

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

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

APRIL 22, 2025

PRESENT:

**Alexis Hill, Chair**

**Jeanne Herman, Vice Chair**

**Michael Clark, Commissioner**

**Mariluz Garcia, Commissioner**

**Clara Andriola, Commissioner**

**Janis Galassini, County Clerk**

**Eric Brown, County Manager**

**Mary Kandaras, Chief Deputy District Attorney**

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:00 a.m. in regular session in the 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, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

**25-0253      AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.**

Mr. Paul White introduced himself as a member of Education Crusade. He informed the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) that he had sent them an email, which included an opinion piece published on the editorial page of *The Nevada Globe* that morning. He hoped they would look at that publication closely and opined that the piece served as an opportunity after the resignation of the Washoe County Library Services (WCLS) Director. He elaborated that the opportunity was to save \$17 million a year while implementing a nine times increase in library services available to the community. He noted that the publication talked about how people often thought there were 12 public libraries in the County, but there were instead 130. He explained that of those 130 public libraries, 12 belonged to the County with an associated cost of \$17 million, and 118 libraries operated in the schools in the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and cost nothing as they were already paid for through the public schools. He stated that the article went on to explain the details of how that worked, and opined that there had been an evolution in library use over the past decade. He noted that visits to libraries dropped 50 percent across the Nation, and while the statistics were not kept locally, he theorized that they might be greater. He asserted that libraries had changed into a combination of a homeless center and a community recreation center, with neither of those serving the purposes of what a library was for. He opined that closing down the County libraries would remove the County from the library business, save \$17 million a year, and give the community nine times more access to libraries than they had at that time.

Mr. Terry Brooks recited a personal poem about food availability, charity, and homelessness.

Ms. Nancy Carlson introduced herself as a resident of Reno. She stated that Washoe County residents voted on Washoe County Question Number One (WC-1) in November not to extend the library bond measure passed in 1974 to provide additional funding to the WCLS, which resulted in the loss of \$4 million for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) and Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26). She said former WCLS Director Jeff Scott proposed that the WCLS receive \$1.25 million out of the General Fund and \$3.2 million from the Library Expansion Fund to compensate for that deficit. She opined that the \$3.2 million from the Library Expansion Fund was intended to maintain and upgrade library facilities and should not be used elsewhere. She explained that the request from Mr. Scott was made without the knowledge of the Library Board of Trustees (LBT) to whom he reported. She stated that the WCLS would receive \$12 million from the General Fund for the following fiscal year (FY). She emphasized that there was a huge deficit in Washoe County, and the voters had sent a message when they voted against the extension of the library bond. She suggested putting the \$4.5 million from that failed bond into the deficit for the County. She stated that many bills in the Nevada Legislature called for the expansion or maintenance of government bureaucracy and for paying more taxes. She noted that, as a retiree on a fixed income, everyone had to cut back on expenses when taxes increased and opined that the County departments should not be any different when they could not budget. She stated that emergency services, such as police and first responders, should be the priority of the County. She noted that while she valued libraries, an attempt to recuperate tax dollars denied from the failure of WC-1 defeated the will of the residents who voted in that election. She emphasized the deficit of Washoe County and opined that the County could not continue to spend, as with any budget, and difficult decisions had to be made when funding ran out. She stated that the time for the Board to make those difficult decisions was then.

Ms. Eileen Ecklund thanked the Board and introduced herself as a Sparks resident. She apologized and noted she was terrible at public speaking. She stated she was present because she believed supporting the public libraries was very important. She said public libraries provided services essential to the community's health and well-being. She urged the Board to fully fund the libraries in the coming year, including the proposed transfer of \$1.3 million from the General Fund to the WCLS and funding from the Library Expansion Fund. She stated that she understood the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks were facing difficult financial challenges and that government agencies had to reduce spending and freeze hiring. She acknowledged that the Board would know that many in the community, ranging from young families to seniors, veterans, and more, similarly faced financial challenges and reduced spending. She opined that the time was not right to reduce the essential services the libraries provided for free to some of the community's most vulnerable members. She stated that libraries were about more than just providing free books, as they offered other free services such as helping neighbors look for employment, a place to live, or information about legal or medical issues, assisting to teach adults who could not read, hosting community meetings, classes, polling places, and children's story times, providing materials and services for seniors, holding a wide variety

of events, and providing internet access and tremendous information services. She noted that libraries were public spaces where all were welcomed and accepted. She thanked the Board for the hard work they conducted on behalf of the residents of the County and for recognizing the essential role that libraries played in the community. She urged the BCC to continue to support that critical resource by finding a way to fund the libraries fully in the following year.

Ms. Cady Stanton thanked everyone and introduced herself as a Washoe County resident. She noted that she was present to speak in support of the \$1.3 million transfer from the General Fund to the WCLS. She indicated that as she watched different attempts to negatively impact the libraries over the past several years, she felt she experienced clarity in understanding that those attempts were never about Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) events or specific lines written in books. She asserted that explicit pornographic material and violence in vast amounts could be found much more quickly on the internet than could be found in the library. She stated that such concerns had never been the issue, and opined that the problem was that libraries stood for something certain individuals were not happy with. She opined that libraries signified the collective human knowledge across centuries and cultures, which allowed individuals to grow from each other. She noted that libraries stood for democracy, free access to information for all, and were a sanctuary for quiet reflection and a place where people could grab a book, think, and learn. She explained that libraries were a place of possibility, transformation, and connection, requiring people to spend no money and welcoming everyone. She emphasized that the issue over the previous few years was that libraries symbolized a resistance to censorship, power, and control while standing for intellectual freedom and the right to information. She opined that the issue was actually related to those topics, but had been portrayed instead as something regarding sex. She stressed that libraries embodied the cumulative intellectual achievements and aspirations, and stated that to shut libraries down would end all of that. She recounted that she had grown up with the library like many others. She expressed her love for the author John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. She recited a quote from one of his published works, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which she noted she had learned at the library, believed spoke to the present time, and was certain many community members who loved the libraries would know. She urged the Board to approve the library fund transfer to support the value of the symbols the library stood for, and an understanding that democracy depended on that.

Ms. Penny Brock provided documents, copies of which were placed on file with the Clerk. She noted that since the Board expected to discuss the budget at the meeting, she wondered how property taxes and the associated bills were determined. She stated that she had no idea how those determinations were made and opined that most people would not know either. She reported visiting the County Treasurer's website, which described how property tax rates were determined. She noted that property tax rates were proposed in April each year based on the budgets prepared by the local governments, including the County, cities, school districts, and others. She noted that she had also found additional information she intended to display on the overhead projector. County Clerk Jan Galassini asked if the overhead projector was working, and after receiving a response, informed Ms. Brock that the projector was not working. Chair Hill noted that the Board had been supplied

with copies of the document she had distributed to them through the Clerk. Ms. Brock acknowledged that, but stated that she wanted the public to see the document. Chair Hill informed Ms. Brock that the document she submitted to the Clerk would be included for the public to view in the minutes for the meeting and invited her to continue her comment. Ms. Brock stated that Clark County, Nevada, was the largest county by population in the State, which included almost 75 percent of Nevada residents, and the City of Las Vegas had an effective property rate of 0.51 percent. She noted that the previously mentioned rate was nearly the same as the Statewide average and was significantly lower than the national average. She said the median effective property tax rate was 1.3 percent, but when the combined rate of schools, debt service, and others was considered, the total rate came to 2.7002 percent. She opined that something was wrong. She noted that she had collected that data from the Treasurer's website. She stated that she had found an article that she thought was interesting earlier that week, and recited the title *Las Vegas Shines as Low-Tax Haven in New Property Tax Report*. She read from that article and opined that something was wrong in Washoe County to make the tax rates much higher than in Clark County. She reiterated her belief that something was wrong with the budgets. She described that as unfair to the taxpayers of Washoe County and opined that the budgets needed to be cut back at that time. She suggested that the County should at least match the tax rate of Clark County, or have an even better tax rate than Clark County, due to the much higher population. She stated that she was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of the taxpayers and urged the Board to cut the budget and take the tax burden off of many individuals on fixed incomes and struggling families.

Ms. Galassini noted they would need to take a moment to fix the technical difficulties at the podium.

Ms. Valerie Wade introduced herself as a lifetime Sparks resident and displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. Ms. Wade recited from the documents she submitted.

Ms. Sandee Tibbett greeted the Board and introduced herself. She stated that she attended the meeting to do what she had failed to do at the LBT meeting held the previous Wednesday. She opined that she regretted not staying during that LBT meeting, despite what she described as misguided attacks directed at the LBT from a select few who she felt were bitter and claimed victimhood. She stated that such behavior was on display again at the BCC meeting. She opined that the LBT was doing an outstanding job restoring accountability, fiscal responsibility, transparency, trust, and balance to the WCLS. She stated that the LBT deserved continued support from everyone. She recounted that for over a decade, Mr. Scott ran the libraries without oversight and promoted a divisive culture that favored certain groups over others and fueled discord. She opined that the LBT was changing the standard operations and had been met with repeated resistance. She stated that critics demanded more training, yet the library needed a cooperative director. She opined that Mr. Scott chose to resign after years of obstructing the LBT, refusing to collaborate, and fostering discrimination through a self-serving agenda. She asserted that his combative stance was his downfall, not a conspiracy from the LBT. She stated that the LBT held Mr. Scott accountable and ensured neutrality in the library services, not just for

a select few. She opined that those actions encouraged resentment among local critics, which she noted had been voiced at the LBT meeting on April 16, 2025. She expressed frustration with divisive rhetoric and described claims that some people were hateful as disheartening. She opined that Mr. Scott's resignation was a positive occurrence and that the community deserved a library system that united them. She stated that the Board was striving to make that happen. She reiterated her belief that the LBT did not need more training, as they only required everyone's respect for having asked tough questions and support to continue rebuilding trust and balance to the WCLS. She urged the community to give the LBT the grace necessary to do their jobs. She suspected her pleas would not be heard. She commended Library Assistant II Andrew Maurins, a staff member at the South Valleys Library, who she noted had feared losing his job after being misled by statements from Mr. Scott, which she speculated was done to secure funding from the BCC. She said that Mr. Maurins had offered his support to the LBT. She opined that more dedicated employees like Mr. Maurins were needed. She urged the Board to ensure Mr. Maurins position was secure. She expressed confidence that his position would be safe as she was sure the library would be funded, had a great staff, was doing a great job, and would not fail. She thanked the BCC for appointing strong trustees to the LBT, who she felt were doing their best to heal the library system. She asked the Board to stand by the LBT as they restored fairness and trust for all.

Ms. Cindy Martinez introduced herself and greeted the Board, County Manager Eric Brown, Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Mary Kandaras, and Ms. Galassini. She expressed disappointment that the budget workshop was cancelled in March. She recounted driving to Los Angeles (L.A.) while listening to a recording of the BCC meeting the week prior, which held discussions regarding the budget. She stated that she nearly drove off the lane when she heard information that indicated that the County Manager had not given clear direction to department heads to review their budgets and identify areas where reductions could be made. She reported that she had served the State and the City of Sparks for over 25 years. She identified the September 11, 2001, events and the 2008 Great Recession as two particularly significant financial downfalls she could remember during her tenure in those positions. She recounted that following the September 11, 2001, events, her agency approached her and asked if she would be willing to take eight hours of furlough to accommodate a reduction in revenue and ensure her coworkers would not lose employment. She noted that she had chosen to do so. She stated that following the 2008 Great Recession, the Nevada Legislature cut the salary of State employees, which resulted in those employees operating for two years with 96 hours of furlough, and another two years with 48 hours of furlough to keep their jobs. She noted that those efforts were conducted after the Governor at that time gave the State department heads clear direction to identify 5, 7, and 15 percent areas of reduction, which she noted they had done. She expressed great surprise that the County Manager did not give that same direction to County staff, and described that as dereliction of duty. She noted that the County Manager's contract was not renewed in January 2025. She thanked Manager Brown for his service in taking the County through the years of the COVID-19 (C19) pandemic, and noted her appreciation. She opined that despite that service, she believed he was no longer up to that task. Chair Hill pointed out that some of Ms. Martinez's statements seemed personal. Ms. Martinez voiced her belief that her statements expressed her personal opinion

and were protected under the First Amendment of the United States (US) Constitution. Ms. Martinez asked the Board to exercise the termination clause included in the County Manager's contract. She opined that each day the County Manager did not attend to matters of financial and fiduciary responsibilities was a waste of taxpayer funds.

Mr. DeAndre Burleson introduced himself and submitted documents, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He greeted the Board and recited his RTC identification number, Nevada identification number, and Reno Housing Authority (RHA) claim number. He stated that he was speaking before the Board about his RHA claim. He noted that he was working with a case manager at the Reno Municipal Court regarding that claim and other matters. He indicated his intent to submit his Medicare information and Renown visit summary. He recounted that he was brought in as a patient at Renown for a few days before the meeting. He wanted to submit the information regarding him being treated as a patient, having been seen by a doctor at the hospital, and the medication he was given. He solicited help from the Board regarding the reinstatement of his RHA assistance. He noted that no information had been solidified, and expressed frustration after an experience calling RHA, which directed him to leave a message. He described his dissatisfaction with the productivity of that communication. He reiterated his intent to submit that documentation and explained what was included in that submission. He speculated that he would attend BCC meetings regularly until the situation was resolved.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Burleson and stated that she understood that County staff had worked with him to obtain a case worker. She asked if that was true. Mr. Burleson agreed and noted that what she described was correct. She wondered how that effort was going. He indicated that he was in contact with County staff and provided the name of Mr. Tolbert, although he was uncertain of the employee's first name. Chair Hill opined that Mr. Tolbert would be the best person to work with to obtain the RHA assistance he sought. Mr. Burleson noted that he was eligible to attend BCC meetings and provide public comment. She emphasized that he was, of course, able to do so, but wanted to ensure that he knew she was following up on his case. He noted that he was also given the name of Ms. Jennifer Perez of the Reno Municipal Court. Chair Hill wished Mr. Burleson good luck and stated that County staff would continue to follow up with him. Mr. Burleson reiterated that he could attend meetings. Chair Hill agreed again, reiterated that she had only wanted to let him know that the County was following up on his case, and thanked him.

Ms. Trista Gomez introduced herself and displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She noted that she would refer to the document she displayed throughout her comment and expected to do so again later in the meeting. She wanted to mention several things because she believed the Board would raise taxes. She stated that the Board was considering two tax increases. She noted that one such increase was from Senate Bill 319 (SB319), which she described as an assessment that acted like a tax, and was regionalization. She stated that there had been plenty of comments regarding other possible options besides that very expensive assessment. She noted that SB319 was in the Legislature at that time. She wondered whether the study for the regionalization plan was being conducted by the same entities that would benefit, whether fire funds were being diverted to the municipalities, what the estimated cost per household

was for the regionalization plan, and whether an amendment could be made to change the legislation to give oversight from the BCC to ensure the Board had to approve those funds. She opined that implementing the recommendation from the final question would at least be prudent. She referred to Assembly Joint Resolution 1 (AJR1) as the property tax and stated that AJR1 would be a much longer process. She wanted to remind the Board that the taxpayers did not receive those benefits, as employees within the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) of Nevada were guaranteed 80 percent of the highest three years' salaries. She noted that she was in PERS for some time and opined that employees fortified their earnings in the top three years of employment to ensure a higher PERS benefit. She stated that, at that time, PERS benefits were \$0.38 and \$0.58 per dollar for each employee, which taxpayers paid for without the same kinds of accommodations. She noted that taxpayers were not given the option to raise taxes to have a secure retirement. She stated that she was not against that, but opined that raising taxes to that level and having taxpayers be responsible for that was a significant thing to ask of them. She noted her intent to discuss the library. She described that she knew some individuals who talked about understanding that the budget was in a deficit crisis and was short. She opined that while those individuals were making professional and mature decisions regarding reductions that needed to be made for the greater good of the public, she felt as though what she heard from the library was similar to the sayings of a character from the novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. She noted that the character was known for wanting exactly what she desired to be given exactly at that moment. She compared this to what she believed were the desires of the library, without making any cuts, accommodations, or changes, with the intent to have all of the money. She opined that the money was for capital expenses. She said she would reconsider if those funds were used to sustain the North Valleys Library's employee levels. She stated that things could be done to make that work, and opined that restructuring would be a very good idea.

Mr. Alan Munson introduced himself as a Washoe County resident and displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He noted that he previously had no plans of speaking that day. He stated that he was one of the people from the Cavalry Chapel Church who spoke at the earlier LBT meeting. He displayed and recited from the sign he had during that meeting. He recounted that when he spoke at that meeting, he discussed his hope that the new library leadership would be someone who could be spoken to before being hired and who would allow for differing opinions to ensure greater unity. He emphasized that his concern for what was going on regarding the libraries was always associated with two things. He noted that the first concern was related to an incident where six people read books at the library aloud for young children, but had been told, as they were preparing to read excerpts from the book, that they could not publicly speak that type of language. He noted that all they had said was that those books should be put in the adult section to let the adults determine what their children looked at. He described that his other concern was that Mr. Scott did not listen to anything said when individuals got up to speak publicly at meetings. He noted his intent to clarify for the Board that those with Cavalry Chapel Church were not hateful, and stated that he belonged to the Christian faith. He elaborated that one of the things that Christians were called upon to do was to love their enemies. He acknowledged that he had difficulty in doing that and was in the process of learning. He stated that they were supposed to be considerate of the opinions of others. He

expressed concern that the Board would investigate what was happening at the Cares Campus regarding what homeless people were doing to change their lives and commit to something. He stated that he would speak more about that in the future. He noted that as a citizen and an individual on a pension, he did not have much money and did not want to see more taxes implemented. He thanked the Board for their work and for listening.

County Clerk Jan Galassini stated that emailed public comment was received and placed on file.

**25-0254      AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.**

Commissioner Garcia wished Chair Hill a happy birthday. She believed that Chair Hill had served in a difficult role for a long time, and she valued her leadership. She thanked the public commenters for the wonderful emails, comments, and phone calls since November in support of the libraries. She noted that she read and appreciated each comment, even if she did not agree with them. She felt that the libraries were essential services that connected the community. She mentioned that the libraries were open to everyone, unlike schools. She reported that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had received hundreds of emails for many months.

Commissioner Andriola wished Chair Hill a happy birthday. She noted that Article 912, regarding the establishment of commissions, boards, and hearing examiners had provisions that she felt needed to be reviewed. She supported the established procedure regarding the code being heard by the Planning Commission (PC), then the BCC. She mentioned that in provision 110.912.10C2, the person who wished to apply for a board must reside in an unincorporated area and be a registered voter in that district; however, the appointments could be made from another commission district if there were no qualified applicants. She applauded County Manager Eric Brown for announcing board and commission openings at the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. She indicated that residents of District 4 did not live in unincorporated areas which made them ineligible. She commented that the County would then seek applicants from another district. She communicated that there was room for review to ensure all voters in the district could be eligible. She voiced that there was a conflict regarding the PC because the provision read that they could hold a public office, but Article 912 regarding the Board of Adjustment (BOA) and the Hearing Examiner indicated they could not hold a public office. She asked that the BCC formally review the article and process because she wanted fair and equitable opportunities. She said that Agenda Item 5A2 pertained to dark skies, and she felt there was an opportunity to revisit preserving dark skies.

Chair Hill agreed with Commissioner Andriola's recommendation to look at Article 912 because her district was roughly 80 percent incorporated City of Reno. She believed finding unincorporated individuals who wanted to apply for the position was sometimes challenging. She felt that there was a lack of representation on the board if no one from unincorporated areas wished to apply.

Commissioner Andriola asked that restrictions be placed at the beginning of



the application to check eligibility for the position.

Commissioner Clark wished Chair Hill a happy birthday. He indicated that the commercial kitchen for senior food had been dismantled, and that the County was serving the seniors cold food. He felt that many individuals had dietary concerns and that the cold food was usually salad. He wanted food options for religious or health reasons. He wished to know when the County's senior kitchen would be opened and operational. He noted that the previous day's menu was chicken cordon bleu, which he said was not served. He asked for the menu to be revised and accurate.

Commissioner Clark said that he met a representative with the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) through the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) in Sun Valley. He mentioned that the representative met with a visually impaired senior at the bus stop in Sun Valley and helped the individual receive lunch. He indicated that the service was great and available through the State. He noted that the OIB offered magnifying devices for homes, and he wanted to ensure that the County shared the information with the visually impaired community.

Commissioner Clark referred to Ms. Cindy Martinez regarding the struggles working at the State during Patriot Day and the Great Recession. He saluted the State for their work because he said they got the community through difficult times. He said that the current affairs were different, and he wanted to compare current events with the Great Recession. He reported that he met with the Assessor and Treasurer, who indicated that there were more tax evaluations, returns on investments (ROI), and new construction on record than ever before. He mentioned that there was a 3 percent cap and depreciation; however, those did not apply to new construction. He indicated that the County had the highest gas and sales tax in the State. He voiced that the County received COVID-19 (C19) funds, which he said contributed more money than the County ever had. He commented that he had met with Manager Brown to discuss funds, and he said that Manager Brown indicated the County was sending more than they were receiving. He speculated that the County felt that if there were taxpayers, the County would never have a lack of funds. He said that the County attacked the middle class and those with fixed incomes, which he believed was unsustainable and needed to be addressed. He echoed Ms. Martinez's sentiments regarding having a new leader who could manage to live within the budget to ensure that a budget deficit did not occur again. He communicated that Manager Brown was the highest-paid manager in the State and made more than Governor Joe Lombardo and possibly President Donald Trump. He expressed that he had a hard time communicating with Manager Brown when he wanted thorough explanations.

Commissioner Clark reported that he was told by a senior County employee at the Second Judicial District Court (SJDC) that there was a radon tunnel under Sierra Street that ran from the SJDC to the Reno Justice Court (RJC). He noted that he saw the tunnel; however, the County refused to give him answers and did not call it a tunnel. He commented that he was told it was a tunnel and that it was not something he made up. He mentioned that the tunnel was to vent the radon gas out of the courthouse. He indicated that he asked when the last time it was tested, and was met with 14 paragraphs that he said

did not answer the question. He felt that he always received incomplete answers to his questions. He said that he had been a real estate broker for 48 years, and if he sold a house, the homeowners would receive a radon test if they wished. He communicated that he repeatedly asked about the radon testing and had received a phone call for a tour. He commented that he previously toured the courthouse and wanted a report on the radon testing. He asked if the County was trying to hide something and mentioned he wanted a radon test performed due to working employees and visiting patrons to the building. He explained that he understood the building was tested in 2017 and 2018 and wanted to see the reports. He believed that the County had difficulty providing straight answers.

Commissioner Clark mentioned that he was invited to a fire evacuation meeting organized by a group of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) around Mount Rose Highway. He saluted any group that decided to meet without the County's involvement. He referred to Commissioner Andriola's comments regarding Article 912 and said that there were staff who did not live in the County. He questioned why a board member should live in the County, but staff did not have to. He believed that it was imperative to have staff live in the County to recirculate funds.

### **PROCLAMATIONS**

**25-0255**      **5A1** Proclamation for the month of April as Teacher Appreciation Month. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Garcia read the proclamation.

Elizabeth Smith, President of the Washoe County School District (WCSD), thanked the Board for ushering in excitement and celebration during the first full week of April for Educator Appreciation Week. She said the WCSD had nearly 10,000 team members, over 3,000 of whom were certified educators. She noted that 99 percent taught in their area of licensure, and more than 70 percent had their master's, doctorates, or multiple degrees. She felt that no other profession was more important than educators. She added that everyone was touched by the professionalism and commitment of a teacher in one way or another. She said teachers did so much, and the WCSD was incredibly lucky to have such an amazing team. She spoke about the goal in raising children and said WCSD was honored to be responsible for the health, happiness, and safety of children while they were at school. She added that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and the WCSD were kindred in that the BCC was also responsible for keeping families healthy, happy, and safe. She thanked the Board for their recognition and honoring educators, and appreciated all that the Board did.

Trustee Diane Nicolet, WCSD Library Board of Trustee (LTB), thanked the Commissioners, the community, and staff for attending the meeting. She said she was a lifelong learner and teacher and shared a celebratory letter that she had written. She read that teachers should remember that they were interested in students' lives, patiently dedicate their work to help understand with great care and effort, and share their time, expertise, and knowledge. She added that teachers coached students on the possibilities in

life and their meaning. She said teachers would encourage even when they needed encouragement, and they added to the very existence of each student. She explained that teachers touched lives in ways that left an enduring mark on minds, hearts, and existence. She believed that through tough times, moments of joy, and feelings of uncertainty, teachers were there to celebrate, console, and champion. She said teachers showed trust and courage, gave looks that helped students to check their behavior, and their daily presence encouraged students to want to go to school. She thanked teachers for all of that and much more. She explained that teachers would always be a part of the lives of students. She concluded by reminding everyone never to forget that teachers would always be needed.

Mr. Calen Evans, President of the Washoe Education Association, represented the certified professionals in the WCSD. He said he was honored and appreciated the opportunity to accept the proclamation on behalf of the certified staff. He spoke about teachers and the important role they played. He noted that even within their own units, they were referred to as educators because there were so many people within the school district and school sites who had a profound impact on students. He listed various administrators and support staff positions and commented that schools would not function without them. He said he had been a teacher for over a decade and was told very early on to become friends with the custodian and the secretary because those two made the entire school operate. He added that on behalf of the amazing professionals in the WCSD, he thanked the Board and the community for attending.

Chair Hill said it was a joy to work with the WCSD. She added that she was dyslexic and struggled with school and a teacher saved her life. She was appreciative of educators.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Garcia, seconded by Vice Chair Herman, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5A1 be adopted.

**25-0256**      **5A2** Proclamation for the week of April 21 - 28 as International Dark Sky Week. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Andriola read the proclamation.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Andriola, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5A2 be adopted.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – 7A1 THROUGH 7D1**

- 25-0257**      **7A1** Approval of minutes for the Board of County Commissioners' regular meetings of March 11, 2025, and March 18, 2025. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.).
- 25-0258**      **7A2** Acknowledge the communications and reports received by the Clerk on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, including the following categories: Communications, Monthly Statements/Reports, and Annual Statements/Reports. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.)
- 25-0259**      **7B1** Recommendation to 1) approve roll change requests, pursuant to NRS 361.765 and/or NRS 361.768, for errors discovered on the 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 secured and unsecured tax rolls 2) authorize Chair to execute the changes described in Exhibits A and B and 3) direct the Washoe County Treasurer to correct the error(s). [cumulative amount of decrease to all taxing entities \$10,494.14]. Assessor. (All Commission Districts.)
- 25-0260**      **7C1** Recommendation to approve budget amendments totaling an increase of [\$59,592.00; \$6,150.70 in county match] in both revenue and expense to the FY25 HPP BP5 NCE Subaward, retroactive to July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, for the Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness (EPHP) Division to support demonstration of achievement in the program domains and capabilities according to the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) cooperative agreement, and direct Finance to make the appropriate budget amendments. Northern Nevada Public Health. (All Commission Districts.)
- 25-0261**      **7D1** Recommendation to accept a grant award from the Best Friends Animal Society in the amount of [\$15,000; no County match] retroactive for the period March 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 for the Peer Mentor Project, where Washoe County Regional Animal Services will assist Wasco Animal Services improve its save rate to 90%; authorize the Purchasing and Contracts Manager to retroactively execute the award documents; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Regional Animal Services. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment on the Consent Agenda Items listed above.

On motion by Commissioner Andriola, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 7A1 through 7D1 be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 7A1 through 7D1 are attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

**BLOCK VOTE – 8 THROUGH 10**

**25-0262**      **AGENDA ITEM 8**   Recommendation to approve purchases that are expected to exceed [\$300,000] from OverDrive Inc. for licensing of eBooks, eAudio Books and Digital Magazines for an amount not to exceed \$850,000 and Baker & Tayler for physical books and CD books with cataloging and shelf-ready processing for an amount not to exceed \$400,000 for Fiscal Year 2025 and authorize the Purchasing and Contracts Manager to execute related contracts and purchase orders for these purchases. Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Garcia disclosed that her sister worked for the Washoe County Library System (WCLS). Commissioner Garcia consulted with the District Attorney's (DA) Office, who advised that she was not prohibited from voting on or discussing Agenda Item 8.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Penny Brock displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She remarked that Agenda Item 8 recommended an additional \$1,250,000 be given to the WCLS from the Library Expansion Fund. She understood from the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) report that \$1,966,389 had already been spent on supplies, and she was concerned that the public did not know what that expenditure was for. She said she consulted the Washoe Checkbook but did not find more information. She stated that the WCLS was already going to get \$12 million out of the General Fund and Agenda Item 8 would give them an additional \$1.3 million out of the General Fund. She noted there was an additional \$3.2 million left in the Library Expansion Fund, and she did not know why. She contended that all other 25 County departments had to operate within the funds they were given out of the General Fund. She questioned why the WCLS would be given \$1.3 million, then \$3.2 million, and an additional \$1,250,000. She felt that taxpayers needed more information about the purchases and cautioned that the County might be utilizing the same funding source twice if they approved \$1,250,000 and allocated \$3.2 million to the WCLS from the General Fund. She calculated that with the authorization, the WCLS would get close to \$20 million in the next fiscal year. She asked Commissioners to think carefully before approving the item.

Ms. Nancy Carlson commented that people who wanted to trim funds from the WCLS budget were not angry or unreasonable. She believed that the Library Board of Trustees' (LBT) meeting that was conducted the prior week was orderly and calm and was a result of requests to former Library Director Jeff Scott that were not listened to. She affirmed that she valued County libraries and said that she used eBooks every day. She disagreed with attempts to recoup tax dollars despite the failure of Washoe County Question Number One (WC-1) and said that doing so would defeat the will of County residents. She summarized that everyone had to live within their budgets, and felt there was no reason the WCLS could not find ways to trim a budget that they were not guaranteed.

Commissioner Clark echoed the questions of public commenters. He asked if the proposed purposes were an existing budget item. WCLS Collection Development

Manager Debi Stears advised that the item represented funds that were allocated by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for the current fiscal year. She said the allocation from the General Fund was \$54,720, and the remaining \$1.35 million was from the Library Expansion Fund. She said the BCC had not previously seen similar requests from the WCLS because, under the purchasing manual for the County, the WCLS had always been exempt from requesting purchases over \$300,000 with a single vendor. She said that changed in 2025, and noted that similar purchases had always been made in the past. She clarified that the difference was that official BCC approval was now needed for purchases over the \$300,000 threshold. She spoke about the impact the spending had and reported that there were over 2.3 million checkouts the prior year. She added that year-to-date checkouts for 2025 had increased by 6.5 percent. She surmised that WCLS users of all ages throughout the community were reading more than ever, and the demand was there.

On motion by Commissioner Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 4-1 vote with Vice Chair Herman voting no, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8 be approved and authorized.

**25-0263**      **AGENDA ITEM 9** Information and acknowledgement of receipt by the Board of County Commissioners of contracts and purchases that have exceeded or are expected to exceed [\$300,000] that may include services and supplies for all County departments. Pursuant to Washoe County Code 15.490, the purchasing and contracts manager is authorized, subject to the provisions of Washoe County Code and the applicable provision of state law, to approve purchases and contracts up to [\$300,000]. As a matter of best practices, the purchasing and contracts manager will keep the Board of County Commissioners informed of all contracts and purchases for all county departments that have been previously approved that have exceeded or are expected to exceed the threshold amount. A full list of specific contracts, vendors, and amounts is viewable in the staff report. The aggregate amount of known expenditures under these contracts to date is \$616,293.51. Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 4-1 vote with Vice Chair Herman voting no, it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be acknowledged.

**25-0264**      **AGENDA ITEM 10** Discussion and possible approval of an interlocal agreement between (1) Washoe County on behalf of the District Attorney's Office and (2) the State of Nevada on behalf of its Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services. The agreement is for the District Attorney's Office to administer a program for the establishment and enforcement of child support and paternity orders and related matters pursuant to NRS 425.375 and related provisions. The agreement would be effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2029, and the

program costs are expected to amount to approximately \$20,779,502.00 (FY 26 \$5,042,042, FY 27 \$5,142,587, FY 28 \$5,245,133, FY 29 \$5,349,730). The contract also provides for 2/3 reimbursement of that \$20,779,502.00 by the state to the county pursuant to federal laws and regulations including Medicare Part IV-D. The current agreement with the state expires on June 30, 2025. Furthermore, request the Chair, Clerk, and District Attorney sign on behalf of the County. District Attorney. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Clark remarked that the agreement reminded him of what was taking place in the Cold Springs area. He said he had asked some questions, but had received a letter from Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Mary Kandaras advising that he could not ask those types of questions. He stated that he had concerns with any issues related to child services and child welfare and wanted his concerns put on the record.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 4-1 vote with Vice Chair Herman voting no, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be approved.

**25-0265**      **AGENDA ITEM 6A1**    Joint presentation and update by the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, Reno Fire Department, and Sparks Fire Department on current and future regional fire collaboration efforts. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Interim Fire Chief Dale Way noted that Reno Fire Department (RFD) Chief David Cochran and Sparks Fire Department (SFD) Chief Walt White were in attendance. He conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Directions from Feb. 6 Meeting; Interagency Working Group; Key Milestones Since Feb. 6; Operational Priorities; Operational Chiefs Subgroup; SB319; Next Steps.

Chief Way explained he was providing an update as a result of the February 6, 2025, joint meeting. He indicated that the presentation would also be presented at the Reno and Sparks city councils. He reviewed the slide title *Directions from Feb 6 Meeting* and said the information received from the joint meeting had been condensed. He said the working group collaborated together on greater cooperation and coordination of services to yield more efficiency and effectiveness. He stated that one of the biggest takeaways was to focus on the regionalization of dispatch in the region. He added that there would be continued efforts to research enhanced regional fire operations. He said that the entities were all independent operations that cooperated and collaborated with one another to develop standard operating guidelines (SOGs) to get to unrestricted automatic aid. He explained that the term *unrestricted automatic aid* had been used previously and was acknowledged by the working group. He hoped the entities could achieve a shared regional dispatch, which he believed would create additional efficiencies and effectiveness with the fire services in the region.

Chief Way reviewed the slide title *Interagency Working Group* and said that

within about two weeks of the initial meeting, the four managers and three fire chiefs agreed to attend weekly meetings. Shortly after, an emphasis was placed on increased communication, more productive cooperation, and collaboration amongst the agencies. He said there was also a focus on decision-making to create policies that would make the process succeed.

Chief Way reviewed the slide titled *Key Milestones Since Feb 6* and explained that they had often used the terms *regionalization* and *consolidation*, and the group focused on regionalization. He said those regionalization efforts included consolidating dispatch and policies that helped them work well together. He noted that the working group wanted to show the different boards and commissions that they had worked together to accomplish what was set forth in the joint meeting. He explained that working with different dispatch centers was a complex environment, but he believed they had come up with reasonable terms that everyone could agree on. He stated that they continued to draft regional SOGs showing how they responded to some of the more standard structure fires and car accidents, so that everyone worked together. He said the managers and fire chiefs testified on Senate Bill (SB) 319, and there was continued collaboration on the request for proposals (RFP) for the study.

Chief Way reviewed the slide titled *Operational Priorities* and mentioned that the working group established certain operational priorities. He added that the focus was to have the closest unit dispatched regardless of borders, which would provide citizens with immediate service. He stated that the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) upgrade with Hexagon was key to progressing, and the deadline was rapidly approaching. He hoped the program would go live between September and October 2025. He said regional response models were part of SOG development, which would allow dispatch to prioritize units. He explained that it was currently being achieved with automatic aid in various areas, so the closest unit was able to respond the quickest. He indicated that focusing on the most effective and efficient call routing was an area of dispatch that would take additional time even after Hexagon went live. He added that once Hexagon was implemented, staff would have a baseline and could work to achieve a more efficient process across every center. He mentioned that the end goal would be working towards a centralized dispatch for all.

Chief Way reviewed the slide titled *Operational Chiefs Subgroup* and said they could not simply create the policy, they needed to ensure that people were properly trained to understand how they were expected to respond. Regarding emergency response models for automatic aid, he noted that based on what was currently in place, they had refined and determined response strings to achieve the recommended National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for total personnel on scene. He said most agencies had numerous personnel on different apparatuses, and they tried to accommodate everyone. He explained they looked at it from the NFPA recommendations of the on-scene number of personnel.

Chief Way reviewed the slide title *SB319* and said it was in the Legislature. He mentioned he emailed the Board an update that SB319 had been amended to a study, which they had all supported. He stated that within the regional fire working group,



managers and fire chiefs were committed to moving forward with a study regardless of the outcome of SB319.

Chief Way reviewed the slide titled *Next Steps* and explained that continued operational regionalization of response was most important to citizens, which would allow the closest unit to respond. He believed labor groups needed to be engaged in discussions and work to define the scope of the study or business plan should start. He said SB319 would be monitored through the Legislature.

Vice Chair Herman thanked the team for their hard work and added that there would be difficult work ahead for them. She said she was grateful for the wisdom and knowledge of the past and looked forward to the future. She thought that the citizens of the County would have the best.

Commissioner Garcia said she appreciated the timely updates and the communication with the Board, and thought it had been helpful. She mentioned she was relieved that there was an amendment since she and Commissioner Andriola had strongly advocated for a third-party review. She was pleased to know that there would be a study that would provide information before any decisions were made. She said she appreciated the update and everyone who had come together to find real solutions, regardless of how difficult the conversations could be. She asked for specific details regarding the RFP and if there was a timeline. She also inquired if there were locals who could do the work or if it would need to be contracted out of State. Chief Way answered that it would likely be a similar process to what had been done with dispatch when they contracted a federal engineer to complete the study. He added that the working group would continue to collaborate on the details of the RFP.

Commissioner Andriola echoed her appreciation for everyone who had worked together. She explained the importance of the study to provide an in-depth, focused look to allow for a clearer understanding. She said she appreciated that operational regionalization was a term used regularly, and that it was not automatically looking to impose taxes. She realized SB319 was currently moving through the process at the Legislature and was out of the Board's hands but expressed the importance of it becoming a study. She questioned the timeline of the RFP and wondered if it would be presented to the Board of Fire Commissioners (BOFC). She questioned how the RFP process would work and be looked at that in a collaborative way. Chief Way said it would be brought back to the BOFC, the BCC, and the Reno and Sparks city councils. Commissioner Andriola asked if all jurisdictions would be able to review the information and provide feedback on what would benefit the community. She stated that when people picked up the phone, they needed a response, and she thought it was enlightening for the community to understand that the Board was moving in a direction that was not seeking to impose taxes on anyone.

Commissioner Andriola questioned the status of the memorandum of understanding (MOU). She wondered if the MOU for automatic aid would still be effective between TMFPD and the City of Reno even though the process was continuing to move towards a viable solution with operational regionalization. Chief Way replied that the RFP

would need to begin quickly depending on the outcome of SB319 because there was a date specific time, which he thought was July 1, 2025, to provide a recommendation from that study. He indicated that the study would occur over the course of the upcoming year and he clarified that the RFP would be assembled and presented to all respective boards, commissions, and councils. He said the MOU on automatic aid had continued even though the 90 days had lapsed, and work continued as well as other cooperative aid agreements. Commissioner Andriola extended her appreciation to Chief Cochran and Chief White, and everyone who worked together for the benefit of the community, without burdening taxpayers.

Commissioner Clark said the public did not care about imaginary lines drawn on a map, they wanted the quickest response when they called for help. He added that the public did not want a debate of whose jurisdiction it was. He mentioned that since SB319 would be a study, it would allow time to prepare for what may come in the future. He voiced his concern regarding a prior study conducted in Reno, and he felt many results had not been implemented. He wondered if SB319 would be an unending study and questioned if the results would be implemented to allow automatic unrestricted aid, which was what his constituents had asked for. He felt that people would have more confidence in the system with that in place. He requested information regarding how that would be implemented and questioned how the study would be utilized. He believed the study could be read, put away, and ignored. He wondered if there was a possibility of having automatic unrestricted aid without waiting for the results from the study.

Chief Way believed that unrestricted automatic aid would be possible without the study. He added that full implementation of the study would likely be incumbent on the BCC and the councils. He noted the study would encompass issues that had been lacking in prior studies and cited the examples of taxation and funding. He said the RFP would address some of those concerns, and then boards, commissions, and councils would fully know the feasibility. At that time, it would be determined how to implement the recommendations from the study.

Commissioner Clark alleged that a study had been done for the RFD that possibly could have provided them with direction, but he felt their city council had not acted on the results of that study. He explained he did not want that to be the case for SB319 and wanted to ensure that unrestricted automatic aid would be addressed, and the Board would be allowed time to examine the information and determine if it made sense. He thanked Chief Way for the report. Chief Way clarified that some of the suggestions from the joint concurrent meeting were unrestricted automatic aid, dispatching, working regional training, and SOGs. He said those were department head or manager-level decisions that had not been made previously and would require cooperation, which he felt was possible. Commissioner Clark indicated that the Board would look to the fire chiefs, the fire unions, and employees as subject matter experts for advice on what could be done to achieve the service level that the consumers and citizens desired.

Chair Hill commended the Board for not acting on SB319 and allowing it to unfold. She felt there had been a positive outcome through the amendment, and she

looked forward to working on what the State asked the Board to do and how to implement it. She said she spent several hours at the Stead Fire Station and witnessed unrestricted automatic aid throughout the day. She thought the call system could be improved, and if that was the option being pursued, she requested that the Board be updated on dispatch services at the next TMFPD meeting. She expressed the importance of viewing the process through those who worked in the stations. She recommended spending some time at the station to see how the process worked. She thanked the team for their leadership and felt lucky to have the support of public service and public safety in the region, and she looked forward to the continued collaboration.

County Manager Eric Brown said it was a pleasant surprise to see how the chiefs worked together with the managers. He thought there had been necessary candid discussions to achieve mutual benefits.

Chair Hill said the Board looked forward to the next update.

**25-0266**      **AGENDA ITEM 6A2** Presentation and Update on FY 25 Third Quarter Status Report for the Washoe County Regional Detention Facility to include security of the jail, conditions of confinement, staffing and medical care of inmates housed at the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts.).

Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Captain Andrew Barrett-Venn conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Total Bookings FY2024; WCDF Users; Bookings by Shift; FY24 Bookings by Age Group; FY24 Bookings by Ethnicity; Suicides Averted/Attempted/Completed; Inmate Assistance Program; Detention Response Team; Yearly Trends; Average Daily Population; Average Daily Populations by Gender; Average Length of Stay; Class Levels by Year; Special Classes by Year; Verified Gang Members; Inmate Fights by Year; Battery on Staff by Year.

Captain Barrett-Venn, reviewed the third-quarter report. He said that to increase transparency, he would provide a quarterly presentation, which would help familiarize the Board and the public with the detention facility. He mentioned that the current presentation would review the entire Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and compare it to the prior years.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide title *Total Bookings FY2024* and said 2024 was a semi-average year with over 14,000 individual bookings that were directed through the sally port from various agencies that used the facility.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *WCDF Users* and reviewed who used the facility. He mentioned that Reno was the largest user, followed by Sparks and others. He explained that others included federal and smaller tribal agencies across Northern Nevada. He indicated that their facility housed a diverse population, which created an issue with the successful flow of paperwork. He said the WCSO coordinated with various agencies to book in a timely manner, allowing their officers to get back on the

street quickly and not be held up at the sally port. He felt large strides had been made, so that officers were not kept any longer than was necessary.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Bookings by Shift* and pointed out that the shift with the most bookings was the night shift, which was 4:00 p.m. to midnight. He explained that mid- and day shifts had the same number of bookings.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *FY24 Bookings by Age Group* and said it was interesting when he ran the numbers because he thought that the average age would have been lower. He thought most people would think it would be lower, but the actual average male inmate age was almost 39 years old and 38 for female inmates.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *FY24 Bookings by Ethnicity* and explained that the most significant number of bookings at the facility were for the white population, followed by Hispanic, black, and others. He said the blue portion that was cut off the slide was unknown. He added that when someone was booked and chose not to identify as any ethnicity, they were marked as unknown.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Suicides Averted/Attempted/Completed* and explained that averted suicides were where deputies physically prevented the suicide. He said physical attempts caught the inmate in the act and either resuscitated or prevented an emergency response with the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA). He added that there was one completed suicide in December 2023.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Inmate Assistance Program* and said 394 inmates were transported in 2024. He stated that the program saved taxpayers \$3,465,630 based on the current rate, and with the new contract increasing, it would be a savings of approximately \$4.5 million. He mentioned that, to be conservative, they used old numbers, and the actual figure would likely be much higher. He said the unit was very small but essential, and the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program coincided with the Detention Services Unit.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Detention Response Team* and expressed how immensely proud he was of the team of 30 highly trained individuals who conducted high-risk transports and specialized in internal and external threats. He said they could be recognized in court by the black uniforms they wore. He indicated that if an inmate went to court and someone in the public wanted to hurt them, the team's job would be to protect the inmate, which was taken very seriously. He said staffing was increased during the election for crowd control preparedness. He mentioned that the entire team was comprised of specialists cross-training with regular deputy ranks had occurred to support that team. He explained that they had reached out to other agencies in Northern Nevada and would continue to do so, in the event there was a mass public demonstration where

crowd control was needed. He mentioned the WCSO could have between 50 and 100 staff

onsite within a few hours.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Yearly Trends* and commented that the next portion of the presentation would review trends between 2008 and 2024.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Average Daily Population* and said there was a trend throughout all the slides, and that 2020 was abnormal because of COVID-19 (C19). He explained that from 2012 to 2024, the trajectory was steady, which he felt made logical sense because the jails average daily population would be more as the population increased. He felt the troubling part was that they held fewer misdemeanants. He added that although lower-level crimes that did not need to be incarcerated had been released, the population continued to increase, which meant more people were committing more serious crimes.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Average Daily Population by Gender* and was fascinated because it had remained unchanged since 2008. He said there was no explanation, but it was a neat statistic considering the changes in mental health populations and severity of crime. He stated that if all numbers were consistent, it would be easier to plan the housing units, daily activities, and programs.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Average length of Stay*, and said that when the WCSO identified that the number needed to decrease, they worked hard to reform the way that someone remained in custody. He explained that they worked with the courts, the Public Defender's Office, and District Attorney's Office to process inmates and release them. He indicated that the Valdez-Jimenez ruling in 2020 changed how things were handled. The unfortunate side effect was that the length of stay was increased by one day which was now the average.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Class Levels by Year* and said it was important because it showed the class levels, which placed focus on the middle two lines, medium and maximum. He noted that the top line was the medium level classification. He explained that inmates were classified by the level of crime, propensity for violence, and history within the jail. He noted that the percentage of mediums remained consistent from 2008, and the unclassified were those that did not stay long enough to be given an official ranking for classification. Chair Hill asked for an example of a medium class. Captain Barrett-Venn explained that a non-violent crime could be possession of a stolen vehicle or drug paraphernalia. The WCSO focused on the maximums and the minimums because those numbers showed trends. He indicated that from 2008 to 2016, it was consistent, and when the reform occurred, misdemeanants were released quickly into the community. He said that because of the reform, minimums dropped, but the maximums, who were the violent offenders, increased. He mentioned that the maximums included those in custody for murder, and noted approximately one out of every 20 inmates were in custody for open murder or another murder charge. He said if that trend continued, the WCSO would need to relocate staff, and housing would need to be able to accommodate a more violent population. He added they would need to consider programs and rehabilitative

processes for those individuals based on the severity of their crimes.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Special Classes by Year* and explained that the administrative status was for those who committed offenses while in custody, such as fights, possession of prison-made alcoholic beverages, manufacturing of weapons, and battery on staff. He noted that the number decreased, but pointed out it was slightly misleading because there was less bed space based on the increased mental health population. He mentioned that the mental health population had displaced some of the more violent non-mental health offenders to allow safe housing. He said the bottom line reflected the protective custody population, the vast majority of whom were incarcerated for child offenses. He advised that the number increased from 2 percent in 2016 to 6 percent in 2024 due to the brilliant work of the Cybercrimes and the Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Units. He stated that those units tracked down individuals who took advantage of or abused children within the community and had done a fantastic job taking them into custody. He indicated that the daily population average had increased because serious crimes took time to prosecute and contributed to an increase in the length of stay.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Verified Gang Members*, and said that currently there were 298, which was 26 percent of the entire WCSO population. He pointed out that there were very few verified female gang members in custody. He added that most females were associates of or had family members involved in the gang community. He explained that if the female population were removed, it would reflect 31 percent of verified gang members of the total male population in the jail. He said that the specific population was difficult to house due to rivalry gangs and the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) mandates. He mentioned that those inmates must be kept as safe as possible which included separating the gangs into different housing units. He described how gangs had evolved into hybrid gangs and noted the difficulty in identifying them due to their confusing tattoos. He indicated a trend in dropouts of gangs who and were non-political, would complete their time quietly, but who had formed new gangs. He mentioned the challenge with housing gangs of dropouts who were former active gang members, who were just as violent as the non-dropout gang members, because they disliked each other.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Inmate Fights by Year* and said that in 2024, there were 86. He stated that 2020 was an abnormal year due to C19 and the numbers had increased steadily since 2012. He said the increase matched the overall growth in population and the surge in the number of severe crimes being committed. He believed that most fights occurred in the maximum units, and about 75 to 80 percent were gang-related in some way.

Captain Barrett-Venn reviewed the slide titled *Battery on Staff by Year* and stated the number had decreased slightly since 2020. He said that inmates that had mental health issues or were new arrivals committed a disproportionate number of batteries on staff. He noted that the positive was that it reflected that the staff handled the maximum units well. He described that having only 26 batteries on staff compared to other facilities was remarkable. He indicated that the small number meant the model of direct supervision, category one training, and the continued training that deputies had reduced fights and

assaults on staff.

Captain Barrett-Venn pointed out that the assembly of the statistics, collected daily, reflected a small amount of information about the correctional world and was used to see trends and better house the inmates. He said their Office Specialists, Meredith Cook and Alyssa Gil, were responsible for helping him prepare the slides and put the numbers together. He added that without their help, the presentation would not have been finished because the data collection was time-consuming.

Vice Chair Herman appreciated the amount of information brought to the Board. She said that, at times, the Board did not understand how hard staffs' jobs were because they dealt with the worst. She respected their work and thanked them for doing it and for the excellent report.

Commissioner Garcia said the WCSO had a difficult job that changed daily, and that collecting the data was time-consuming but enlightening. She shared her concern regarding the trends provided in the presentation, specifically the increases in mental health, crimes against children, and the number of gang members since 2016. She said what put her at ease was the commitment of the Sheriff and the WCSO to provide services and resources to inmates while incarcerated. She commended the WCSO for innovative programming that changed lives. She mentioned that she attended a graduation, and that seeing the men who completed their general education development (GED) or moved on with various aspects of their education was very transformative. She felt concerned but also relieved that there were so many great programs and opportunities within the jail. Captain Barrett-Venn thanked Commissioner Garcia and said the intense programming made a difference, which was not depicted in the presentation. He explained that the mental health population went from 15 percent to 10 percent due to reduction and recidivism, and that was part of the Sheriff's drive for the jail-based mental health unit. He said that unit was manpower intensive, but the results were undeniable and changed lives by reconnecting inmates with their families and keeping them out of custody. He stated that it saved the taxpayers money and made productive members of society instead of people reentering the facility as criminals. He added that they saw results with the Board's support of their programs. He said they hoped to offer those programs to the entire mental health population, as well as those pursuing their GED, and driver's license. He felt that those who attended the courses and signed up for job interviews prior to their release would help reintegrate the jail population into the general population. He commented that the Sheriff had said every inmate was a friend, family, or neighbor, and that when they patrolled the streets, the people in the jail were the same ones who lived in the community.

Commissioner Andriola thanked him for an excellent presentation. She said that when numbers increased, it was discouraging, but because the population was growing, there was likely a correlation. She thanked the WCSO for protecting the community, and she realized the difficulty and could not imagine what they went through each day. She commended them for trying to help those who wanted to become productive citizens by providing them with the tools and resources to do so.

Commissioner Clark thanked Captain Barrett-Venn for the informative

report. He said the report provided a great deal of detailed information, which could require additional time to review. He said it was apparent that Captain Barrett-Venn was aware of what was taking place statistically in the jail. He explained that he had spent a fair amount of time in the kitchen at the jail where he watched the food be prepared and he was aware of what took place around him. He felt the staff was professional and seemed to treat all the inmates with dignity. He said they prepared respectable food for the inmates, handed it out efficiently, and he thought it was very well run, clean, and was a testament to the dedicated crew.

Chair Hill commended the WCSO's work and passion for the jail. She said it was apparent that Captain Barrett-Venn cared about the outcomes and wanted to keep the Board informed so they could ensure the WCSO received the resources they needed. She thought the slide that showed that half of the jail population came from the Reno Police Department (RPD) showed that regional services across the board should be looked at, which included regional policing. She added that the exceptional staff who worked in the jail worked with individuals on their worst day. She believed that would make them better peace officers, and there could be opportunities to find efficiencies and better regional cooperation if services were combined. She explained that she was proud of the WCSO and thanked them for the work that they had done.

**12:00 p.m.**     **The Board recessed.**

**12:10 p.m.**     **The Board reconvened with all members present.**

**25-0267**     **AGENDA ITEM 11**     Update and possible direction to staff regarding preparation of Fiscal Year 2026 budget for consideration by the entire Board at the May 20, 2025 public hearing on the FY2026 budget. Finance. (All Commission Districts.).

Abbe Yacoben, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Washoe County, conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: FY 2026 Budget Update; Fiscal Year 2024 Total Budget Appropriations - \$1.06 Billion; Hiring Freeze vs Vacancy Savings; General Fund Contingency; Budget With and Without Library Support; Next Steps; Thank You & Questions.

County Manager Eric Brown introduced Ms. Yacoben and noted that he wanted to refine the understanding of where the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) was as a group on some of the issues discussed at the previous BCC meeting. He stated that he intended to ensure those things were appropriately addressed within the budget. He noted that Ms. Yacoben was prepared to discuss slides within the presentation that clarified certain key decisions. He introduced the approach to the budget over the following three to five years, which he explained was the relevant period of time. He forecasted exiting Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) at about 25 percent of the fund balance. He recounted that the previous Fiscal Year ended with a fund balance of approximately 30 percent. He stated that contrary to what had been said, the County was not out of funding, but intended to put the proper



practices into place to ensure that would not happen in Fiscal Year 2028 (FY28), Fiscal Year 2029 (FY29), and beyond. He opined that the presentation, which included a 5-year forecast on the slide titled *Budget With and Without Library Support*, would elaborate on that topic and demonstrate the potential impacts of some of the actions that had been discussed.

Ms. Yacoben greeted the Board and introduced herself. She noted that the slide titled *Fiscal Year 2026 Total Budget Appropriations - \$1.06 Billion* appeared relatively the same as what the Board received the week prior, but included staff's interpretation of the guidance that was given to them. She wanted to ensure the Board was in agreement before moving forward so staff could incorporate any changes into future discussions and ultimately into the final budget scheduled for adoption on May 20, 2025. She noted that staff heard the recommendation for no expanded positions in all funds and opined that the time was not right to expand or add positions. She recounted that there was opposition or great reservations regarding a hiring freeze. She said she would discuss that topic again on the next slide by discussing an idea called vacancy savings, which she believed would be mutually beneficial.

Ms. Yacoben indicated that there would be no reclassifications resulting in cost increases. She noted that multiple departments were getting very creative by upgrading the necessary positions as an employee was doing more sophisticated work while downgrading another position, resulting in a net-zero impact. She commended those departments and described those efforts as wonderful. She noted positions that moved up without any offsets created long-term costs that could not be supported at that time. She stated that staff would streamline processes, re-evaluate, and be prepared to pivot if needed, as they wanted everyone to be in the proper classification and pay grade.

Ms. Yacoben noted that staff had heard the recommendation to remove the library support of \$1.3 million. She reminded those in attendance who might be new to the topic that when Washoe County Question Number One (WC1) did not pass, there was a residual fund balance in the Library Expansion Fund. She noted that the fund balance needed to be used for the purpose for which it was intended as voted on 30 years prior. She described that there was between \$1 million and \$1.3 million in that fund, which she noted was a very conservative estimate, as the amount was unknown because the year had not yet ended. She reiterated that the \$1.3 million was a very conservative estimate to subsidize the library for the year, while staff worked with the Library Board of Trustees (LBT) and library staff to create an operational model and subsequent budget that the BCC could support. She explained that one of the goals was to update the BCC on what staff heard at the previous meeting, to ensure that the information was understood correctly, to obtain guidance, and to update the Board on new occurrences. She recounted that in the last week, staff received phone calls from the Commissioners and from staff who wanted to begin the process of working together to identify a collaborative solution. She stated that the collaborative solution would not be ready by May 20, 2025. She noted that the Board would see the budget forecasts with and without library support at the end of the slides, and that staff would need guidance from the BCC.

Ms. Yacoben stated that no change had been proposed for the \$1 million increase in the General Fund transfer to Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH). She noted that there was a recommendation to increase the General Fund transfer to the Roads Fund by \$5 million. She explained that a positive aspect of conducting presentations like this was that staff could provide the Board with information regarding where potential risks and areas of concern were. She noted that the General Fund transfer to the Roads Fund was one such area of concern. She recounted that as she was working with leadership from the Community Services Department (CSD) to investigate the Roads Fund over the next five to ten years, she discovered that the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) quality benchmark score was 73. However, the County's score had degraded into the high 60s, with a score of 68 or 69. She described that as she looked into the models created to identify how much the County would need to spend to reach the PCI benchmark of 73, she found that the cost in the first five years would be somewhere between \$11 to \$15 million per year, depending on which year was being considered. She recommended using an average estimation of \$13 million. She noted that the \$5 million transfer would get the Roads Fund out of trouble and prevent the loss of cash, which she opined might otherwise happen in the coming year. She noted that the recommended transfer would not solve the PCI policy compliance situation.

Ms. Yacoben described the recommendation that Special District Funds remain at \$100,00 per district. She introduced the suggestion that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded positions be paid for with ARPA interest. She recalled with some uncertainty that \$1.2 million in salaries were paid for with ARPA interest out of the total \$6 million provided by that interest. She elaborated that the recommendation provided a temporary solution, which would give time for that conversation to be addressed again in the future.

Ms. Yacoben stated that the contingency fund was not included within their initial discussion as a central point of conversation, but she noted that the topic had been mentioned. She explained that as new factors were introduced into the budget model and the 5-year forecast to close the gap in the budget, which she expressed confidence in being able to achieve, there would be additional risk introduced into places that were previously unaffected. She wanted to provide a briefing on contingency as questions regarding those areas of risk arose, so that Commissioners could make the right decisions for the Board. She referred to the recommendation for frequent updates, which she described as a unchanged factor.

Ms. Yacoben referred to the content on the slide titled *Hiring Freeze vs Vacancy Savings*. She requested to review hiring freezes and the Vacancy Savings model, as she described having received questions following the previous briefing that led her to believe she had not provided enough detail. She considered hiring freezes not only as an administrative function but also as an austerity measure. She noted that hiring freezes served as a strict target of numbers and personnel to be achieved through controlled hiring in certain areas. She clarified that a hiring freeze did not mean that employees could not swap in or out of vacant positions, but instead meant freezing the personnel budgets rather than halting the entire budget, with some employee salaries coming from the services and

supplies budget and others from the personnel budget. She stated that in most cases, personnel increases were higher than they were for increases in services and supplies. She noted that they were not equivalent trades and were a cause for careful consideration.

Ms. Yacoben explained that hiring freezes reduced expenditures without layoffs or furloughs. She recounted that the Board voiced loyalty to the employee base, which she noted was appreciated, and the reason for the introduction of the hiring freeze at that time. She acknowledged that a hiring freeze required more centralized oversight as a common rule that everyone would follow. She opined that there was flexibility in employees being able to swap between positions. She reiterated that the hiring freeze paused personnel expenditures as opposed to implementing layoffs, furloughs, or other types of reductions to the budget. She noted that the hiring freeze was accompanied by a review process that had been in place in the past, where staff proposed to conduct a multi-departmental collaborative review process with the option of appeal if an individual did not receive an answer they felt was sufficient. She noted that the process involved a two-step procedure and was thought through. She stated that a positive aspect of a hiring freeze, despite serving as an austerity measure and being very difficult, was that the associated savings were long-term. She explained that those savings did not just consist of a single instance, as a frozen position would go into perpetuity and assist in the 5-year forecast. She noted her intent to move on to another topic, as she believed she had identified an alternative that would be mutually beneficial.

Ms. Yacoben described that when considering other practices of a size similar to the County, as a large employer with 3,100 employees, the best budgeting practice was considered vacancy savings, otherwise known interchangeably as salary savings. She reiterated that vacancy savings were considered to be a budgeting best practice. She illustrated a hypothetical scenario in which, if she were to leave her position the next day and the role remained vacant for three months until a new employee was hired, the new hire would start at the beginning of the position's pay scale based on the fair rule established by the Board and would lead to natural savings through attrition. She elaborated that a vacancy savings model was not a hiring freeze where the Board directed people to keep certain positions frozen. Instead it consisted of monitoring what was done, how the hiring processes worked, and what the natural rates of attrition and turnover were, while placing those things into the budget and 5-year forecast. She noted that for many years, those factors were put into the later portions of the forecast, such as in years two through six or during years one through five after the current budget. She explained that the rate included in those portions was approximately 1.5 percent. She proposed an increase to 3 percent in consideration of what was standard compared to other entities, as well as the history of the County. She reported that she had seen other places reach higher rates than that in departments with higher turnover before reverting, which was a practice she did not recommend.

Ms. Yacoben stated that vacancy savings provided more flexibility for the departments as the Board would not give them any specific directive and would instead codify what had already been happening. She noted that the implementation would be based on the historic experience of how long the hiring process took and what the new

employee's salary started at, compared to what the exiting or retiring employee received. She noted that vacancy savings was positive for the department as the model was not an austerity measure and was beneficial to the BCC as the 5-year forecast would ultimately become more accurate without the additional attrition needing to be accounted for in the budget. She acknowledged that while those elements were mutually beneficial, risk was also introduced into the 5-year forecast. She elaborated that the risk was that when the County had previously experienced events where the need arose to enter into a contingency plan, augment the fund, or change a budget. Those efforts could be done with much more ease than would be possible at that time, as those practices tightened the forecast. She explained that despite the risk, the vacancy savings model was a more accurate way of projecting future occurrences and subsequently offered a compromised solution for the Board to consider.

Ms. Yacoben referred to the slide titled *General Fund Contingency*. She described the General Fund contingency account as another previously mentioned recommendation that she felt deserved a separate slide. She acknowledged that a conversation regarding contingency could be held in more detail at the following BCC meeting scheduled for May 8, 2025, or at a different meeting. She indicated her intent to present the information for the purpose of continued consideration. She explained that Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 354 governed contingency at a maximum of 3 percent of expenditures, excluding transfers out of the fund. She stated that the Board approved the use of contingency funds, so when the Board considered items that required or proposed the use of contingency funds, staff would present those items with the necessary specialized language. She noted that contingency funds could be different every year, and in FY25, staff budgeted the maximum amount of 3 percent for very specific reasons. She recounted that collective bargaining had been underway and that staff did not know the outcome at the time. She explained that there had been a significant Request for Proposal (RFP) during the spring of FY25, and staff had accommodated the expected increase, for a total that would be \$1.2 to \$1.3 million higher than anticipated. She noted that staff responded by coming back with that contingency, and described those actions as an appropriate use of a fund or account of that type. She stated that large mid-year contracts were renegotiated in FY25, and noted that she could think of several situations where, for example, a contract did not end on June 30 and was renegotiated. She explained the occurrence of prices being locked in by a contract when the agreement was renegotiated once every five years, only for cost increases to occur upon renegotiation. She acknowledged that the Board had likely seen similar increases, particularly with software and technological equipment. She indicated that increases associated with contract renegotiations were another area where they might have to consider a contingency even if staff might not like to.

Ms. Yacoben stated that Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) originally proposed a contingency of \$6.8 million. She noted that the values she was providing were run-on numbers for a high-level discussion. She stated that the FY26 contingency was proposed at a rate of 1.5 percent because collective bargaining agreements were being negotiated. She explained that the expected bid prices saw some cost increases and high inflation in the services and supplies area. She elaborated that bid prices did not always come back at a natural inflationary rate of 2.5 percent to 2.75 percent, which staff had assumed five years

ago. She described that those rates had since increased higher than that. She reported that general market conditions were uncertain. She wanted to mention a factor about both contingency and fund balance, though she noted they did not need to talk about the fund balance on that day. She emphasized that higher contingency and fund balances would be expected when a third of the revenue within the General Fund was based on sales tax, which was dependent upon how much people spent to subsequently generate that tax. She noted this was not something the County could control. She recounted that she had witnessed higher contingencies and fund balances on the West Coast compared to when she began her career working on the East Coast. She attributed those lower fund balances and contingencies in the eastern portion of the Country to revenue being much more certain in that area. She noted that they could debate that topic further in the future.

Ms. Yacoben referred to the slide titled *Budget With and Without Library Support*. She wanted to show the information on the slide so she could assess the budget with and without additional library support expenditures. She described that staff had compared the original General Fund 5-year forecast with the \$1.3 million in library support to a version of the forecast without that expenditure. She noted that the impact of that change could be seen in the charts. She opined that both forecast depictions showed a worst-case scenario, as staff had not yet worked with the LBT or library management to identify the ideal operational budget to bring back as a proposal to the Board. She noted that staff had contacted the LBT, and she informed the Board that staff would begin that work the following day.

Ms. Yacoben referred to the slide titled *Next Steps* and reported that weekly briefings would continue at the regular BCC meetings. She proposed discussing the contingency at subsequent briefings and acknowledged that the topic had been mentioned at that meeting. She opined that the topic of contingency should be brought back and discussed further if the desired value for the contingency was not discerned. She noted that augmentation to the fund was another topic to provide additional briefings on, because projections would become more accurate as more risk was introduced into the fund. She stated that there were only two ways to augment or increase a budget in Nevada, which she emphasized the State was very strict and transparent about, despite being easy to follow. She wanted to explain how augmentations were impacted when risk was introduced into the 5-year forecast. She stated that the in-depth discussion would be held on May 8, 2025, and the public hearing on the tentative and final budget adoption was scheduled for May 20, 2025. She noted that State law required the County to file the budget with the Department of Taxation by June 1, 2025, though staff would try to have that filed a couple of days early. She concluded her presentation and stated that she would take any questions.

Vice Chair Herman recalled that she had discussed abatements and new construction at a previous meeting. She asked if the BCC could have a presentation by the Treasurer or Assessor regarding the background and possibilities.

Ms. Abbe Yacoben noted that the Treasurer and Assessor were not prepped for an immediate discussion but indicated they could be invited to a future meeting. She mentioned that the abatement in the general fund was about \$71 million, while all funds

were roughly \$94 million. She indicated that Vice Chair Herman's statements regarding abatements being a major contributor to the budget were correct.

Commissioner Garcia thought that the wonderful thing about budget discussions was that they would impact fiscal year (FY) 2030 and beyond. She opined that the BCC needed to be cognizant of the effects that could occur from ideas and suggestions. She appreciated the presentation and believed the details were great. She indicated that no one on the BCC was an accountant or ran an organization with over 3,000 employees. She said that while the BCC may be familiar with budgets in their personal lives, it did not make them experts. She did not want Ms. Yacoben to feel like the BCC did not support her or Ms. Cooke. She communicated that the previous meeting was difficult, and she wanted to ensure Ms. Yacoben was thanked for her work.

Commissioner Garcia asked what the May 8, 2025, workshop vision was. Chair Hill believed that the idea of the workshop was to allow the BCC to hear from department heads but cautioned that the presentations should not reflect a sales pitch because that could place the BCC in a challenging position. She noted that the workshop was a consequence of budgetary actions. She asked if all department budgets were flat and if there was no recommendation for a hiring freeze. Ms. Yacoben confirmed that all department budgets were flat and said she felt the BCC wanted more options.

Chair Hill wondered if Ms. Yacoben was recommending vacancy savings. Ms. Yacoben confirmed the recommendation of vacancy savings and said there was risk involved because the forecast was tighter. There would be no ability to enforce vacancy savings which could cause a lack of achievability in departments. She explained that smaller departments would be over budget, which she said was not illegal per Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS).

Chair Hill believed that the State performed the same vacancy practice. Ms. Yacoben indicated that she was unsure but would not be surprised if the State followed the same procedure. Chair Hill mentioned that the rates were built into the budget because the State knew its own historical rates. Chair Hill asserted that Ms. Yacoben was working with the larger departments regarding budget contracts. She was confident that Ms. Yacoben and staff could work through issues. She did not think that the workshop was necessary if there was a flat budget and no hiring freeze. She originally desired the workshop because she wanted to understand the consequences of each decision. She reported that the BCC would track the progress of the vacancy savings and reconvene for updates. She felt hesitation removing the \$1.3 million for the library because if all departments remained flat, she did not understand the desire to lower funding for the library.

Commissioner Garcia noted that she wanted to hear from the elected officials, but she was nervous about it taking place in a public forum. She indicated that

this was her first round of difficult conversations regarding the budget, and she was hesitant about the workshop.

Commissioner Andriola thanked Ms. Yacoben and Ms. Cooke for their hard work. She believed that it was challenging to gather and balance the desires of the BCC. She appreciated the summary and thought individual meetings were helpful. She explained that she liked analyzing information for research opportunities. She noted that it was difficult to receive information at the time of the meeting without the option of providing direction. She asked about department flexibility regarding vacancy savings. She wondered if departments were allowed to decide what was in the department's best interest to stay within their budgets. Ms. Yacoben said that Commissioner Andriola's comments were correct.

Commissioner Andriola appreciated having weekly meetings as needed. She asked what the process of augmentation was. Ms. Yacoben explained that briefings in advance could take place; however, she did not always have the information early and sometimes received questions as late as the day before a meeting. She noted that the weekly meetings would be more like a conversation rather than a presentation.

Ms. Yacoben reported that she did not prepare an augmentation presentation because she wanted to receive further feedback. She indicated that augmentation was when the BCC made a change to or increased the budget. Staff could then perform a transfer of appropriation that did not increase the budget from department to department. She noted that the two ways to augment the budget included an additional beginning fund balance that was provided from the State or through unanticipated revenues throughout the year. She only recommended augmentation through unanticipated revenue from grants. She voiced that expenditures could not be budgeted if it was unknown whether a grant was going to be received. She asserted that it was not recommended to indicate a consolidated tax (c-tax) increase if there was only nine months of data. She commented that the State was monitoring the budget. She recalled that the State had reviewed an augmentation that was not proper, and it was sent back.

Commissioner Andriola indicated that the complexity of augmentation was essential to understand. She noted that there was little time to meet the June 1, 2025, deadline. She mentioned that while it could be done, there were clear factors regarding the request. She thanked Ms. Yacoben for providing financial guidance regarding fiduciary responsibilities to the Library Board of Trustees (LBT). She asked if the LBT would have the information before May 20, 2025. Ms. Yacoben did not know because she believed the LBT first needed to research operational functions.

Commissioner Andriola said that the Library's budgetary impact was unknown, and she wondered if they needed the \$1.3 million. Ms. Yacoben indicated that the expansion fund budget was roughly \$4.5 million, and the Library was scheduled to have about \$3.5 million in residual balance. She explained that it would be clear if it were needed after the budget was adopted, but she believed \$1.3 million was the most conservative value. She reported that personnel and circulation were in the expansion fund. She speculated that if the BCC were to change the amount, the Library would have to reconsider its needs. She voiced that she did not know what the impacts were because it was not her area of expertise.

Commissioner Andriola indicated that the budget was flat with recommendations but asked if it would be flat without the \$1.3 million going to the Library. Ms. Yacoben noted that the \$1.3 million made the budget flat.

Commissioner Andriola mentioned that County Manager Eric Brown reiterated that the budget discussion was also for the future. She hoped to look to the department heads to make the decisions if there needed to be program pauses. She believed that the possibility of pausing programs needed to be researched now instead of waiting. She asserted that providing updates would be helpful. She noted that it would be difficult to have every department present to the Board, but she felt the time restraints were firm and that discussion should be open. She recalled the 2008 Great Recession and had since found the recommendations made by staff in the past were important to understand for future discussion. She felt that it was her fiduciary responsibility to share the information for collective research and to provide possibilities. She wished to know if it would be difficult for the LBT to request an augmentation. Ms. Yacoben reported that the library could be augmented if there was an excess beginning fund balance in the County budget, but she may propose utilizing the contingency fund instead. She explained that a need for augmentation was unknown until financial statements were received.

Commissioner Andriola asked if the \$12.4 million contingency fund could be utilized for the Library. Ms. Yacoben noted that it could not be used before June 30, 2025. She asserted that the BCC's adaptive contingency for next year would be utilized.

Commissioner Andriola appreciated everyone's collegiality and believed the team was stronger when there were differences in opinion. She thanked staff for the detailed options and the opportunity for department heads to provide the required services. She said that even if there were no major changes, feedback was still important for transparency.

Chair Hill mentioned that austerity measures were not occurring. She asked Commissioner Andriola if she envisioned updates throughout the year from departments because she believed that the BCC should receive regular updates. Commissioner Andriola agreed. Chair Hill recommended tabling the workshop meeting depending on how the conversation progressed.

Commissioner Andriola said that she had discussed possible projections and thought the BCC should receive updates along the way so that department heads were aware and could offer suggestions. She noted that it was helpful for the public to have transparency through ongoing public discussions.

Commissioner Clark appreciated Ms. Yacoben's work and frankness and asked who her reporting supervisor was. Ms. Yacoben replied that Manager Brown was whom she reported to. Commissioner Clark recommended that Ms. Yacoben's subsequent conversation with Manager Brown involve providing the Board with information sooner than five minutes before the presentation. He felt he had asked for the information



repeatedly and was frustrated by rushed processes. He indicated that the BCC needed the information before the meeting. Ms. Yacoben expressed that she understood. Commissioner Clark warned that the next time he received information at the last minute, he would walk out and read it on his own time.

Commissioner Clark expressed that he felt discomfort when department heads did not talk to him. He asserted that he did not want to put department heads on the spot to answer questions today; however, he thought the discussions should have been ongoing. He reported that the Commissioners were only elected by 20 percent of the County, whereas the elected department heads were elected by the whole County.

Commissioner Clark indicated that the elected department heads were subject matter experts and that the public wanted to hear from them. He recalled that his department stood on its own and delivered service when he was the Assessor. The County did not have Washoe 311 at the time. He opined that all forms of information were needed, whether it was good or bad. He believed that saying it was inappropriate to hear from department heads was farcical. He understood that details would be added to the presentation, but he thought the presentation could be delivered before the meeting. He said that the budget should have been discussed months before when Manager Brown received a pay raise and bonus, despite of the budget deficit.

Commissioner Clark referred to Ms. Cindy Martinez's comments regarding the economic deficit at the State and said that the County lost 60 percent of equity with foreclosures on every street, people lost their jobs, and housing prices plummeted. He reported that the Treasurer had a historical increase in money received due to more new construction than ever before and the highest gas and sales taxes in the State. He wondered why the County was struggling during good times and believed that the County was in worse shape than during the Great Recession.

Commissioner Clark noted the recommendation of no expanded positions but asked if positions would be filled as needed. Ms. Yacoben confirmed that positions would be filled as needed. Commissioner Clark referred to the NNHP funding transfer and wanted to know if the City of Reno and the City of Sparks contributed to NNHP. Ms. Yacoben explained that she was not an expert; however, she recalled that the Cities provided some property tax funding in the past, but did not send a transfer like the County did.

Commissioner Clark mentioned that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were insufficient to fund positions. He indicated the funding was not guaranteed, and the money would be depleted. He asserted that the County was loyal to its employees, but he was more loyal to the taxpayers. He voiced that the County should consider furloughs, cut hours, or layoffs for individuals hired with ARPA funds.

Chair Hill clarified that the ARPA positions were in the Alternate Public Defenders Office (APDO) and Public Defenders Office (PDO). Commissioner Clark believed that the positions should have been funded properly without unsustainable funds.

Commissioner Clark asked if there was departmental flexibility with vacancy savings. Ms. Yacoben communicated that the recommendation codified what the departments experienced when an employee left. She said that the new employee would start at a lower salary, which she said would codify the attrition rate based on historical knowledge. Commissioner Clark asked if department heads had savings flexibility from unfilled positions. He noted that he spoke to Sheriff Darin Balaam about past savings that the WCSO wanted to use on other things. Ms. Yacoben expressed that using position savings for other services was strongly discouraged because she said it tightened the modeling more. She explained that personnel, services, and supplies were kept separate; however, when there was a base increase to the budget the department automatically received it. She said the base budget increased based on contract increases. She explained that she encouraged departments to ask for new programs during budget times or utilize contingency funds during the middle of the year.

Commissioner Clark asked what more centralized oversight meant. Ms. Yacoben said that more centralized oversight was a rule when a hiring freeze occurred which was the same across all departments. She noted that there would be a review committee to research all position proposals versus the use of vacancy savings, which were budgeted into the department.

Commissioner Clark asked what the review process appeal entailed. Ms. Yacoben mentioned that if someone resigned and the department wanted to fill the position because they believed it was critical, the department would go to the review committee. She noted the review committee would indicate if the position was critical or propose other options to lessen the departmental burden. She explained that austerity measures were used to research different methods and improve processes. Commissioner Clark wanted to know if a department could appeal if their staff decreased significantly. Ms. Yacoben communicated that the scenario would not fall under the review process. She assumed Commissioner Clark was asking about a department that simply needed more people. Commissioner Clark clarified that departments had vacancies based on how they used to do business when the County was much smaller. He said the departments may not need a significant number of employees, but a few to help lessen the burden. Ms. Yacoben asserted that if there were vacancies in the department that were frozen under a different situation, the department would bring the appeal to the review committee for discussion. She commented that 80 percent of the general fund was personnel, and said the County should be cautious when filling vacant positions. She expressed that it was frowned upon to request personnel mid-year because it did not give the BCC the ability to look at all the proposals together. She said that many departments wanted things throughout the year, but those requests should be heard at the same time, unless it was an emergency.

Commissioner Clark believed Ms. Yacoben knew what department he was referring to and said they did not wake up overnight with the need for more employees. He said that the department had requested the positions for several years. He felt that he had institutional knowledge after 10 years with the County and when he saw the letter from the elected officials, he believed it was unprecedented. He wanted to support the elected

officials. He noted that the elected officials needed to be involved in an open discussion.

Commissioner Andriola asked if the hiring freeze was not an option. Chair Hill indicated that it was an option they did not have to choose. Ms. Yacoben mentioned that she was attempting to provide options. Commissioner Andriola asked if the options were between the vacancy savings and the hiring freeze, which Ms. Yacoben confirmed.

Chair Hill explained that she supported the library funding since all department budgets remained flat. She asserted that if all departmental funding was cut, then she would support a reduction in library funding. She noted that Ms. Yacoben and Ms. Cooke would assist the departments with salary savings and realistic budgets. She reminded the BCC that the library had been saving the County over \$3 million in the general fund because the WCLS had the expansion fund. She did not love utilizing the expansion fund, but she understood it was a compromise. She knew that there would be discussions but she thought the BCC needed to support the \$1.3 million. She mentioned that the BCC would work with the staff to develop an understanding of library operations to ensure the library could continue the evening and weekend hours that the BCC supported. She believed that the ARPA funded positions needed to be discussed because the PDO and APDO said it was hard to keep professionals when those salaries were not in the general fund budget. She wondered if that impact could be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. Yacoben reported this issue involved eight positions that equated to roughly \$1.2 million. Chair Hill wanted to make sure the professionals were maintained in the PDO and APDO. She did not want tertiary counsel utilized due to a lack of positions. She said using tertiary counsel cut into contingency funding and was expensive.

Chair Hill appreciated the contingency fund explanation because she thought it was odd to have \$12 million left over. Ms. Yacoben understood the confusion. Chair Hill indicated that it felt like the County was in a crisis but had \$12 million sitting in the contingency. She noted that it seemed like the County was reconsidering assessments to find a balanced budget. She appreciated Vice Chair Herman's suggestion regarding hearing from the Assessor about the abatements. She thought that the topic of abatements would be a good discussion for the BCC and the next legislative session.

Commissioner Garcia agreed with Chair Hill and said that two weeks prior she had read a headline indicating the library budget was stable. She communicated that she did not expect to hear two of her colleagues disagree with allocating \$1.3 million to the library fund. She divulged that she was shocked and disappointed because she thought there were three programs identified early on that were in need of immediate support. She mentioned that the Library was facing a critical need and a viable solution had been offered by staff. She explained that it felt strange that two of the three programs in need were approved immediately while the Library was not. She was grateful to be able to express concern but she did not feel the level of scrutiny was warranted towards the Library. She disclosed that her sister worked for the Library, her brother worked for Roads, she had served on the District Board of Health and stated she was not practicing favoritism. She said that she was not shy about making disclosures and had no pecuniary interests. She noted that when a department expressed struggles and concerns, she felt that it was the

leader's job to assist. She said that the WCLS, NNPH, and Roads were all struggling and she wanted them to have the resources they needed in FY2026. She said that it was not personal or political but the right thing to do. She opined that preparing for future years may be different. She thanked Ms. Yacoben for discussing the hiring freeze and the salary savings because she felt the options were helpful. She asserted that she felt comfortable with what was presented and urged the BCC not to hold the library unfairly. She hoped the BCC could understand the return on investment and that the library served many populations. She believed that the BCC needed to be leaders and boost morale instead of tearing it down.

Commissioner Andriola appreciated Commissioner Garcia's passionate support, and thought everyone supported libraries. She noted that it was interesting that everyone was focused on the \$1.3 million in a \$1.6 billion budget. She indicated that the BCC did not know if the Library was truly struggling, and while she did not want the Library to experience hardship, she thought it was important to provide the opportunity to research the LBT's responsibilities. She said if there were struggles, interest could be given to the Library for full positions. She thought the work of the District Attorney (DA), PDO, and the Library was important. She did not know what the full responsibilities of the LBT were and commented that the LBT Chair requested a pause to look at the budget. She thanked Manager Brown for offering the opportunity for Finance to assist the LBT and said balance was essential. She said the recommendation was to use ARPA interest to fund the DA and PDO positions. She explained that it was important for FY2027 budget planning to research the priorities and discuss needs with the department heads. She said that the BCC did not know where the library was in terms of need, which was what she wanted to know. She referred to her previous comments from the April 15, 2025, meeting and said that the BCC discussed the tightening of budgets. She reported that her hesitation about the \$1.3 million was related to the potential of all departments having to suffer, including the Library. She believed that it was not correct to assume that she believed the \$1.3 million was political. She did not want to hurt the libraries, but said that the utilization rates and library needs were conflicting. She had heard from some that the Library needed funding, but from others that it did not. She was unsure what the Library needed, and that was why she wanted the LBT to review and vote for a recommended budget before it was reviewed by the County. She opined that the reason for the uncertainty was due to a lack of process. She reiterated that she was not against the Library and did not want to remove magical opportunities from families and children but believed there were also 24 other departments that had important services. She speculated that once options were selected, the BCC could have more difficult discussions in the future. She wanted to perform her fiduciary responsibility and believed that she was only one voice. She did not know what the ARPA interest was but wanted to explore other options for the DA and PDO.

Commissioner Clark agreed with Commissioner Andriola and indicated that the NNPH and Roads Department needed funding. He encouraged Ms. Silver to run for the LBT because he believed in her. He thought there were a couple of Commissioners that people would think were unlikely allies of his who voted for Ms. Silver to be on the LBT. He noted that Ms. Silver asked for an opportunity to review the library budget. He said if the Library needed funding, he would support it, but he wanted someone

to research options. He expressed that he did not want to remove library funding and make them fend for themselves. He was unsure how long it would take for Ms. Silver to review the budget, but he felt it was the correct process and would create a better understanding of what was needed. He did not want to be blindly led through budget recommendations, and trusted Ms. Yacoben would work with Ms. Silver on options. He communicated that the County should not rush through processes without proper information.

Chair Hill believed that the previous year's budget would be passed on May 20, 2025, if the BCC could not reach a consensus. She noted that Ms. Yacoben needed direction within the next few meetings regarding the Library. She mentioned that, to the public commenters' point, the \$1.3 million was a small portion of the larger budget. She indicated that it seemed like the Library was being targeted, and she knew that some Commissioners thought it was a mandate. She explained that it was not a mandate, and people were confused about the ballot question. She compiled the statistics of WC1 for clarity and reported that a majority of voters in the County did not vote for or against the expansion fund. She stated that 5.7 percent did not vote on the item, equating to 15,000 people, 45.7 percent voted yes, equating to 120,000 people, and 48.5 percent voted no. She said that the no votes were not the majority and she felt that it was fair to say there was confusion on whether it was a divided mandate from the community. She believed that there was clear support for library services after the ballot measure failed. She felt that the WCLS should be held accountable for the same fiscal decisions expected from other departments. She said that all County departments were flat, and to take from the Library was a punishment. She did not support layoffs or reductions of hours and services at the library when the County expanded the Library. She communicated that the community rallied together to request the BCC's support of the WCLS because the residents witnessed what the Library had done since 2021. She recalled that people experienced enrichment, and she thought that with a change of leadership, there would be an opportunity to review the operations and funding of the WCLS. She reported that the Library would not receive Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding from the federal government due to the actions of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). She opined that the conversation would be great over the next year because there were 24 departments that could be heard from at every meeting. She asserted that the discussion would continue at the May 13, 2025, meeting and it was possible there would not be a workshop. She said that there would be a budget item on the May 20, 2025, agenda and Ms. Yacoben needed to know how to proceed.

Commissioner Clark indicated that Ms. Silver was a good friend and that he was vilified by people of his own political party for supporting her. He knew she was the right person for the LBT. He believed that she should be allowed to share comments and options after reviewing the budget and meeting with Ms. Yacoben. He said that he was called an election denier for the last five years over an election that someone did not win but claimed they did. He said that the roles had reversed and another political party were now the election deniers. He said that people could disagree with how a vote turned out but should not deny the results of an election. He mentioned that saying something did not pass due to speculated uncertainty, lies, or flyers was denying the outcome of the election. He believed telling voters they did not understand what they were voting for was an insult. He

felt that the election outcome was valid and to say it did not happen or was not understood was offensive. He communicated that election deniers were flooding the chambers. He explained that the LBT controlled the Library Director. He opined that the point of the LBT was so that the BCC did not have to meddle and micromanage the Library.

Chair Hill noted that it was the BCC's job to approve the library budget and clarified that WC1 was not a mandate.

Commissioner Clark told Chair Hill expressed frustration over being interrupted/ He stated other Board Members could disagree, but it was improper for them to correct him.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Cindy Martinez displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk and said that the information she presented during Agenda Item 3 was based upon the hiring of the County Manager in October 2019. She noted that she gathered information from agendas, minutes, and video. She mentioned that she preferred to conduct detailed research on causes, conditions, and source documents. She reported that she voted no on Washoe County Question One (WC1), knowing where the two cents would go. She asserted that she was not duped or confused by WC1 and knew precisely what she voted against because she did not like the Washoe County Library System's (WCLS) management process, the behavior of its employees, and the public protesting of WC1. She indicated that there was accountability on both sides. She declared that she was offended because the results of the election were valid and she felt that it was an insult to say otherwise. She recalled informed conversations with a variety of people regarding WC1, and while she said that she was not solely responsible for the outcome, the individuals she spoke to were informed and intelligent. She remarked that she had not heard a definition for essential services. She asked why the presentation was not published and speculated that she would need to request the presentation from public records. She specified that she was offended by the push to continue discretionary funds. She explained that the discretionary funds started at \$20,000 per district and had increased over the past five years. She referred to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 244.1505 and said that discretionary funds had been amended five times since its adoption in 1981. She concluded that discretionary funds were taxpayer money.

Ms. Marie Rodriguez a Library Board of Trustees (LBT) Trustee, displayed a document, copies of which were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. She deemed the libraries an essential service and said that she regularly met with people who did not have computers or internet and could not afford to purchase books. She divulged that her family used to rely on the library for books when her child was young. She commented that libraries were a part of the community and that she attended a Latino poetry event organized by Nevada Humanities at the Sierra View Library which she said was empowering and well attended. She communicated that the LBT was given ample time to review the budget. She mentioned that the LBT was given information and an agenda in advance each time the budget was discussed and there was an opportunity to ask questions during the meeting. She said that she asked clarifying questions, understood, and comprehended the budget. She responded that as a Trustee, she was confident the library

funds were appropriately handled. She detailed that the budget was covered at the December 8, 2024, and January 15, 2025, LBT meetings. She speculated that the January 15, 2025, budget layout was difficult for some of the LBT Trustees and that they wanted a clarified format. She indicated that on February 19, 2025, the budget was presented in a clarified format, and on March 19, 2025, more budgetary questions were answered. She said the Board was given a paper copy of the presentation. She voiced that budget frugality was discussed due to the increase in prices.

Ms. Penny Brock displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. and said that Senate Bill (SB) 116, sponsored by Senator Skip Daly, established a base compensation for elected officers for fiscal year (FY) 2025 and 2026 at a three percent increase higher than the highest-salaried employee under their supervision. She indicated that the County Manager was the BCC's highest-salaried employee. She opined that each Commissioner would receive 3 percent more than \$364,000 per year, which she said would amount to \$10,920, for a total of \$374,920 per year. She mentioned that the increase would go into effect July 1, 2025. She commented that, according to Article 15.3 of the Nevada Constitution, an increase or decrease in the compensation of officers whose compensation was fixed by the constitution would apply after the term of the current elected officer ended. She thought the salary increase would apply to the contingency fund.

Ms. Stacy McKenzie indicated that she was the acting Library Director. She mentioned that she would work closely with the LBT to ensure they had the desired information. She indicated that she wanted to ensure the LBT felt confident that the WCLS needed \$1.3 million and said she would meet with the LBT over the next few months to discuss the budget with the community. She reported that she and the WCLS were committed to moving forward. She noted that one of her goals was to balance issues to ensure that information was provided and to meet with anyone who had criticisms or other opinions. She detailed that she had worked in every type of library for over 30 years and recalled that she was also a prison librarian for several years. She understood how important libraries were to all community members. She wanted the WCLS to remain for everyone, and she understood governmental budgets and library consulting. She asserted that she would be diligent in her role as the acting Director to help the LBT recruit a balanced, fair, and professional leader. She thanked the library staff for their acceptance and support in her role. She looked forward to meeting and working with the LBT and BCC.

Mr. Roger Edwards explained that he had been a resident for 50 years and a long-time user of the library; however, he said the issues had nothing to do with improper management. He noted that vacancy savings could not be discussed without replenishing vacancies at the management level. He mentioned that he was a Nevada Air National Guard Federal Manager during the last nine years of his career. He reported that he dealt with budgeting, hiring, firing, and never had a full office. He indicated that he always attempted to receive more positions with existing allocations in the budget; however, many times he did not receive them. He asserted that the cost of replacing managers who retired was different than filling the vacancy of a Driver at the Roads Department. He communicated

that Ms. McKenzie stepped into a position that was not mentioned in the budget, which he felt was a significant problem. He said that he was confused about the contingency funds and expansion funds. He believed that if there was a difference, it should be mentioned, and he asked the BCC to stop using the terms interchangeably.

Ms. Trista Gomez asked if library personnel were hired while WC1 was pending. She felt that it would be imprudent to expand the budget if there was. She noted that the expansion fund was utilized to fund \$3 million for the library, with \$1.3 million from the general fund. She explained that the expansion fund budget was supposed to be for the North Valleys Library and that the money would need to be replenished if no alteration was made. She asserted that the WCLS budget was not in a \$1.3 million deficit but in a \$4 million deficit. She mentioned that the BCC needed to figure out how to address the deficit now. She indicated that everyone she knew voted no on WC1 and that they were not duped. She commented that the libraries were already built, and the management was not running efficiently. She expressed that she loved and needed the library; however, she wanted it to be efficient and sound. She believed that abatements on property taxes were what kept locals from moving. She speculated that locals could not purchase property in the current market without abatements. She opined that seniors were not selling their homes to buy something new. She communicated that individuals did not have money from out-of-state pensions or the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). She said individuals had local money that did not provide the ability to move and buy a house with \$5,000 to \$7,000 per year in property taxes. She mentioned that property taxes were a cost to local taxpayers. She told the BCC to stop raising budgets because the community did not have the money. She recommended that the BCC balance the budget and be responsible.

Chief Deputy County Clerk Cathy Smith advised the Board that she received emailed public comments, which were placed on file.

Commissioner Garcia asked Vice Chair Herman to express her opinions. She explained that Vice Chair Herman was a valid member of the BCC who served for ten years. She hoped that Vice Chair Herman would voice her thoughts at the next meeting because she believed her perspectives were important.

Vice Chair Herman opined that Commissioner Garcia would not like her comments.

Commissioner Garcia indicated that she may disagree with Vice Chair Herman's comments, but they were still necessary to communicate. She took issue with the comments regarding the budget not being political or personal. She believed that the political climate trickled into day-to-day operations. She reported that District Health Officer Dr Chad Kingsley's departments and divisions may feel the impact of political pressure from vaccine beliefs, climate change, or air quality. She mentioned that she had seen doubt seep into the Registrar of Voters (ROV) over the past few years while the BCC was told they were stealing elections, corrupt, and deserved to go to jail. She explained that libraries experienced the same political climate, and she did not want it to be political or personal. She asked when the presentation would ease doubts. She said that Ms. Yacoben



and Ms. McKenzie were meeting with the LBT for a budgeting 101 session. She asserted that there was support and that an LBT Trustee displayed minutes that indicated the LBT was shown the budget on multiple occasions. She thanked the interim Library Director for expressing the need for the \$1.3 million. She said that she had proof that there were salaries, wages, employee benefits, services, and supplies that were linked to the fund. She commented that there was no mismanagement of funds, and she felt that the doubt should be relieved. She did not understand why there were people actively attacking a viable budget solution. She said that it was strange to express a love for the library but then vote against the \$1.3 million budget solution that was presented. She did not know if every commissioner was a library cardholder, but she said that she was. She stated that she had children and was a frequent library user. She explained that two Saturdays prior, there was a children's day event with a display that noted *books give you wings*. She brought the photo and kept it with her because she felt the BCC had an opportunity to not clip the wings of the WCLS. She suggested that the BCC needed to offer support. She expressed that she had a right to her opinion, along with her fellow Commissioners. She strongly supported the \$1.3 million transfer to the WCLS and hoped her fellow Commissioners did too.

Commissioner Clark reported that he did not indicate that there was something wrong with the budget. He said that he spoke to people who were not confused by WC1 and that voting was one of the few ways the public was able to inform the former Library Director, Jeff Scott, that they were not happy with his interactions. He mentioned that everyone he spoke to who supported the denial of WC1 did not care about the two cents the library received, but cared about the way the WCLS was run. He indicated that former Library Director Scott had numerous occasions to change and balance the views of the public but had decided not to. He supported the library, but he had been told by the LBT Chair, Ann Silver, that she wanted more detail regarding the budget without someone micromanaging her. He explained that he heard the former Library Director was an obstructionist. He did not want to make it political, but felt there was an opportunity to research the library's budget in a different way. He recalled that there had been accusations against the former Library Director for not allowing the LBT to be involved with the library for the last ten years. He wanted to look at the facts to figure out what was occurring.

Chair Hill asked Ms. Yacoben if she had heard clear directions from the Commissioners because there was no full consensus. She indicated that the next budget meeting was May 13, 2025, and there did not seem to be a need for a special workshop meeting. She hoped that Ms. Yacoben could meet with the BCC members before the May 13, 2025, meeting.

Vice Chair Herman indicated that all she heard about was the library. She recalled that she did not have a library where she grew up in Alaska and that she obtained books on her own. She could not help but think of Gerlach's lack of a fire department due to funding when discussing the essentials. She explained that the County dissolved the volunteer fire department in Gerlach and said that there was no money for the residents who worried about flooding in Lemmon Valley every spring, while developers received abatements. She believed that the County was overpowering and did not support the people in Cold Springs who needed help. She felt that the roads in District 5 had been neglected

for a long time, and that work finally began due to Manager Brown's efforts. She asserted that people complained about the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) but she felt it was the voice of the people who paid taxes. She said that the County wanted to dissolve the CABs because they were expensive. She communicated that library books were great; however, she wondered if many of the other services at the library were important. She speculated that Commissioner Garcia would not enjoy her comments.

Commissioner Clark complimented the elected officials who collaborated on the letter that was submitted for the public record. He believed that the public and BCC needed to see the information, and he was happy that most of the elected officials were able to attend the meeting. He hoped the officials listened to what was discussed.

Chair Hill thanked Ms. Yacoben for her work and indicated there was a tentative plan.

There was no action on this item.

**25-0268** **AGENDA ITEM 12** Discussion and direction to staff regarding legislation or legislative issues proposed by legislators, by Washoe County, or by other entities permitted by the Nevada State Legislature to submit bill draft requests, or such legislative issues as may be deemed by the Chair or the Board to be of critical significance to Washoe County. Pending legislative bills can be located here:

<<<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/83rd2025/Bills/List>>>.

Current bills the County is tracking that may be reported on or discussed are listed under Government Affairs at <<https://www.washoecounty.gov/mgrsoff/divisions/government-affairs/index.php>>.

Due to time constraints inherent in the legislative process, a list of specific bills that staff will seek direction from the Commission on during this item will be posted on the web site under Government Affairs at

<<https://www.washoecounty.gov/mgrsoff/divisions/government-affairs/index.php>> by 6:00 p.m. the Friday before the meeting.

Due to the rapid pace of the legislative session, additional bills upon which comment may be sought from the Board of County Commissioners will be posted as soon as known. Manager. (All Commission Districts.)

Chair Hill indicated that Government Affairs Liaison Cadence Matijevich was unavailable.

County Manager Eric Brown noted that it was a busy day at the Legislature, and if there were any questions, he was available to convey them to Ms. Matijevich.

Commissioner Andriola mentioned that she had heard accolades for Ms. Matijevich's work. She was happy to have a great County representative at the Legislature. Chair Hill agreed that the job was hard and said she admired Ms. Matijevich.

Manager Brown said that he would deliver the sentiments to Ms. Matijevich.

On call for public comment, Ms. Penny Brock expressed concern regarding Assembly Bill (AB) 416 because she said the bill took away the rights of the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees (WCSDBT), the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), the Library Board of Trustees (LBT), and university governing bodies. She explained that AB416 gave librarians the right to allow materials in public and school libraries without the ability to remove those materials unless taken to court. She believed that a hired employee should not have the right to choose materials and felt that it was wrong to remove elected and appointed officials' rights. She requested that Ms. Matijevich be aware of AB416 and to possibly have the BCC take a position.

There was no action on this item

**25-0269      AGENDA ITEM 13 Public Comment.**

Ms. Trista Gomez and Ms. Kaitlin Nichols were not present when called to speak.

Ms. Virginia Larmore introduced herself and wanted to take a moment to thank the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for being so gracious and patient while listening to people over the previous weeks and months. She acknowledged that while not everyone would agree on how much the library should be funded, she opined that there could be agreement that everyone valued the libraries, even if the degree of that value was not equal. She described that shared value as a small, tenuous, uniting factor. She indicated that values should be something that united them, and asked for confirmation of that. She stated that everything that had occurred had been for less than 1.5 percent of the budget, and what they talked about that day was regarding a value of \$1.3 million. She emphasized the many weeks and months of comments, emails, articles, and petitions garnered significant community support, concern, news coverage, and vested interest. She stated that less than 1.5 percent of the budget was allocated for a department that she opined held together the community, actively supported many other departments, drove new civic engagement, fostered new connections, and reminded everyone of the importance of speaking out for things that were sometimes taken for granted. She stated that all those actions were done by a humble department that asked for less than 1.5 percent of the County's \$1 billion budget. She requested forgiveness if her question was considered naïve, but wondered if receiving such a significant demonstration of support was normal for a department that asked for so little. She asked whether they had seen such impassioned, dedicated, and persistent advocacy for other departments that requested so little. She reiterated her earlier question, suggesting that values should unite them. She postulated that the Board could potentially prove the suggestion that values united people on that day or over the following weeks. She opined that whether values were viewed as a measure of what one could get for how much was spent or as a principle of what was important in life, libraries were one of the few things that provided both. She emphasized that the \$1.3

million in funding would only be enough to allow the library to manage operations and figure things out. She noted that everyone had pledged their love for libraries and challenged the Board to prove the truth of that pledge.

**25-0270      AGENDA ITEM 14 Announcements/Reports.**

Commissioner Clark noted that he had one quick item he had previously overlooked to discuss. He recounted that he had asked about outstanding fines that might be owed to the health department during one of the two previous Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) meetings. He indicated he might have used the wrong word when asking his previous questions. He asked whether there were specifically any Code Enforcement fines rather than compliance fines, or any other term he used to ask about those fines previously. He reiterated that he was seeking information regarding outstanding Code Enforcement fines for the health department concerning restaurants.

\* \* \* \* \*

**2:13 p.m.**      There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

---

**ALEXIS HILL**, Chair  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

---

**JANIS GALASSINI**, County Clerk and  
Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

*Minutes Prepared by:*  
*Heather Gage, Deputy County Clerk*  
*Lizzie Tietjen, Deputy County Clerk*  
*Brooke Koerner, Deputy County Clerk*  
*Jessica Melka, Deputy County Clerk*