter of support from CAB. Ms. Enfield said we would draft a letter with ideas of what should be included. Ms. Evans asked if that was something we needed to vote on. Ms. Enfield said it's not a binding document. Mr. Cooper said the grant is not monetary; they would take over the planning and provide information about grants. There is a lot of money out there, many sources of grant funds. Ms. Enfield said they would bring in other consultants to assist with other parts of the plan, such as the watershed. The majority of this would be on BLM and part of GID.

9. GEOTHERMAL EXPLORATION UPDATE, ORMAT TECHNOLOGIES - Scott Nichols, Manager, Regulatory Affairs, Ormat Technologies

Mr. Nichols provided an update on the project. We had two open houses to gather information from the community. He said he understands the concerns.

Mr. Nichols spoke about the land management and exploration that we are proposing. He provided the background of studies and data collection.

At the last community meeting, he said one inquiry was about the geothermal power plant's electrical reliability. He said he committed to contacting NV Energy about reliability and if they had any future plans. He said we contacted them and found out there were five power outages that didn't exceed a few hours in 2021. He said NV Energy reported they are in the primary design stage for the Empire distribution circuit. There isn't a deadline or critical path; that is in their plan.

Four days prior to our community house, BLM opened a public comment period. We received several comments. It closed on January 10. BLM reported they would begin draft scoping meetings within the next few weeks. In early February, they will consolidate the 75 comments they received from the public regarding the exploration. He said he didn't get an update on when they will get back to the public regarding the comments. He requested to come back to the CAB to update the process and have an open dialogue.

He said the original application was withdrawn due to concerns by the public. He said they applied for exploration. He said exploration for geothermal interests has been numerous over the year. Geologists have looked for commercially viable resources such as green energy options for power. He said we are focusing on exploration. We have continued hydrologic monitoring, cultural evaluations, visual assessment, dark-sky compliance, and data collection. BLM is evaluating.

Ormat has been part of the community since the 1980s. He said Ormat is committed to preserving Gerlach's quality of life and understanding the concerns and unknowns. We don't intend to change the character and nature of Gerlach. Ormat is the single best partner you can have in your community. He

said we give money to support foundations every year. He said he would be happy to go back to his office to ask for permission to support the Art Trail.

Ms. Evans said in the document that we responded to; there isn't a lot of detail. We want to know about the assessments. She asked how those could be accessible by the public. Mr. Nichols said those are not assessments of the impact of the proposed geothermal drilling. It was data collection for baseline work. He said the dark skies assessment information had not been released. He said he would follow up to see when this is available. He said we support NIPA's requirements to determine if the project will have any impact, whether significant or de minimus. He said the BLM staff and experts such as mapping analysts, culturalists, biologists, and hydrologists would review the assessment and determine if there is an impact. They will provide a draft document of their findings. A public member spoke about how they will review mitigating impacts.

Kim Carter, Ormat, the BLM will put out a draft of the analysis of baseline studies. You will have another opportunity to review the impacts.

Ranger Crow asked if Gerlach would be supported by green power. Mr. Nichols deferred to NV Energy. He said, would the contract for the green energy be sold to Gerlach? The answer is no. It would be sold to a company that would provide the power to you. He said we sell power to NV Energy to provide energy. Mr. Crow asked if the power would be locally produced or if it have to go to Reno just to return. Mr. Nichols spoke about tracking electrons and supply power. Mr. Crow said so if there is a power outage, we all go down regardless of if the power comes from a mile away.

Cameron Hall said we are concerned about Gerlach's limited power capacity. Mr. Nichols said he would ask NV Energy about their plans to increase capacity and follow up about their plans.

Gabrielle Enfield requested his contact for collaboration on the grant.

Mr. Nash said he assumes the exploration is eventually installing a geothermal plant. He asked if he would be an environmental impact statement before installing that plant? Mr. Nichols said that as we go through exploration, we will decide if there are commercially viable resources. The BLM will determine if an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be required for the project. Mr. Nash asked if he could ask NV Energy about capacity. Mr. Nichols said he would ask if NV Energy could come out to speak with the CAB.

Mr. Moore said you are doing exploratory wells. Those pull water up and exchange and put the water back into the ground. It's a closed-loop. Mr. Nichols said if a powerplant was developed, that is true. He said just for exploratory; we are drilling a hole and looking for a resource. Mr. Nichols said that once you build the plant, you will need a separate water source for the steam turbine after being heated up. Mr. Nichols said no, there is no separate source of water. The geothermal brine is used as the heat source, and that heat is used to vaporize working fluid, such as an isobutane, butane type working fluid. It's a closed-loop in both instances; geothermal brine never sees the light of day; the isobutane is in a closed system and never sees the light of day. There is no use of surface water or steam output. Mr. Moore asked what is the power output that would make it a viable resource. Mr. Nichols said it's based on the temperature of the geothermal brine, which is a combination of temperature and flow. He said he believes the chemistry of the water in Gerlach and wells that have been tested indicate the water is in the high 200-degree temperature. So a high temperature can be economically viable if there is enough flow and the rock is permeable. We are determining those two components. And then we need a buyer for the power. He said he said it needs to be over 260 degrees. He spoke about the 10-megawatt plant on a 2-acre parcel at San Emidio plant.

Ms. Evans summarized; Ormat won't sell power to residents; they will sell to NV Energy, who provide power to residents. Mr. Nichols confirmed and said we have a relationship with NV Energy. Ms. Evans said she appreciates that they listen to you when they won't listen to us. We have a lot of outages.

Mr. Allen asked if hydraulic fracturing is part of the exploration process. Mr. Nichols said no.

Cameron Hall asked about the decibel level and testing. She said the sound carries out here. Mr. Nichols said he understood that concern. He said he visited another site; he said he was 500 yards from the power plant and used the decibel meter on his phone that reported 50 decibels. That is for a 20-megawatt powerplant. He said it equates to an air conditioner fan sound. She asked if they would be looking to install the plant in the mountains. Mr. Nichols said it hadn't been decided, but it would be kept out of the viewshed. Sound is taken into consideration. He spoke about sound shielding at other sites. He said he couldn't say there won't be any sound when running a drill rig. As a short-term activity, if approved, he said we would use as much sound shielding as possible. There will be some sound from short-term drilling. She said she is concerned about long term. He offered to tour the Brady plant with her if she was interested.

10. WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE- Commissioner Herman was not in attendance.

11. BOARD MEMBER ITEMS — This item is limited to announcements and/or requests for future agenda items by CAB members. (Non-Action Item)

Mr. Moore asked Manager Brown about fiber installation. Mr. Brown provided an update. We have issued an RFP that went out in December to construct fiber from the Nixon/Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe. They agreed to use the fiber from Nixon to Gerlach. We should know by March 1. He said the timeline would take 9-12 months from design to serving customers. He said we are working with the State Office of Science and Technology on the RFP. He said we are looking at other funding options with long lead times. Ms. Evans asked about the affordability of the fiber.

Ms. Gambrell said she hadn't heard back regarding the reason why the WSUP extension for the Ormat plant at San Emidio plant was submitted to the GGID versus the CAB. Mr. Brown said he wasn't familiar with that issue. GGID is getting the WSUPs instead of going before the CAB.

12. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT – There were no requests for public comment.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.