



South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board
Minutes of the regular meeting of the South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board on December 2, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at South Valleys Library

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Present – Nicol Herris, Brad Stanley, Drew Ribar

Absent – Penny Brock, Marge Frandsen, Colleen Winans

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –

Norm Davidson said she and her husband have lived in Steamboat Springs nearly their entire lives and are very concerned about wildfire risk. She believes the Nevada Department of Agriculture has put homes in jeopardy by fencing off Steamboat Valley, which she says prevents wild horses from grazing vegetation that would otherwise help reduce wildfire fuel. Drawing on his experience living through multiple wildfires, she urged revisions to the fencing to allow horses to move in and out of the valley for grazing and water access. She also suggested constructing a large wildlife overpass near East Lake Boulevard, similar to those used in Utah and Nevada, arguing it could be safer and more cost effective than the current fencing approach.

Dan Doengis said he works for the consulting firm Parametrix and is supporting the Regional Transportation Commission on its active transportation planning efforts. He explained that RTC has developed a regional active transportation plan for the Reno Sparks area and is now focusing on specific neighborhood network planning areas to gather more detailed community input. The study he discussed covers the Hidden Valley Meadowood area, and he invited residents to share concerns related to traffic safety for people walking, biking, using wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility devices, particularly near schools and parks. He noted that flyers with a study area map, project timeline, and a QR code linking to more information are available, and announced a community workshop scheduled for Wednesday, December 10, at Truckee Meadows Community College, Meadowood location on Neil Road.

Tom Daly explained that the Regional Fire Safety Study Board will meet on the 12th at 2:30 p.m. at the county building to hear a staff recommendation to hire a consultant to study potential fire services consolidation or other improvements to fire and EMS service delivery. He said that of nine applicants, only one firm met the criteria, Emergent Global Solutions, noting that the firm has not previously studied fire service organizations in Washoe County, Reno, or Sparks. He added that public hearings are expected in the spring and said it will be important to hear the consultant's presentation and understand their capabilities as the process moves forward.

Ellie Hyatt thanked the council for the opportunity to speak and emphasized ongoing concerns about public safety fencing related to wild horses in the Virginia Foothills and Toll Road area.

She urged council members to continue pressing county commissioners to support and complete the remaining public safety fencing work associated with Naomi Doerr's project, noting that easements are secured and the work is out to bid, but completion is critical. She shared recent incidents where horses entered roadways and residential areas, including one that reached near Damonte Ranch High School, requiring volunteers to intervene for safety. She said the fencing project is close to completion and encouraged another public meeting with Naomi Doerr to clarify next steps. Hyatt also expressed interest in the Hidden Valley planning effort, raised questions about paths and fencing in that area, and stressed that keeping horses and fencing at the forefront is essential to prevent traffic hazards and potential injuries or deaths as traffic increases.

Lisa O'Sullivan said she believes recent fencing has significantly increased wildfire risk in Steamboat Valley by removing grazing animals that historically reduced vegetation on steep, mountainous terrain. She said the fence extends far up the mountains rather than along residential areas, leaving large areas unmanaged and increasing fire danger. O'Sullivan stated she has toured the area with Truckee Meadows firefighters who support revising the fence and said the project moved forward without a meaningful public comment period under the NEPA process. She contrasted the fencing approval timeline with the much longer environmental review typically required for fire breaks and said fire risk was not adequately considered. She added that alternative grazing options on BLM land were not allowed and supported a separate City Arena fencing project, which she said was well planned and focused on public safety by reducing horse vehicle collisions.

Sarah Riley said she has lived in the area for 42 years and has regularly observed wild horses coming through to drink water and leave without causing problems. She stated that horses have not been responsible for recent increases in crime, accidents, deaths, or missing persons and said none of those issues were caused by the horses. Riley questioned why fencing was implemented broadly rather than limited to more urban areas, noting that her community is rural, and suggested the timing of the fencing appears to coincide with development activity.

4. COMMISSIONER/CAB MEMBER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENT

Commissioner Mike Clark said he had no formal announcements and was attending to listen to residents' concerns. He shared that after visiting the fencing area with a community member, he felt the project did not make much sense from a neighborhood perspective. He said residents should have had more opportunity to provide input to the state of Nevada before the fencing was implemented and stated he would advocate for greater local involvement, emphasizing the importance of community voices in decisions that affect where people live.

Brad Stanley encouraged attendees to sign up for a tour of the proposed fencing along the fence line, noting that a sign-up sheet was available and a tour would be arranged. He said he took the tour himself and found it valuable, explaining that seeing the terrain in person provides a clearer understanding than reviewing maps alone. Stanley said the tour would help residents better understand how the fence would be laid out, what impact it might have, and that there is still time for people to provide comments.

Nicol Herris asked if there were any requests made at the previous CAB meeting. Sally Johnston answered that the only request was for the upcoming presentation.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF October 2, 2025

Brad Stanley moved to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2025, South Truckee Meadows/ Washoe Valley CAB meeting. Drew Ribar seconded the motion and the minutes passed unanimously.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District

Battalion Chief Shane Akerson reported that Truckee Meadows Fire responded to 237 calls in the South Truckee Meadows area in November, which is consistent with the monthly average. There was one fire during the month, and it was a minor incident handled by the first arriving engine company. He reminded residents that open burning season is currently open through April 30, weather permitting. Residents who do not yet have a permit can apply at pmfpd.us, where they can also find the rules and regulations for burning and check the daily green or red-light status indicating whether burning is allowed. Akerson noted that winter typically brings an increase in structural fires and encouraged residents to have fireplaces, wood burning stoves and pellet stoves inspected and cleaned annually. Chimney fires often occur this time of year due to buildup and wildlife nesting in chimneys. He also stressed the importance of proper fireplace ash disposal. Ashes should be fully cooled and wet before being placed in a fire safe metal container rather than plastic trash bins, which can easily ignite. Finally, he reminded residents to prepare for winter driving conditions by maintaining vehicles with appropriate tires, chains and windshield wipers, and to keep driveways and walkways clear of snow and ice. Fire crews regularly respond to slip and fall injuries during winter weather.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office

Lieutenant Bradley Johnson of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office reported an increase in business burglaries across Washoe Valley and the south end of the county, including incidents along Mount Rose Highway and at convenience stores during early morning hours. He encouraged residents to report suspicious activity to the non-emergency dispatch line and to call 911 if a burglary appears to be in progress, noting that deputies are actively monitoring these crime trends. He also warned residents about ongoing fraud scams. Johnson emphasized that the Sheriff's Office will never call to claim someone has a warrant or demand payment through Bitcoin ATMs, gift cards or cash deposits. He noted that scammers are also posing as incarcerated relatives requesting bail money and urged residents to contact the Sheriff's Office booking supervisors directly to verify whether a loved one is in custody and confirm any legitimate bail information. With the holiday season underway, Johnson reminded residents to watch for package theft as deliveries increase. He encouraged the use of doorbell cameras, checking in with neighbors and promptly retrieving delivered packages. Stolen packages should be reported so deputies can investigate. Finally, he addressed winter road safety, asking drivers to slow down and move over when approaching traffic accidents or emergency scenes. If drivers are unable to change lanes, they should reduce speed to under 25 miles per hour to provide first responders with a safe space to work.

7. TRUCKEE MEADOWS FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Deputy Chief Chris Ketring of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District presented an overview of the proposed fire station consolidation in Washoe Valley, using the same information previously shared with the Board of Fire Commissioners. He explained that the proposal centers

on constructing a consolidated fire station in the New Washoe City area at 340 U.S. Highway 395. The planned facility would be an approximately 11,000 square foot block construction building with three apparatus bays and living quarters for eight personnel to allow for future expansion. The land was purchased in 2020 for \$475,000, with current construction costs estimated at about \$16 million plus an additional \$1.2 million in project related expenses. Ketring provided background on fire service history in the area, including the former Sierra Fire Protection District and the evolution of Truckee Meadows Fire into an independent district. He outlined the current configuration of stations serving the valley, including career and volunteer stations, seasonal resources and mutual aid partners such as Carson City Fire, Nevada Division of Forestry, the Forest Service and the City of Reno. He explained that Washoe Valley is classified as a rural service area under the adopted standards of cover, which set response time goals of 20 minutes for first arriving fire engines and medical responses 85 percent of the time. While some areas meet these standards, others do not consistently, particularly on the east side of the valley. Call volume and population have increased over the past decade, prompting a 2019 deployment study that recommended consolidating Stations 30 and 32 and redeploying resources to better match where calls occur. Ketring reviewed multiple funding strategies that have been explored, including USDA loans, private lending, the State Infrastructure Bank, ARPA funds and federal grants, all of which have faced challenges due to rising interest rates, flat property tax growth and limited district revenues. He also discussed alternative approaches such as downsizing the station design, using temporary modular facilities, repurposing an existing volunteer station on Bellevue Road as a temporary solution and redeploying wildland crews. Looking ahead, Ketring said the district will continue pursuing funding through public and private partnerships, grants and potential collaborations with educational institutions, while continuing to set aside capital funds and provide updates to the Board of Fire Commissioners. He emphasized that securing funding under current budget constraints remains the district's largest challenge for both the consolidated station and long-term service delivery in Washoe Valley.

A resident asked whether Truckee Meadows Fire had explored using qualified volunteers to help with labor on the proposed station project as a way to reduce costs instead of hiring contractors. Deputy Chief Chris Ketring responded that this approach is not feasible because the project is subject to legal requirements, including prevailing wage laws, which require the work to be performed through paid labor rather than volunteer services.

Several residents asked follow-up questions about the future of existing facilities, staffing and service coverage related to the proposed consolidated fire station. One resident asked what would happen to the current Fire Station 32 and whether it would be sold to generate funds. Another asked about relocating wildland fire crews to Washoe Valley and clarified where those crews are currently based. Additional questions focused on the exact location of the proposed new station, referencing nearby landmarks, and whether service boundaries or response areas such as Toll Road would change under the new configuration. Chris Ketring of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District responded that the current plan is not to sell Fire Station 32. Instead, the district intends to repurpose it to house wildland fire crews, which he described as a top priority and an opportunity to improve coverage in the valley. He explained that wildland crews are currently distributed across the district, including locations such as Lemon Valley, and that relocating a crew to Washoe Valley would add an important resource. Ketring clarified the proposed station location along U.S. Highway 395 near existing commercial development and confirmed that certain response areas, including Toll Road, would continue to be served from existing stations, supplemented by automatic aid agreements. He emphasized that the goal is to strengthen local response rather than relying more heavily on outside agencies.

A question was raised about the interest rates private lenders were offering for financing the consolidated fire station. Chris Ketring said he did not have the specific rate information available at the meeting and would follow up by providing details from the district's chief financial officer. A second question asked what the public could do to help given the funding challenges facing the project. Ketring responded that community members can assist by sharing ideas for potential funding sources the district may not have explored. He added that if a viable funding option is identified, public support could be critical in helping move it forward during the early stages.

A resident asked whether the state's prevailing wage requirement for construction projects significantly increases costs and how much money might be saved if the law were changed to allow open bid competition instead. Chris Ketring responded that prevailing wage requirements are set by state law and must be followed. He said he does not have an estimate of the potential cost difference between prevailing wage and open competition and noted that analyzing that impact would be outside his expertise and would require review by analysts or other staff.

Fire Chief Richard Edwards of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District explained that prevailing wage requirements include not just hourly pay but also benefits and other labor costs, which is why projects using nonunion labor can sometimes appear cheaper. He noted that state law requires prevailing wage on this project and changing that law would likely take significant time and would not be realistic for the current effort. Edwards emphasized that the district remains fully committed to building the Washoe Valley fire station, but the primary challenge right now is securing a sustainable funding source. He said the district's budget is under pressure due to declining or flat property tax revenues, an issue affecting fire agencies across the region and state. Given those constraints, the district's top priority is maintaining daily staffing levels and ensuring enough responders are available to provide reliable service from existing stations. He said new construction will move forward when additional funding becomes available, while the department continues to focus on delivering a high level of fire and emergency service to the community.

Nicole Herris asked what additional requirements or pressures could be placed on new developments to help address the impact they have on fire protection and other public services. Fire Chief Richard Edwards of the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District responded that this is an important issue that extends beyond fire services alone. He said new development affects the full range of public infrastructure and services, including roads, emergency response, sidewalks, water systems and law enforcement. Edwards noted that many existing developments were approved under past rules, limiting the ability to apply new requirements retroactively, but emphasized that future projects should be evaluated more holistically. He said ongoing and future development must account for how public safety and infrastructure needs will be funded and sustained over the long term as population and service demands increase.

A resident expressed concern about limited access in and out of the valley, noting that U.S. Highway 395 can become blocked during fires, leaving residents and emergency responders unable to enter or evacuate. The speaker recalled a past fire where people and animals were trapped, including an incident in Pleasant Valley where a woman died in her home. The resident also pointed to target shooting in the desert as a cause of wildfires and urged stronger controls, such as restricting shooting in brush areas or providing designated shooting ranges, to reduce fire risk.

Several residents raised concerns about wildfire evacuation and the impacts of future development in Washoe Valley. They cited the Little Valley and Davis Creek fires, noting that

residents on the east side of the valley took up to an hour and a half to evacuate, which they described as unacceptable given the risks to families, livestock and valuable horses. Speakers warned that introducing higher density or urban style development into a rural area could create serious conflicts, as new residents may expect urban level response times and may not understand the realities of rural living, limited access and slower emergency response. They emphasized the need to preserve the rural character of the valley while improving safety. Residents said they are willing to work collaboratively with fire and public safety agencies to find solutions that make the area safer and more sustainable. They stressed the urgency of building a new fire station in the valley and noted that extreme winds and natural conditions can rapidly intensify fires, increasing the need for improved local fire protection and evacuation planning.

8. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CAB Chair decided to skip this item.

9. BOARD MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT/REQUESTS/DISCUSSION

Brad Stanley asked whether a follow-up presentation could be scheduled to revisit a previous discussion on fire related issues, including fencing and other related concerns that were raised at an earlier meeting. The request referred to a presentation from the June meeting and sought an update on the current status of those issues. Staff indicated that a follow up from the presenting agency could be arranged and acknowledged that there is ongoing community interest in understanding where the process stands.

Nicole Herris clarified that the CAB should have a presentation on flood plain mapping in February. Sally Johnston confirmed they would.

Drew Ribar requested that the CAB invite the Department of Agriculture to come to talk about fencing.

10. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Kelly White expressed support for building a fire station in Washoe Valley and asked how the community could help make it happen. She suggested that securing private donors or philanthropic support could be a potential path forward, noting that there are well funded developments and organizations in the region that may have an interest in contributing to improved fire protection. White emphasized that funding is the biggest obstacle and encouraged exploring foundations or other private funding sources to help the fire district move the project forward.

Joel Greenwood, a resident of Hot Springs Road, said he values seeing the wild horses in the area and questioned why fencing is being installed to restrict their movement. He shared that he continues to see herds and individual horses regularly and expressed concern about the impacts of fencing, including potential restrictions on access to water. Greenwood asked what authority local agencies have over the issue and why the fencing is necessary. Meeting facilitators responded that the fencing issue falls primarily under the authority of state agencies and that the

most effective way to address concerns is to have those agencies present directly. Staff confirmed that the topic is already on the agenda and that the appropriate agencies will be invited to provide a presentation, answer questions and explain the purpose and impact of the fencing. Greenwood was asked to submit a speaker form so his comments could be included in the official meeting record.

Mike Clark thanked residents for attending and engaging in the discussion, emphasizing the importance of community participation. He explained that the Washoe Valley fire station was approved several years ago, when construction costs were much lower, but it was never built. Since then, rising construction costs and interest rates have more than doubled the projected price, putting the project well beyond current available funding. He said neither the county nor the fire district currently has the money to build the station and that meaningful progress will likely require assistance from state or federal sources rather than small scale local fundraising. Clark also addressed concerns about wild horse fencing, noting that those decisions fall under state authority and are not controlled by the county. While the county cannot override state actions, he said local residents should have been better informed and included in the process, particularly where fencing affects private property. He expressed hope that a state presentation will help answer questions and provide clarity. He voiced support for Fire Chief Richard Edwards, noting that the chief inherited the situation and is actively working to identify financing options under difficult circumstances. Clark concluded by arguing that Washoe County's challenge is not a lack of revenue but how funds are spent. He pointed to record assessed property values, strong investment returns, high sales and gas tax revenues, and significant past federal ARPA funding, and urged residents to stay informed, vote thoughtfully, and hold elected officials accountable for budget priorities.

A resident questioned why funding appeared to prioritize fencing over building a fire station. Mike Clark responded that the county did not make that decision, explaining that the fencing project is driven by the State of Nevada and federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, not Washoe County. He emphasized that the county has no authority over state or federal actions but added that residents should still have a voice in raising concerns with those agencies.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.