

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

FRIDAY

1:00 P.M.

JUNE 26, 2026

PRESENT:

Clara Andriola, Chair
Mariluz Garcia, Vice Chair
Alexis Hill, Commissioner

Evonne Strickland, Deputy County Clerk
Kate Thomas, County Manager
Michael Large, Chief Deputy District Attorney

ABSENT:

Michael Clark, Commissioner
Jeanne Herman, Commissioner

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 1:01 p.m. in regular special 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, Deputy County Clerk Evonne Strickland called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

26-0477 AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Monty Turner indicated that he experienced taxation without representation because he believed he lacked access to the fire department, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), Code Enforcement, and County health services. He said that fire taxes cost him \$161.88, school debit taxes were \$116.46, and regular school taxes were \$224.84, which he did not understand because he noted he did not have children. He mentioned that his County taxes were \$406.53, from which he felt he received no benefits. He said that if he called the WCSO, he received no service. He recalled that the Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) called him twice the previous day and provided no service when he informed the NNPH that dust was coming off the mountain and over his home. He explained that his wife had bad asthma and he was on medication. He reiterated that he had taxation without representation, along with everyone on his street.

Cindy Leslie noted that she was a Sun Valley resident and had paid the Sun Valley General Improvement District (SVGID) \$39 per year. She said that the SVGID was not being reimbursed for the funds, even though there was an agreement that the SVGID would receive \$150,000. She indicated that, in addition to the tax she paid, she had a monthly water bill. She wished to know where the money was going if the SVGID was not receiving it. She recalled attending a monthly Sun Valley Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)

meeting, where she heard other residents complain about the taxes and the unclean ditches. She asked why the County was not cleaning Sun Valley.

Chair Andriola said that Ms. Leslie could meet with County staff regarding her requests. She asserted that the information she asked for was transparent and available to everyone. She requested that a member of staff meet with Ms. Leslie to address her concerns.

26-0478 AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.

There were no announcements or reports.

26-0479 AGENDA ITEM 5 Recommendation to approve and execute the Resolution R26-0000033 levying tax rates, certified by the Nevada Tax Commission, designating the number of cents of each \$100 of property levied for all Washoe County entities for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 pursuant to NRS 361.460. The combined overlapping tax rate is limited to \$3.64 on each \$100 of assessed valuation, pursuant to NRS 364.453. Finance. (All Commission Districts.)

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas explained that there would be no presentation for Agenda Item 5; however, Budget Manager Lori Cooke was available to answer questions. She reminded those in attendance that the Nevada Tax Commission (NTC) certified the fiscal year (FY) 2026/2027 tax rates on June 25, 2026. She clarified that the NTC certified the tax rate annually. She noted that State law required the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to follow the NTC's action by levying the tax rates designated for Washoe County.

Chair Andriola asserted that Agenda Item 5 was a statutory item that the BCC was required to review. She explained that she wanted to address misinformation about the tax rate and clarified that it had not increased. CM Thomas also indicated that the tax rates did not increase or change.

On call for public comment, Monty Turner asked the Board to imagine the County as a financially struggling family being requested to provide more of their money to the government. He believed that Agenda Item 5 was not a minor inconvenience but very impactful. He recalled that the Board wished to tax hybrids and electric vehicles (EVs). He speculated that the County had the highest fuel tax in the United States (US). He said that families were paying more for fuel while the rest of the State filled their vehicles for less. He asserted that the government was supposed to serve the people, not make families pay higher taxes while Commissioners serve on multiple boards and collect influence-peddling paychecks. He said the worst offenders were those who served on powerful boards, such as the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). He felt that the region's government and its agencies were bankrupting citizens while ignoring concerns. He opined that Agenda Item 5 was the same failed model that drove millions of people and businesses out of California. He said that trust was easily broken under automatic tax hikes,

overlapping roles, and a government that acted like its own community. He wondered if Commissioners would place a ballot question in the upcoming election to prohibit those from serving on other governmental boards while in office because he speculated they should have one job and one duty to the people. He asked if the voters should be allowed to repeal or modify the RTC fuel tax indexing system because it priced individuals out of their homes. He said that taxpayers were not fuel in the government's machine and that the Commissioners were elected to serve the taxpayers.

Troy Regas indicated that he was a candidate for Washoe County Commissioner District 3. He said that he missed the previous BCC meeting where EV taxes were discussed. He believed that people were struggling, but the County wanted to keep raising taxes. He said that Sun Valley was full of low-income residents with no grocery store, and that they had to drive miles to eat, with their trips potentially further taxed by an EV tax. He speculated that the government would start running grocery stores. He felt that, too often, the only voices heard were those of developers who fund campaigns. He said Skyline Flats was destroying the privacy of longtime residents in District 3; therefore, people were moving due to the loss of privacy. He noted that Sierra Reflections was being built on mercury-contaminated land. He said the Board ignored the concerns of outraged constituents because they cared only about tax revenue and developers' profits. He speculated that the community was experiencing taxation without representation. He explained that when families struggled financially, they cut spending and worked harder, and he said the County should do the same. He relayed that it was time for the government to meet the same standard as the public, rather than a revolving door of influence. He presumed that the current governance would result in more poverty, more dependence, and more misery because the Board refused to listen to common sense. He reiterated that families were already struggling to pay more for groceries, housing, insurance, utilities, and gas. He stated that continuous increases in taxation would reach a critical threshold and that leadership was not measured by how quickly one could take money from taxpayers, but rather by the courageous cutting of waste and conflicts of interest, while putting residents first and practicing real fiscal discipline.

Chair Andriola requested that Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large clarify the Board's legal requirement related to Agenda Item 5. CDDA Michael Large explained that Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 361.460 pertaining to the levy of a tax rate by the County Commissioners was provided immediately after the NTC certified the combined tax rate. He said that the BCC should, by resolution, proceed to levy the tax rate required for the fiscal period beginning on the succeeding July 1, designating the number of cents per \$100 of property levied for each fund, based on the NTC's action. Chair Andriola asked CM Thomas to repeat her earlier answer regarding whether the tax rates had been increased. CM Thomas reiterated that the tax rate had not increased or changed.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Vice Chair Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 3-0 vote, with Commissioners Clark and Herman absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved and executed.

AGENDA ITEM 6 Discussion and possible action to ratify the June 19, 2026, Declaration of State of Emergency by the Washoe County Manager. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320 the Washoe County Manager declared an emergency to exercise the powers prescribed by state law, by Washoe County ordinances and resolutions, and by the Washoe County emergency plans in response to the June 19, 2026 flash flood event which was a natural event that threatened loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss to the extent that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare. (All Commission Districts)

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas introduced Emergency Manager Kelly Echeverria, who provided a brief overview of the emergency declaration proposed in Agenda Item 6. Ms. Echeverria indicated that a flash flood occurred on June 19, 2026, in the Hidden Valley community, resulting in significant debris flow. She said the community received two inches of rain in one hour, which she believed was a lot. She recalled hiking through the debris flow the previous day and witnessing a significant amount of earth that had flowed into the neighborhoods. She said that one home was destroyed, a few homes had major damage designations, and most had minor damage designations. She opined that it was a large undertaking to assist the community, with the Community Services Department (CSD) and the Cities of Reno and Sparks serving as initial responders. She explained that CM Thomas and executive leadership felt it was best to declare a disaster. She said that the declaration would open the County to State resources, including a State disaster declaration, which would then be transferred to the President, who could approve federal reimbursement and engage the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). She speculated that the region would hit the local and State thresholds with the combined impacts of other areas in the State.

Director of Community Services Eric Crump reiterated that there was a significant flash flood in the Hidden Valley area. He expressed pride in the Community Services Department (CSD) for its immediate response and continued assistance to the residents of Hidden Valley. He noted that over 1,900 labor-hours had been spent removing roughly 5,400 tons of mud and debris from roadways and storm drains. He said that 78 drainage inlets were open and cleared. He speculated that the Board knew the CSD's priority was to clear roads to ensure safe ingress and egress for first responders and the community. He explained that the team was working on clearing the storm drains because the County did not know when another storm could hit the region. He said that the storm drains were significantly impacted throughout the Hidden Valley area. He reported that the storm drains were a mix of private and public infrastructure and that they were not designed to accommodate a flash flood. He asserted that the team would continue to work towards clearing the drains.

Chair Andriola thanked the staff for their immediate response and for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD), the City of Reno, the American Red Cross (ARC), and Team Rubicon (TR) for mobilizing quickly. She asserted that it was not

only the County that assisted with the emergency response and the aftermath of the flash flood. She requested that Ms. Echeverria inform those in attendance what the emergency update website was. Ms. Echeverria indicated that perimetermap.com and emergencywashoe.com were great resources for staying informed.

Vice Chair Garcia speculated that when people thought of essential workers, they had specific careers in mind; however, she said that the public works and CSD staff responded very quickly to get people to their destinations safely. She explained that those staff members were available during snowstorms, events, or natural disasters. She said that her brother was a heavy equipment operator for CSD; therefore, she believed she knew the hard work those employees did. She noted that staff were pulled away from their families on Father's Day and other holidays and had to make sacrifices when they received an emergency call.

Commissioner Hill expressed appreciation to the first-responding teams and the residents for understanding that recovery took time. She asserted that the County would learn from the Hidden Valley Flood. She said there had been another flood in the same area recently and that a team was available to assist residents. She reiterated her thanks to the residents for their patience as the County continued recovery activities to support the community.

On the call for public comment, Claudia Townsend provided documents, copies of which were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. She reported that she had been a resident of Northern Nevada for 36 years and had been in real estate for 40 years. She believed that the Hidden Valley Flood was significant and did not appear to be the first flood in the area. She said the flood on June 19, 2026, was the third in the area, and while she was not asking for sympathy, she noted that she was requesting leadership. She felt that, since the Hidden Valley Flood was the third major flooding event in the area, it was no longer an isolated emergency but a recurring threat and disaster affecting hardworking families. She said that much of the discussion centered on disaster recovery, with a focus on repairing roads, culverts, drainage systems, and other public infrastructure. She felt that while investments were important, they did not restore a family or replace a lifetime of savings lost in floodwater. She mentioned that there were federal and State programs designed to help communities recover, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Individual Assistance (IA), the United States (US) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Disaster (CDBG) Recovery Funding, hazard mitigation, grant programs, funding, and other state and local recovery initiatives. She said that grant funds could often be distributed to affected families. She referred to the document she had distributed to the Board and explained that a table displayed smaller flood disasters across the US. She said that the Board needed to be advocates for programs that could assist families in rebuilding. She opined that there might be funding available that the County was not aware of. She asserted that there were families affected, representing years of hard work, sacrifice, and investment, who paid their property taxes, contributed to the local economy, volunteered in the community, and placed their trust in elected leaders. She urged the Board to stand

with the residents of Hidden Valley and to pursue every available grant opportunity not only to repair infrastructure but also to assist homeowners' recovery.

Eric Disbrow thanked County staff, emergency responders, and public works crews for their efforts to protect residents and clear debris after the Hidden Valley Flood. He reported minor damage to his property; however, many of his neighbors were not so fortunate and had extensive damage to their homes, cars, trailers, air conditioners, and landscaping. He recalled that the previous year's mudslide in Hidden Valley cost him \$20,000 to dig a new ditch to build a retaining wall and clean his property. He urged the County to focus on long-term flood mitigation and drainage infrastructure improvements because he felt that the flood exposed vulnerabilities. He said that extreme weather events were becoming more frequent and severe. He respectfully asked the County to conduct a comprehensive review of drainage systems, detention basins, culverts, channels, and stormwater conveyance facilities serving the Hidden Valley area. He speculated that the public should be informed of any identified deficiencies and given a clear timeline for corrective action. He encouraged the County to pursue State and federal funding opportunities for flood-control projects, erosion-control measures, and watershed-management improvements. He said that investing in prevention was often far less costly than repeated emergency response and property damage. He asked that residents be included in the planning process through public meetings and regular updates so that the community could better understand both the risks and proposed solutions. He felt that the goal should not be simply to recover from an emergency, but to reduce the likelihood and severity of future flooding and mudslides. He expressed hope that the County would treat the disaster as an opportunity to strengthen infrastructure, improve public safety, and increase resilience for the residents of Hidden Valley. He thanked the Board for their time and consideration.

Deborah Wilson indicated that this was the first time she had provided public comment. She said that she had lived in Reno for 62 years, and in Hidden Valley for 22 of those years. She explained that she was not significantly impacted by the Hidden Valley Flood, aside from a few rocks; however, she witnessed extensive damage to her neighbors' properties that would cost them a lot of money to rebuild or replace. She believed that Hidden Valley was a premier place to live, and one she had wanted to move to her whole life. She said she was an insurance agent and disclosed that the mudslide and mudflow were not covered by flood insurance. She noted that there was no coverage that residents could purchase that would have provided relief to her neighbors. She agreed that more communication was needed to ensure that the community remained involved. She said she was working from home when the flood occurred and witnessed some of her neighbors lose their homes. She noted that she was able to return to her home, but said that people whose homes were uninhabitable needed help because they had to rebuild something that could never have been insured. She asserted that the County staff who assisted during the flood cleanup were impeccable. She said the staff continued to help homeowners with damage and debris cleanup. She mentioned that Waste Management (WM) had been helpful with trash pickup of mud and debris, while other staff further assisted with clearing out drains. She expressed appreciation to the fire agencies that went door to door to ensure that neighbors and their pets were safe. She said that she did not

know what taxes she paid, but felt that they were worth every single dime. She urged the Board to do whatever they could to help neighbors rebuild and ensure emergencies such as the flood did not happen again.

Chair Andriola believed that the Hidden Valley Flood was heartbreaking. She said that she and the other Commissioners were immediately informed of the occurrence regardless of the district. She asserted that the residents' voices were heard and recalled hearing their concerns after the first flood in Hidden Valley. She disclosed that FEMA had restrictions, and while she was not making excuses, she wanted the community to know that there were limits on the aid FEMA could offer and thresholds for what they considered federal-level disasters. She said she was unsure whether the Hidden Valley Flood would qualify, but wanted the community to know that the County was committed to assisting residents as best it could. She felt that the County was committed to the residents of Hidden Valley after the first flood and was addressing the residents' concerns. She recalled walking through many areas of Hidden Valley with engineers to discuss proactive measures. She said that the recommendation to have feedback and better communication was heard by the Board. She noted a commitment to ensure not only that immediate responses were provided but also that the County would maintain ongoing contact with various residents. She said that Ms. Echeverria was well-versed in navigating grant processes and would pursue any available avenue to aid the residents of Hidden Valley. She opined that the grants might take time and said she did not want to make excuses for slow progress or minimize emotional impacts. She indicated that the County could not control weather patterns or stop natural disasters. She requested that Mr. Crump share the progress made in Hidden Valley regarding proactive approaches to prevent future disasters.

Mr. Crump explained that post-storm, the County visited the area and reestablished existing drainage infrastructure. He said that infrastructure was associated with development, and with the Development Code in place at the time it was built. He noted that the Washoe County Development Code (WCDC) had changed over time, informed by new knowledge, to create a more resilient community. He said that development and infrastructure in Hidden Valley were complete; therefore, FEMA floodplain mapping was relied upon to better understand risks and to begin working toward additional infrastructure. He reported that building additional infrastructure after a development was rare and that he could recall only one occurrence in Lemmon Valley, where the County built additional infrastructure after the development was built. He said that infrastructure required time, money, partners, and substantial resources; however, the County was committed to assisting Hidden Valley.

Chair Andriola asked whether there were additional opportunities to explore available resources under the FEMA declaration in the event of future disasters. Ms. Echeverria said that the County would work with regional public information officers to ensure that residents received the information they needed to recover from, prepare for, and respond to other events. She noted that the County had completed its mitigation plan for the Hidden Valley Flood. She said that whenever funding became available for a hazard, the team immediately connected it. She explained that opportunities were pre-

identified by subject-matter experts for funding that the County could then pursue, as applicable. She said that if an opportunity arose to implement a project that would minimize or eliminate the impact of a disaster, the County would fully pursue it within its abilities. She disclosed that she was a firm believer in mitigation and that if the County could proactively reduce or eliminate the impact, she would engage with the opportunity.

Chair Andriola asked whether there were any relief opportunities for homeowners who were not covered by insurance, or any recommendations for navigating recovery after the emergency. Ms. Echeverria explained that individual and public assistance became available once the damage or expenses reached certain thresholds, which was why the County was diligently tracking costs and expected costs to be combined with other occurrences happening in the region. She said that in the meantime, the County was relying on volunteer organizations such as the ARC and TR. Chair Andriola indicated that a webpage was created for Hidden Valley Flood updates and opportunities. She said she wrote a monthly article and that the current one would be lengthy due to the inclusion of resources and ways to assist the community. She believed that the County had a responsibility to ensure that the residents were communicated with effectively and efficiently. She reiterated that she wanted the residents to know they were heard and that the first step toward creating other opportunities was the declaration. She recalled Mr. Disbrow's comment regarding requesting community feedback. She said that during the last flood, the County asked for community feedback and would do so again regarding the Hidden Valley Flood. She reported that she would hold a community meeting to provide a setting for communication and feedback. She asserted that she and the County would serve the community and be proactive in finding solutions. She thanked the staff, residents, and the community for their assistance.

Vice Chair Garcia recollected that the Hidden Valley Flood footage was distressing and said that she could not imagine the amount of stress and trauma the families experienced as they were displaced. She noted that she visited emergencywashoe.com and believed that it was a great place for resources and updates. She asked whether the Nevada Division of Insurance (NDI) was the appropriate agency to contact for information about flood insurance, or whether individuals should contact Washoe 311. Ms. Echeverria opined that the NDI was a great place to request information. She recalled that someone had researched flood insurance for their property and found it would cost \$3,000 because they were not in a FEMA flood zone. She said that FEMA flood zones typically included low-lying neighborhoods, such as the northern part of Hidden Valley, but not the southern part, which was at the base of an alluvial fan, making the area susceptible to flash floods. She noted that the County was working with the Nevada Silver Jackets and other Nevada flood teams to change the messaging. She opined that if insurance was unattainable due to cost, FEMA needed to make a change. Vice Chair Garcia asked if residents could contact their congressional delegates regarding flood insurance concerns. Ms. Echeverria said that the more voices that reached out to their congressional delegates, the faster change could happen. Vice Chair Garcia requested that those in attendance keep the Board apprised of

any GoFundMe pages created for the Hidden Valley neighborhood. Chair Andriola said she was happy to speak to constituents after the meeting or by phone later.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Vice Chair Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 3-0 vote, with Commissioners Clark and Herman absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be ratified.

26-0481 AGENDA ITEM 6 Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

26-0482 AGENDA ITEM 7 Announcements/Reports.

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas thanked the Communications Department for arriving at the scene of the Hidden Valley Flood within hours to gather transparent, comprehensive footage, which was posted on *Emergency Washoe* to inform residents and the community. She believed that, as public servants, the County sometimes received a lot of blame; however, she expressed appreciation to those who offered kind comments, insights, and suggestions to staff. She thanked the wonderful community of Hidden Valley.

Commissioner Hill wondered whether Government Affairs Liaison Cadence Matijevich could research whether the County was missing anything at the State level that they could advocate for regarding flood insurance during the upcoming legislative session. She believed it was difficult to tell constituents to express their concerns to their senator because she speculated Congress would do nothing about the issues. She asserted it would be great if the State could make changes related to flood insurance.

Chair Andriola indicated that she served as Vice President on the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO), which represented all 17 Nevada counties. She noted that it had been quite some time since the last presentation by the Nevada Division of Insurance (NDI). She said that the previous director was no longer with the NDI, and since then, the position had been filled. She wondered if there might be an opportunity for the County to open a discussion with the NDI. She believed there may also be an opportunity for insurance companies or agents with expertise in the area to meet with County staff and share their knowledge. She opined that meeting with the NDI could be powerful with the help of expertise.

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1:54 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

CLARA ANDRIOLA, Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

Minutes Prepared by:
Lizzie Tietjen, Deputy County Clerk

Pending Board Approval