



## **Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Gerlach/Empire Citizen Advisory Board held on March 17, 2022, at the Gerlach Community Center, 410 Cottonwood, Gerlach, NV 89412, and via teleconference.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM** – Elisabeth 'Schatzi' Gambrell, Kristy Evans (zoom), Andy Moore, Alan Nash.

Absent: Tina Walters

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

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

**4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2022** (for Possible Action) – Alan Nash noted he had some edits to the minutes. Ms. Ramos noted that if the Board members have edits, they may submit their edits before the meeting for revision and amendment. The Board agreed to submit their edits minutes and bring the February minutes back for review and approval at the next meeting.

**MOTION: Alan Nash moved to forward the minutes to the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Andy Moore and passed unanimously.**

**5. WASHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE** – Washoe County Sheriff's Office general update (Non-Action Item) –

Lt. Frank Eubanks provided an update on the Gerlach/Empire area incidences. He noted that the speed trailer slowed down traffic in the Empire area. He added that his software program crashed and is working on getting it back up. He said they would move the trailer around to monitor traffic. Ms. Gambrell requested the data. She said they are working on getting a flashing crosswalk sign where our school children cross, and that data would be helpful. Lt. Eubanks noted that we would do an after-action memo to send to the CAB.

Brandi, Empire Country Market, said the speed trailer helped reduce the seed. It was a huge improvement. Lt. Eubanks stated he understands how bad the traffic speeds can get out there.

Lt. Eubanks inquired when the Burning Man meetings would start. He stated he has yet to experience it at this level. He said we are heavily involved. Marnee, Burning Man meeting coordinator, said we would be reaching out within the next two weeks. The initial meetings will begin in April. We are looking forward to meeting together. She provided her email to Lt. Eubanks.

Kristy Evans said she would like to be involved and requested an agenda item.

## **6. WASHOE COUNTY/PAIUTE FIRE CONTRACT & BROADBAND INTERNET UPDATES** – Eric Brown, Washoe County Manager (Non-Action Item)

Candee Ramos provided an update. She shared that Washoe County Assistant Manager Dave Solaro will be on the April agenda to discuss the Neighborhood Hub webpage for development projects. NV Energy will also be on the agenda. If you have questions, please send Mr. Solaro an email, and he will provide an answer.

Ms. Ramos read an email from Dave Solaro regarding the status of the Pyramid Fire. The current status of the agreement with Pyramid Fire is to assume emergency services operations that will be scheduled at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting on April 12. The agreement is in the final stages with the County's Risk Manager and County's Attorney's office and is expected to be completed in time for the April 12 staff report deadline which is approximately 10 days prior. The effective date of the agreement will be April 13. Pyramid Fire will provide limited staffing in Gerlach until they can hire enough personnel to begin full implementation of 24-hour, 2-person crew on July 1, 2022. The general scope of the agreement is for Gerlach and areas north, 365-day per year or 24-hour per day coverage of the existing station with two personnel with EMT care or higher with fire fighting capabilities. It's an initial 5-year term with the option to extend in two-year increments.

Don Pelt, Chief of the Paiute Fire, said that is accurate. The executive team at the reservations had questions and wanted to add things into the agreement, which stalled us from getting it on the tribal council meeting this month. We are trying to get it ironed out so we can move forward with Board of County Commissioners on the same timeline so we can get you some help.

Jonathan Prichard said we have a finalization meeting next week in preparation of the Board of County Commission meeting and will know more after that meeting.

Andy Moore requested to see the proposal. He asked if there was an opportunity to review it as a board. Ms. Ramos stated she would see if she could get that from Mr. Solaro upon his return and send it to Tina and Schatzi, who can share it with the group.

Kristy Evans shared her appreciation for the County Staff and Mr. Pelt.

Lisa Nash, president of the volunteer firefighters, thanked Chief Pelt, Jonathan, and the County. We feel supported, and we are excited to see this happen. Ms. Gambrell agreed. She said she was happy to see this move quickly forward. She thanked Mr. Brown.

## **7. PRESENTATION REGARDING SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR HIGHWAY 34 STORAGE** – Mike Railey, Planning Manager, Christy Corporation, Ltd. (Non-Action Item)

Mike Railey, Applicant Representative, provided a PowerPoint presentation. He noted Lisa Nash is also present from his office.

Andy Moore asked about the anticipated traffic and timeframe for the busiest. Mr. Railey noted that storage typically has a low trip generation. According to ITE Standards, this would generate about 15-20 trips per day. Given the location, we don't anticipate that. He said peak hours would be 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. are extremely low. It's 1 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. He said he would assume peak demand would be 20-30 trips per day in and out of the facility.

Andy Moore asked for the timeframe that this facility would be the busiest. Would it be around Burning Man? Mr. Railey said we anticipate that the peak would be the week before and after the event. The true peak would be the beginning of August to the second week of October as the highest demand times.

Ms. Evans asked what he meant by inoperable vehicles and what are the restrictions. Mr. Railey said any vehicle not registered to operate on a road. A boat is an inoperable vehicle per Washoe County standards. Some vehicles are used at Burning Man that aren't street legal and are considered inoperable.

Ms. Gambrell said we aren't looking at construction equipment or heavy trucks; we are looking at storage to support the Burning Man events. Mr. Railey noted that this permit does not prevent construction equipment storage, but we don't believe it's the target market. Ms. Gambrell said the proposal read a lot like what happened at 360, including not planting non-native plants, the berm, and one container level. While we were approving the 360 projects, there was a discussion about how tall you can store items and defining 'inoperable' so it's not a junkyard. She said she likes the idea of using 11 acres instead of all of the 51 acres. She said we started building out highway 34 towards our most pristine areas. We've already opened the door on that but are concerned about how much more there can be. Mr. Railey said that is a valid concern. He said no one is permitted to come in and work on their car. He said there wouldn't be day-to-day people working on the equipment. He said we would be open to adding a high restriction if you want to add a condition to address that. Ms. Gambrell said another concern we had discussed previously was that the containers couldn't sit directly on the ground. They needed a pad under them, so they did corrode. Mr. Railey said the ground would be covered with a compacted gravel or all-weather surface. They won't be on the native ground. Ms. Gambrell asked if the ground would be protected from any oil leaks from the inoperable vehicles. Mr. Railey said we could install sand-oil separators to capture it before it seeps into the ground.

Ms. Gambrell thanked Mr. Railey and Lisa for being here.

**8. WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSIONER UPDATE-** Washoe County Commissioner Jeanne Herman may be available to provide updated information on discussions and actions by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). (Non-Action Item)

Commissioner Jeanne Herman was not in attendance.

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

Andy Moore said he looks forward to an update from Manager Brown about the broadband update. He did mention they were supposed to be receiving interest with the RFQ. Ms. Ramos stated she would share that with Manager Brown.

County Manager Eric Brown called in via zoom and provided an update to item 6. Mr. Brown apologized for not attending. He said he was in town but had to get back. He said the last time he reported on an RFP for potential options. We had two eligible applications. The RFP review committee selected the winner. He said he is happy to say the cost is lower than expected. He said largely because the folks at the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe allow us to use some facilities between I-80 and Nixon. The application is a lot cleaner. We will be moving forward with the winning bidder. They have experience in rural markets in Nevada. He said all things look good, and we should be submitting the paperwork for the funding source for the FCC at the end of the month and expect an answer in 90 days. If that happens, it could be as soon as July or August, and we can begin construction.

Andy Moore thanked Mr. Brown for answering his question. That is good news. Once you have approval in July or August, what is the timeline for when services will be available? Mr. Brown said 18 months with a caveat of labor and supply chain issues. There is uncertainty with that. They are expecting 18 months, early 2024.

Ms. Gambrell said during our January meeting, that we talked about having difficulty with getting permits for building and that there could be some concierge service. Mr. Brown said he had had conversations with the planning team. He suggested addressing that on the April agenda for Mr. Solaro because things are moving forward.

Ms. Gambrell said she sent an email to Candee and Mr. Brown regarding information she received from Kathy Stark regarding selling properties here in Gerlach and difficulties with that. She said she would like to add that to the agenda as well. She said there are rules and restrictions on the number of properties they can sell. We have a real housing shortage between the mines going in and the 12 full-time jobs with Burning Man. That will increase children and the need for more teachers, and it keeps snowballing. Getting some properties sold so they can be built on is critical for us as a community. She requested that to be added to the April meeting. Mr. Brown said he got an ear-full from the folks at Burning Man. He said he met with them at several sites. He said we can bring that to the April meeting.

Ms. Gambrell complimented Mr. Brown. She said you have been working so well since you have got the job. Gerlach is getting much-needed care. We appreciate it.

Andy Moore suggested implementing 10-minute time limits on presentations.

Kristy Evans suggested having the ability to make an exception if someone needs a little longer than 10 minutes. The board members agreed.

#### **10. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –**

Scott Nichols, Ormat Technology, said he attended the January meeting and was glad to be back to this March meeting and plans to be back for the May meeting. He said to date we don't have any updates with Ormat. We continue to work through the process with BLM for exploration. He said he reached out to Tara to talk about dark skies initiatives.

Tara, dark skies, provided an update. She said she took a grant writing class for federal funds. She announced a meeting on April 9 to help the Gerlach community see what we are talking about. To see how the meters work. It's citizen science. Its public education. We will move into Federal grant funding options and how that rolls out at some point. She said she is grateful that Mr. Nichols is here, how Ormat can help, and what they are already doing. Burning Man is already helping with ideas and involvement of how dark skies can work. It will be a collaborative process. Ms. Gambrell said there is a rumor that the dark skies initiative means you will take out all of the telephone poles with lights on them.

Matthew' Chef' from Burning Man project. We are excited to ramp up for the event. Marnee will attend next month to discuss the details. We've begun grading on the 360; there are a lot of trucks. We are working with the County to restore the road after that is done. We have a team with subcontractors and County to make sure nothing blows out too bad. We have resources to address that. We met with Mr. Brown to talk through concerns with permitting and difficulty with getting general contract help and expenses to do things out here and walking through the plans on the old pool property and 360. He said you may have noticed the Gerlach workforce program. We had four students come out, and we showed them the rural economic development and the County's development plan and showed them our plan and had them critique them and help figure out how we can teach workforce classes. We repeated that program this past January. We had 25 students in three classes: rural economic development in Gerlach, welding, and solar. We are trying to provide resources for people who can get one of those 17 full time jobs that we have added. There is more to come. We will do another version of the workforce program in May with seven classes. No one has been turned away due to a lack of funds. We had an anonymous donor for those who wanted to attend. Out of the 25 who attended last time, 12 were locals. He encouraged everyone to be part of the program. As we fill those new jobs, we are hoping for zero unemployment in Gerlach, and we think we can be part of that. Ms. Gambrell asked if that is being advertised in the Happenings, Post Office, Bars. Matthew said yes, we would be.

Andy Moore said he has reviewed what is being proposed at Ormat, and the exploration includes building 21 wells at 2.1 acres each. Mr. Nichols said that is the maximum number permitted. He said we would not build that many wells. it's not feasible to go

back to BLM for another assessment modification. He said he expects 3-4 wells based on his experience. You don't know where the wells are going to be, so you project all of the wells' locations based on the data, and within those 21 potential sites, there will be selected wells. Mr. Moore said he is familiar with the drill rigs and the amount of material needed to set the drill. Mr. Nichols said these drill rigs are typically smaller than the oil and gas rigs. He said the contractor would have to grade for a pad and bring in enough foundation material to support that area. In response to Mr. Moore's question, Mr. Nichols provided definitions for 'restoration' to put it back to what it was before; 'reclamation,' attempt to achieve that level of standard; there is 'rehabilitation' which make have different use, and there is nothing at all. He said he uses the term reclamation; if the pad is not used, it gets graded and blended into the topography. It blends into the contour. It will be graded and seeded, and mulched. If it's incorporated into the use, which would be our primary intent, there are mistakes, but we don't like to make them. If we use that well as part of the operation, it will remain a well pad. In any case, we are responsible for maintaining erosion and ensuring that it doesn't become an offsite erosional hazard. Mr. Moore asked about the environmental impact. Mr. Nichols said we had not done the environmental impact study. It's in the environmental assessment phase. Mr. Moore asked about groundwater. Mr. Nichols said it's not water; it's geothermal brine. It's a thousand feet deeper than the aquifer this town is sitting on. That has to be evaluated in a geothermal analysis. It's part of the environmental assessment. Mr. Nichols said he could not say if the BLM requires a hydrologic analysis of settlement or potential settlement in a geologic setting here in Gerlach. Ms. Gambrell said those were the concerns expressed in the letters provided to the BLM regarding settlement, how the injection level will work, and how it would affect our water table. Mr. Nichols said the BLM hydrologists and specialists look at those comments and concerns. If they reject any comments, they provide reasons why. Then they will produce a hydrologic analysis and responses to those comments in their analysis of the environmental impact statement. Mr. Moore asked if the public comment period was closed. Mr. Nichols said that the comment period for the exploration closed on January 10. Ms. Gambrell said if they hold the patterns of the planning and submissions we've seen, they have to write answers to any of the questions in the plan before it's approved. It hasn't been approved yet. It has to come back through again if that still holds true. She said we don't get SUP's anymore.

**ADJOURNMENT** – The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.