



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: August 17, 2021

DATE: July 12, 2021

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Assistant County Manager,
Community Services Department

Nancy Leuenhagen, Communications Director,
Office of the County Manager

THROUGH: Eric Brown, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation and possible action to adopt Resolutions to create Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) for the specific purpose of developing the commissioner support program, to be implemented within the Office of the County Manager, as funded on July 1, 2021 within the FY 22 operating budget. The Board may choose to create all or some of the CABs for the purpose stated, possible resolutions to create CABs include: R21-037 East Truckee Canyon CAB, R21-038 Gerlach/Empire CAB, R21-039 Incline/Crystal Bay CAB, R21-040 North Valleys CAB, R21-041 Spanish Springs CAB, R21-042 South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley CAB, R21-043 Sun Valley CAB, R21-044 Warm Springs/Rural CAB, and R21-045 West Truckee Meadows/Verdi CAB. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

At numerous meetings over the past several years, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) has discussed various issues related to the Washoe County Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) program and overall citizen input, including a desire to broaden citizen engagement and increase Commissioner outreach and support. At its February 16, 2021 meeting, the Board directed staff to create a two-track program.

Track One consists of a Commissioner support program focusing on data driven commissioner-citizen engagement, to be implemented in the Communications Division of the Office of the County Manager. This outreach program will focus on soliciting input on general community-wide issues (not specific development projects).

Track Two is focused on creating an improved development review process, which will remain located in the Community Services Department (CSD) and will assist in gathering community input *before* certain development project applications are accepted for review.

This Board item focuses on Track One—the Commissioner Engagement (Support) Program.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Stewardship of our Community.

PREVIOUS ACTION

On May 18, 2021 – The Board approved the FY22 budget which includes \$367,000 for the creation of the Commissioner Support Program within the Office of the County Manager (Track One).

On February 16, 2021 – The Board approved the development of a new Commissioner Support Program under the Communications Division (Track One), which will be part of the two-track approach to enhance board support and citizen engagement. The Board also directed staff to prepare the necessary budget elements to fund the proposed program in FY22 with an estimated program budget of \$372,000 to cover personnel, technology, and program costs, a portion of which will be offset with revenues already established in the Office of the County Manager.

On August 12, 2020 – The Board gave direction to explore and possibly expand the current Manager’s Office Communications Team to create a comprehensive community engagement program, expand the existing CAB program, and schedule an update on developing the program at a future Board meeting.

On January 23, 2018 – The Board acknowledged an update and provided direction to staff on changes to the CAB program to change the meeting dates of CABs and provide additional structural changes for facilitating discussions relevant to development items at the CABs.

On June 27, 2017 – The Board acknowledged an update and gave direction to staff on changes to the CAB program.

On August 9, 2016 – The Board dissolved the West Truckee Meadows CAB and the Verdi Township CAB and created the West Truckee Meadows/ Verdi Township CAB.

On June 28, 2016 – The Board acknowledged an update on the CABs and gave direction to staff, but took no action on this item.

On February 9, 2016 – The Board acknowledged an update and directed staff to take necessary steps to start the Gerlach/Empire CAB as soon as possible in 2016.

On October 27, 2015 – The Board acknowledged an update on the CABs and took no action on this item.

On June 9, 2015 – The Board approved updated bylaws to reflect the approved CAB structure and redefined the CABs purpose for FY 2015-2016.

On May 12, 2015 – The Board approved revised resolutions for each CAB and updated the standard CAB structure for program changes and a community forum program.

On April 14, 2015 – The Board provided direction to staff on the CAB program structure.

On April 13, 2013 – The Board reconstituted the CAB program and created a total of nine CABs within modified geographic boundaries.

BACKGROUND

On August 12, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners directed staff to explore and possibly expand the current Manager’s Office Communications Team to create a comprehensive community engagement program, expand the existing CAB program, and

provide an update on developing the program at a future Board meeting. In response, staff formed an internal Strategic Planning Initiative Community Engagement committee to explore ways to implement the requested program elements. A cross-functional committee that included 14 employees from 6 departments participated in 6 discussion meetings to come up with recommendations.

The resulting recommendations included the need to provide greater and more expansive community engagement and administrative support to Washoe County's five Commissioners, thereby providing increased and more targeted service delivery to Washoe County's residents. To accomplish this, the committee recommended a two-track approach. It was envisioned that Track One will create the Commissioner Engagement (Support) Program under the Office of the County Manager/Communication Division. This Program is recommended to include:

- Outreach and district specific communication
- Technology to support data gathering (e.g., Zen City, GIS HUB, social media monitoring, etc.)
- Educational opportunities for citizens
- Centralized program and process management

Track Two recommends eliminating the current development review process conducted by the existing CAB program, currently administered by CSD. A separate discussion related to Track Two is contained in a separate item on this Board's meeting agenda.

On February 16, 2021, the Board approved the development of a new Commissioner Support Program under the Communications Division, which represents Track One of the two-track approach. The Commissioner Support Program will enhance board support and citizen engagement. The program is intended to address the need to provide greater and more expansive community engagement, targeted jurisdictional messaging, and administrative support to Commissioners. The program is also designed to strengthen Commissioners' relationships with constituents within their community. A new Community Outreach Coordinator, along with a dedicated Washoe311 team member, will work with Commissioners on their specific jurisdictional needs.

Following this direction, the budget items necessary to implement Track One have been included in the approved FY22 budget. However, it will take some time to hire and train these new positions and fully launch this program. It is anticipated that this process will begin in earnest upon the new fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021. However, certain elements have already been implemented, such as acquisition of the powerful Artificial Intelligence software tool Zen City.

As staff continues to work to develop and implement Track One, it is anticipated that an additional Community Outreach Coordinator position will be necessary to make the program successful. Board action to reclassify an existing position will be brought to the Board for approval, depending on the result of the proposed recommendation and action by the Board.

To assist in developing the Commissioner Support Program (Track One), staff is recommending elimination and subsequent re-structuring of the current CAB program.

NRS 244.1945(1) provides that a Board of County Commissioners may create advisory boards by ordinance. The Washoe County Commission created the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) Program, which currently consists of nine citizen boards that represent distinct geographic areas across unincorporated Washoe County. The existing CABs were created solely to provide input and recommendations on development projects to decision-making boards in the County, including the Board of Adjustment, Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. Rather than utilize CABs for development-review purposes, staff believes that a better current function for CABs in Washoe County would be to assist in developing the Commissioner Support Program (Track One). In a separate item on this agenda, the Board is being asked to dissolve the existing CABs, which are solely utilized to provide input and recommendations on development projects in lieu of a neighborhood meeting process (Track Two).

To assist in developing the Commissioner Support Program (Track One) staff is recommending the creation of new Citizen Advisory Boards in various locations within the county, as determined by the Board. Specifically, staff is recommending the Board utilize some of the CABs with their previously defined boundaries as selected by the Board. Staff is also recommending that the duties of these new CABs include providing input and recommendations to the Washoe County Office of the County Manager staff, regarding a commissioner support initiative, and future use of structured Citizen Advisory Boards. It is anticipated that membership on these new CABs will be sourced from existing CAB members. If there are not enough existing CAB members who are interested in serving on the new CABs, the County will accept applications for new members. The creation of these new CABs will require resolutions to define the type of advice that the Board is requesting and the duties of each respective new CAB. Resolutions have been provided for the Board to utilize if appropriate.

FISCAL IMPACT

If this item is approved by the Board, staff will proceed with initiating the process to re-classify an existing vacant position and bring the results of that request back to the Board for action at the appropriate time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board adopt Resolutions to create Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) to assist in developing the commissioner support program, to be implemented within the Office of the County Manager, as funded on July 1, 2021 within the FY 22 operating budget.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to adopt the following Resolutions to create Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) to assist in developing the commissioner support program to be implemented within the Office of the County Manager, as funded on July 1, 2021 within the FY 22 operating budget. Resolution _____, Resolution _____"