



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

**BOARD MEETING DATE: March 18, 2025**

**DATE:** February 12, 2025

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Eric Brown, Washoe County Manager  
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**SUBJECT:** Request by the Washoe County Manager, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 5 (Administration and Personnel) to update provisions relating to citizen advisory boards (CABs). The amendments may include, but are not limited to: renaming the boards; clarifying that the purpose of the boards is to provide feedback on community-wide issues within Washoe County’s governmental jurisdiction as part of the commissioner support program; requiring the geographical boundaries of the boards to fall within a single commissioner district; updating provisions for appointment of members; removing the prohibition on CAB members from concurrently serving on the County’s planning commission or board of adjustment; amending various provisions to comply with current open meeting law requirements; and updating provisions related to bylaws; and direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney’s Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040. (All Commission Districts.)

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### SUMMARY

This item is the next step in a multi-step process to make some changes to Washoe County’s citizen advisory boards (CABs). This item is specifically focused on the initiation of code amendments to update provisions related to CABs. The Washoe County Manager, by and through the County Clerk, is requesting to initiate proceedings to amend Washoe County Code Chapter 5 (Administration and Personnel), pursuant to Washoe County Code 2.030, which will allow for the creation of an ordinance to update provisions relating to CABs. These amendments are being requested to: rename the “citizen advisory boards” to “constituent advisory boards”; clarify that the purpose of the boards is to provide feedback on community-wide issues within Washoe County’s governmental jurisdiction as part of the commissioner support program; require the geographical boundaries of the boards to fall within a single commissioner district; update provisions for appointment of members; remove the prohibition on CAB members also serving on the County’s planning commission or board of adjustment; amend various provisions to comply with current open meeting law requirements; and update provisions related to bylaws.

**AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_**

If the request is approved, the Board of County Commissioners is asked to direct the County Clerk to submit a request to the District Attorney's Office to draft the proposed ordinance amending this code chapter. When the proposed ordinance is complete, the County Clerk will set an introduction and first reading of the proposed ordinance.

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

There have been multiple County Commission actions related to citizen advisory boards that did not involve changes to the Washoe County Code. However, for the purposes of this staff report, the previous action section is limited to previous code amendments related to citizen advisory boards, as the initiation of code amendments is the request currently before the Board.

**July 9, 2013** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 1515, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards to revise provisions relating to recruitment and appointment of members, filling vacancies, selection of officers, and terms of membership.

**May 8, 2007** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 1328, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards related to alternates.

**July 12, 2005** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 1271, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards to revise provisions regarding advertising for recruitment of new members and restrict concurrent service on certain boards.

**June 24, 2003** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 1209, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards to eliminate a two-term limit on appointment of members.

**October 13, 1992** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 858, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards to specify service on and removal from advisory boards, conduct of meetings, membership and appointment, and requirements for adopting bylaws.

**June 11, 1991** – The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 824, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards to provide that the election or appointment of a member of a citizens' advisory board to the Board of County Commissioners resulted in automatic termination of the person's membership on the advisory board.

**March 19, 1991**- The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 818, which revised Washoe County Code provisions related to citizen advisory boards.

**June 17, 1980** - The Board of County Commissioners enacted Ordinance No. 468, which authorized the Board of County Commissioners to establish citizens advisory boards to assist the Board in an advisory and liaison capacity on county matters about which the Board desired study or advice. The ordinance specified standards related to the purpose of the boards, establishment of boards through resolution, membership of board members, bylaws, budget and compensation, and termination of service on boards.

## **BACKGROUND**

Washoe County Code (WCC) 2.030 provides that amendments to the Washoe County Code must be initiated by a request from an elected or appointed Washoe County official or a department head to the County Clerk. Upon receiving the request, the County Clerk, pursuant to WCC 2.040, places the request on an agenda for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners. Upon a majority vote of the members present at the meeting, the Board may approve the request with any changes the Board desires. In considering the request, the Board may hear testimony from the proposer or any other person regarding the proposed changes. If approved, the Board then directs the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney for preparation of a proposed ordinance. Pursuant to WCC 2.050, when the District Attorney has completed the proposed ordinance, the County Clerk will place the proposed ordinance on the Board's agenda at a regularly scheduled meeting for an introduction and first reading in accordance with the adoption procedures set out in NRS 244.100.

As indicated in the attached letter, the Washoe County Manager has requested an amendment to Washoe County Code Chapter 5 (Administration and Personnel) to update provisions relating to citizen advisory boards. These code sections have not been updated since 2013, and they warrant review and updates to comport with the current purpose of the CABs, recommended procedures and practices relating to board membership and meetings, and updated open meeting law requirements prescribed by the Nevada Revised Statutes.

The desired changes, additions and modifications to WCC 5.425 through 5.435 include:

- Renaming the “citizen advisory boards” to “constituent advisory boards” to better reflect the CABs’ primary purpose of acting as a liaison and providing advice to the specific Commissioner in whose district the CAB is located, as well as to the Board of County Commissioners as a whole, as part of the commissioner support program.
- Clarifying that the purpose of the CABs is to provide feedback on community-wide issues *within Washoe County’s governmental jurisdiction* as part of the commissioner support program.
- Requiring the geographical boundaries of the CABs to fall within a single commissioner district rather than share districts, as some currently do. If this code amendment is ultimately adopted, it is proposed that the County will have one year to update the geographic boundaries of the CABs. This is accomplished outside of the code amendment process by amending the resolutions for the individual CABs and using GIS mapping to set the boundaries.
- Updating provisions for appointment of members, specifically requiring that applications be kept on file for a period of 1 year rather than 3.5 years and revising provisions related to appointment of members for vacancies on CABs that share districts.
- Removing the prohibition on CAB members from concurrently serving on the County’s planning commission or board of adjustment, as there is no longer a conflict of interest in serving in both roles.
- Amending various provisions to comply with current open meeting law requirements.
- Updating provisions related to enactment of bylaws.

Following these code amendments, it is anticipated that other changes to the citizen advisory boards' documents, such as amendments to the standard bylaws will be forthcoming. The standard bylaws have not been updated since 2015 and also require review and updating. If the Board ultimately adopts the proposed code amendments, further Board action will also be needed to amend the resolutions for the specific CABs that currently share districts in order to update the GIS mapping which sets the boundaries for those CABs.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact to request initiation of proceedings to repeal, amend, or enact provisions in Washoe County Code.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve a request by the Washoe County Manager, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to WCC 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 5 (Administration and Personnel) to update provisions relating to citizen advisory boards; and direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney's Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040.

### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to approve a request by the Washoe County Manager, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (“WCC”) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 5 (Administration and Personnel) to update provisions relating to citizen advisory boards (CABs). The amendments may include, but are not limited to: renaming the boards; clarifying that the purpose of the boards is to provide feedback on community-wide issues within Washoe County's governmental jurisdiction as part of the commissioner support program; requiring the geographical boundaries of the boards to fall within a single commissioner district; updating provisions for appointment of members; removing the prohibition on CAB members from concurrently serving on the County's planning commission or board of adjustment; amending various provisions to comply with current open meeting law requirements; and updating provisions related to bylaws; and direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney's Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040.

Attachment: Clerk's Letter requesting to initiate proceedings to amend the Washoe County Code