

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

MONDAY

9:00 A.M.  
RETREAT

OCTOBER 13, 2008

PRESENT:

Bob Larkin, Chairman  
Bonnie Weber, Vice Chairman  
Jim Galloway, Commissioner  
David Humke, Commissioner

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

ABSENT:

Kitty Jung, Commissioner

The Board of County Commissioner's Retreat convened at 9:12 a.m. at the Washoe County Regional Public Safety Training Center (RPSTC), Room 103, located at 5190 Spectrum Boulevard, Reno, Nevada. Chairman Larkin called the meeting to order and the following discussions ensued:

**08-1059      AGENDA ITEM 1**

**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. All public comment for this meeting will be heard during this item. Comments are to be made to the Commission as a whole."**

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**08-1060      AGENDA ITEM 2**

**Agenda Subject: "The Board of County Commissioners will participate in discussions with Washoe County Department Heads and County staff to discuss Washoe County's vision, mission and organizational value statements, strategic priorities, key outcomes, success indicators, supporting goals, performance measures and targets, action plans and environmental scan; these discussions will include, but are not limited to, discussion on the following priorities:**

- **Improve Public safety, security and health**
- **Preserve and enhance our quality of life**
- **Improve regional collaboration**
- **Support a healthy economy**

- **Promote financial accountability of Washoe County**
- **Provide excellent public service**
- **Develop our workforce**

**Based upon the results of the discussions with Department Heads and County staff, the Board of County Commissioners will discuss and give direction to staff regarding Washoe County's strategic priorities, key outcomes, success indicators, supporting goals, performance measures and targets, and action plans for Fiscal Year 2009-2010 and Fiscal Year 2010-2011."**

Chairman Larkin discussed what was happening with the economy and the stock market. He noted today's discussion would focus on the economy's impact on the County's budget and on some environmental issues. He felt the main affect on the County would be from lower sales revenue. He advised the County had been very proactive in attempting to bring the County's budget in line with the anticipated sales and property tax revenues, but he was afraid that job was just beginning. He said the County would work through it and would get down to where it needed to be in forecasting the departments' budgets. He felt this retreat was an opportunity to look towards where the County wanted to be in the next 12 to 18 months.

Katy Simon, County Manager, stated there were five reasons to do strategic planning: to expand horizons, to have a clear set of expectations and direction, to do resource allocation, to measure progress, and to build the team.

Ms. Simon asked everyone today to wear their county-wide hat. She indicated there would be an opportunity later to do departmental strategic planning and to connect the two together, but today the issues should be examined from a county-wide perspective.

The following documents were distributed to the attendees and placed on file with the Clerk:

- Retreat Outline
- Washoe County Strategic Planning Retreat 2008 PowerPoint Presentation
- 2008 Environmental Scan: Community Analysis PowerPoint Presentation
- Washoe County Strategic Plan 2008 Community Input Report
- Washoe County 2008-2010 Strategic Plan Summary

Erica Olsen, Facilitator, conducted an exercise where everyone indicated what they were most proud of that happened during the last 12 months. At the conclusion of the exercise, she noted there were more than 70 individual things that the people who work for and serve the County were proud of and were important to remember.

Ms. Olsen said today was about dialogue, which was defined as a conversation to gain deeper insight. She indicated today's goal was to facilitate a conversation to examine more closely the strategic issues facing the County. She advised

the report from this retreat would be used for departmental planning, would go to the taskforces for action planning, and then would come back to the Board for two reviews before the Strategic Plan was approved. She noted the Strategic Plan was trying to increase public value.

Mike Haley, Sheriff, said during any discussion about public value, the following questions should be asked: what should citizens expect and demand from public executives, what sources could public managers consult to learn what was valuable for them to produce, how should public managers cope with the inconsistent political mandates of government, and how could public managers find room to innovate.

Sheriff Haley indicated his office viewed the public and the County's employees as shareholders who were free to pursue and propose new ideas about how to improve the organization in terms of efficiency and service.

Ms. Olsen discussed the *Retreat Outline*, and she noted today's success would depend on everyone's participation.

John Slaughter, Management Services Director, discussed a slide that showed how the County's strategic planning fit in with the Baldrige model. He said today's focus would be to get a prioritized list of key outcomes and then for the taskforces to discuss supporting goals and action plans, which would then be worked at the department and employee levels. He also discussed the key dates regarding the Strategic Plan update.

Ms. Olsen explained strategy versus tactics and indicated the focus today would be on "what," which would be on providing excellent public service without going into the detail on how to do that.

Mr. Slaughter advised there was a Strategic Plan web site, which was a way to keep the public informed about the County's strategic planning and also a place for the public to provide input.

Mr. Slaughter conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2008 Environmental Scan: Community Analysis that included information on population growth, changing demographics, taxable sales, auto/home sales, building permits, foreclosed homes, perception of safety, parks and open space acreage, water conservation, air quality index, employees, and the Wellness Program. The presentation also indicated the success indicators, categorized by the County's priorities, for public safety, health and security, quality of life, regional collaboration, health economy, excellent public services, financial accountability, and workforce development.

Commissioner Galloway commented there should be an examination of whether the goals or the actual performance were wrong because there was disconnect between the two. For example, he said only 38 percent of the people surveyed indicated they watered on assigned days. He said he heard people say they could not keep their

lawns alive during the summer when only watering on the assigned days; and someone in Caughlin Ranch said they were fined by the Homeowners Association for having brown spots on their lawn. He felt something like that needed to be revisited.

Commissioner Galloway asked what percentage the General Fund budget was cut compared to the budget in the previous year. John Sherman, Finance Director, indicated he would get back to Commissioner Galloway with that information.

Adrian Freund, Community Development Director, commented that the focus had been on stimulating affordable housing and there could be a new challenge for the County on whether there was a role, working collaboratively with the cities, to help people retain their homes.

Grady Tarbuton, Senior Services Director, said there had been a lot of discussion on how to retain people beyond what would be their normal retirement age to keep that knowledge base in the community. He stated this was an issue that had to be addressed by the County and by many community businesses.

Sheriff Haley advised if the economy did not recover for a substantial length of time, the pressure exerted on the workforce would mean an increase in sick time. He said the County needed to focus on keeping its workforce healthy.

Kathy Carter, Community Relations Director, commented the 200,000 web site visits were unique visits each month. She said the tactic would be to use e-Government for community outreach and the strategy would be to increase community engagement.

Doug Doolittle, Regional Parks and Open Space Director, said he was often asked why the County continued to acquire land for open space. He noted his response was this might be the only opportunity to acquire that land and it was important not to miss those opportunities.

Mr. Slaughter discussed Washoe County Day held at Rancho San Rafael Regional Park. He noted 3,000 people showed up instead of the 200 people that were expected. He stated the event was designed to inform the public about what the County offered and to ask what was important to the public. He also discussed the input obtained from the 50 people that attended the Community Leaders Form and from the Community Canvas. He advised the full *Community Input Report* was available on the County's web site, and there had been inquiries from other communities regarding the County's process. He said the two highest ranked responses that came out of both sessions were increasing collaboration with the County's regional partners and increasing green initiatives to help the environment. He advised the number one priority that came out of the Washoe County Day event were the schools. He linked that with the notion that the County should be collaborating with the School District to help improve that citizen priority.

Chairman Larkin asked if there were any thoughts regarding alleged fraudulent mortgage practices and had any complaints been filed. Paul Lipparelli, Deputy District Attorney, replied the regulation of Nevada's financial institutions was done at the state level by the Attorney General. Melanie Foster, Legal Counsel, indicated a Commissioner asked her to look into that issue several months ago to see if there was any action by the County that would be appropriate. She advised if there was a pattern or practice that the County became aware of on the part of any lender, it could be reported to law enforcement to be investigated. She said because of conversations with people in the Attorney General's Office, she was aware they were looking at that issue very closely.

Mr. Freund commented he looked through the *Community Input Report* and the quality of the citizen engagement needed to be fine tuned so the citizens felt they were being heard. Mr. Slaughter said the feedback from the County's two events indicated citizens appreciated the opportunity to provide input to the County and there were plans to do such events more often than once a year.

Commissioner Weber suggested preparing a fact sheet that contained information on regional collaboration and other things the County did that could be made available at Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings and other venues.

Chairman Larkin discussed falling oil prices, and he indicated he did not want to see the County back off from some of the innovations he was hearing about such as the Sheriff's Office idea of leasing vehicles. He felt this was the time to make a strategic shift out of fleet management into lease management, and he requested all departments give serious thought to leasing vehicles.

Ms. Olsen solicited ideas from the department heads and senior support staff regarding the County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) exercise. The SWOT responses were categorized on wall charts and a typed version of the wall charts entitled, "*BCC Strategic Planning Retreat SWOT Analysis – October 13, 2008*" was placed on file with the Clerk.

**10:58 a.m.** At the conclusion of the SWOT discussion, Ms. Olsen announced a 10-minute recess.

**11:12 a.m.** Chairman Larkin reconvened the retreat.

Ms. Olsen said the next part of the discussion would be to take the information from the abbreviated environmental scan and the SWOT process to look at the current key outcomes and see if there were any additional key outcomes that needed to be added to the list and, after assembling the list, have the Commissioners prioritize the key outcomes. She noted that information would be taken to the afternoon sessions for a closer look.

Ms. Olsen felt everyone was familiar with the County's long-term strategic priorities and that the key outcomes were those areas that needed to be focused

on during at least the next couple of years. She said they were strategic in nature, had long-term implications, probably affect more than one department, and were important to the County's elected officials and to its citizens.

Mr. Slaughter explained the criteria for considering something a key outcome was: did it have a community-wide impact, was it two plus years in nature, did it guide county-wide activities, and was there intent to fund.

Sheriff Haley said regarding the intent to fund, if there was an area that was listed as a priority and the Commission also listed it as a priority, he believed that later on resources would be found that would have a positive affect on that area. He said it should be considered if there was the intent to fund it to any degree. Commissioner Galloway said that was an excellent point, but he felt many of the key outcomes were already funded to a degree. He stated that did not rule out realigning the resources that already fit into that category.

Ms. Olsen facilitated the discussion on the seven Key Outcomes: Improve Public Safety, Security and Health; Preserve and Enhance Our Quality of Life; Improve Regional Collaboration...Efficiency, Effectiveness; Support a Healthy Economy; Provide Excellent Public Services; Promote Financial Accountability of Washoe County, and Develop Our Workforce. The information that was added to the key outcomes was categorized on wall charts and a typed versions of the wall charts entitled, "*Washoe County 2008-2010 Strategic Plan- Summary*" was placed on file with the Clerk.

Mr. Slaughter clarified the discussion regarding the supporting goals of the key outcomes would happen during this afternoon's meeting. There was further discussion that clarified the focus should be county-wide rather than departmental. Ms. Simon said she hoped every employee would feel a relationship and a commitment to everything that ended up being a key outcome to the county-wide Strategic Plan. She noted every department had tasks that contributed to the outcomes that were being discussed.

During the discussion regarding "Improve Public Safety, Security and Health," Don Jeppson, County Building Official, felt some departments did not do a good job of letting the public know what their role regarding public safety was, such as Building and Safety protecting the public by having strong earthquake building codes. He said a better job needed to be done to educate the public on all of the public safety and health work that was being done.

Commissioner Galloway said he did not want to look at public safety and security only as community issues because individuals had security issues such as identity theft.

During the dialogue on "Preserve and Enhance the Quality of Life," Mr. Slaughter reminded everyone that the purpose of the County's Key Outcomes was their

value to the public. He stated there was talk about educating the public, but what value was that to the public.

Ms. Simon said the focus under “Regional Collaboration...Efficiency, Effectiveness” should be to look at opportunities to share services and to reduce duplication. Chairman Larkin acknowledged the earlier focus was to look at services that could be shared and now he suggested broadening the focus to all services that could be integrated, collaborated, or consolidated that were appropriate to improve efficiency. He felt everything should be on the table. Ms. Simon confirmed that was what was being looked at, but maybe there was a better way to communicate that intent. She said it should be clear to the public that the County was paying attention to their imperative that the entities work together to reduce duplication. She stated “regional” sometimes made people think there would be a new government entity.

Commissioner Galloway said Washoe County was a regional government and the potential should be maximized to utilize the existing regional government. He noted many things were sidetracked over the years because other political entities wanted to set up a separate board to vote on regional issues, but the Commissioners sitting on regional boards represented the entire region. He felt there must be some things the other governments would not object to the County doing and that would reduce the amount of bureaucracy and meetings.

Naomi Duerr, Truckee River Flood Management Project Director, asked if major initiatives were being listed that needed a lot of regional collaboration, such as the Flood project, or if the focus was something different. She said the list was starting to include education, and she wanted some guidance on what regional collaboration should include. She asked if it was things the County wanted to collaborate on regionally or was it some activity that had to be done to enhance regional collaboration. Ms. Simon said however it was articulated, it was clearly understood the shareholders of this community wanted the County to demonstrate strong, effective, and successful collaboration in the delivery of services. She said that would take the form of initiatives on which the County would collaborate and it would also take the form of broadening the County’s view on finding and focusing on new regional collaborations. She felt it included two pieces: the scanning and expansion of successful service delivery done through regional collaboration and a group of initiatives that would fall under regional collaboration. She stated the list should contain things that should be focused on that the citizens indicated were the highest priority and they could fall under more than one section.

Mr. Lipparelli said it seemed collaboration was more the manner in which an action would be undertaken, but what was really the focus was efficiency. He stated what the taxpayers wanted was efficiency and collaboration might be a way to get there.

Dan St. John, Public Works Director, noted it appeared there were three equal local governments in the region when in actuality one of the local governments was a regional government. He felt that whole sense of regional service delivery was not really expressed. He stated the community was saying consolidation and regional

efficiencies, and he asked if that could be stated more strongly. Chairman Larkin said that was true, but the citizens of Sparks indicated they were not interested in consolidation, so he would stop short of going with the consolidation of governments. Ms. Simon explained it was not just about efficiency, but for some people it was about self determination.

Ms. Duerr asked about handling the initiatives for regional collaboration. Ms. Simon replied the initiatives would have to be determined by working with the County's partners, which was why she did not want to list them.

During discussion regarding "Support a Healthy Economy," there was discussion that any pursuit of alternative energy should include the research and development and manufacturing of alternative energy solutions. Chairman Larkin felt the region should take the existing technology and enhance it to become the world exporter of that technology.

Mr. Freund noted that the economic region covered 7,500 square miles and there also needed to be discussion regarding multi-county collaboration. He felt this County had a role in stimulating the multi-county collaboration to help develop the region.

During the discussion regarding "Provide Excellent Public Service," Ms. Carter said the issue was the quality of the public input and how it was used.

During the discussion regarding "Promote Financial Accountability of Washoe County," Mike Turner, Facility Management Division Director, noted most of the focus was on expenses and there should be more focus on looking for revenue opportunities.

Mr. Slaughter proposed each of the breakout groups this afternoon, and the task forces later in the month, take this information and work with it to come up with a list of two to three recommended priorities to take to the Board to see what was missed or needed changing and, then taking that direction, it would be brought back to the Board for final review and approval.



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**12:42 p.m.** The Commissioners made some concluding remarks after which the portion of the retreat that included the Commissioners adjourned. After lunch, the department heads and key support staff broke up into discussion groups, which was not recorded.

The foregoing minutes represent the understanding of the Washoe County Clerk's Office of the discussions held during this retreat.



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

*Minutes Prepared by  
Jan Frazzetta  
Deputy County Clerk*