



## North Valleys Citizen Advisory Board

**Minutes of the regular meeting of the North Valleys Citizen Advisory Board held on March 9th, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. Reno Stead Airport, 4895 Texas Ave, Reno NV 89506**

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

PRESENT – Scott Finely, Aaron Jennings, Susan VanNess, Daniel Yriarte

ABSENT – Roger Edwards, Krystal Ayers , Shelia Herring

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Susan VanNess motioned to approve the meetings of February 9, 2026, North Valleys CAB meeting. Aaron seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

### 4. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

A resident raised concerns about evacuation during a wildfire, noting heavy congestion along U.S. 395 and questioning how additional development could impact the ability to safely exit the area. Aaron Jennings responded that updated evacuation planning now allows for more targeted, block-by-block notifications. Instead of evacuating the entire area at once, officials can direct specific neighborhoods to leave in stages, which helps reduce traffic congestion and improves overall evacuation efficiency as population density increases.

Tammy Holt-Still urged residents to attend a March 19 meeting regarding the proposed Prado development near Lemon Drive, citing concerns about traffic, population growth, and warehouse impacts. She emphasized that the project does not align with the existing master plan and encouraged community participation, noting that similar opposition had successfully stopped the project before.

Katherine Yriarte shared information about upcoming community events she is hosting, including a March 22 gathering and a March 28 family-friendly event with food and activities. She emphasized her goal of connecting with residents and hearing their concerns. She also highlighted a March 19 regional fire board meeting on potential fire department regionalization, noting its importance for fire-prone areas.

Rob Pierce, a candidate for County Commissioner in District 5, highlighted his long history in the North Valleys and extensive public service on local boards and commissions. He emphasized the need for controlled growth, improved infrastructure, and stronger public safety, while advocating for giving residents more input on development decisions. Pierce also invited the community to an upcoming meeting featuring experts discussing data centers and their potential impacts.

## 5. CAB MEMBER/ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/ COMMENTS

There were no announcements made.

## 6. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES

### Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District

Battalion Chief James Solaro provided a January 2026 update for the North Valleys, reporting 467 total incidents, the majority of which were medical emergencies, with relatively few fires and only one confirmed structure fire. He also reminded residents to change smoke detector batteries with the recent time change.

## 7. FIRE ADAPTED NEVADA (FAN)

Brett Taylor provided an overview of the Fire Adapted Nevada program, explaining it as a statewide partnership that brings together agencies, communities, and homeowners to better prepare for and live with wildfire. He emphasized a shift away from total fire suppression toward active land management and preparedness, noting that decades of extinguishing natural fires have led to dangerous fuel buildup and more intense wildfires. He explained that wildfire risk varies by location and conditions, but the potential loss to homes and property remains high, making it critical for residents to understand their individual risk and take action. Taylor highlighted that many home losses are caused by embers igniting materials within the first five feet of a structure, rather than direct flames, underscoring the importance of defensible space and home hardening. He also discussed factors contributing to increased wildfire danger, including hotter temperatures, variable precipitation, wind patterns, and continued development into fire-prone areas. Lessons from recent fires show that evacuation can be difficult and unpredictable, reinforcing the need for preparedness rather than relying on escape. Taylor introduced programs like Firewise, which help neighborhoods organize, assess risk, and take collective action. He noted that community-wide participation is essential, as one unmitigated property can threaten others. He encouraged residents to start with their own properties, work with neighbors, and engage with local fire officials to reduce risk and improve resilience across the community.

Rob Pierce asked about getting an updated assessment of wildfire mitigation efforts at his property, noting it had been some time since it was last reviewed. In response, he was encouraged to connect with staff who offered to provide resources and arrange a follow-up evaluation, along with educational materials to support continued improvements.

Ted Day asked about roof venting requirements, noting he was advised to include vents when replacing his roof and is now concerned about whether they create a wildfire risk. Brett Taylor explained that proper venting is necessary, but vents can be made safe by using fine mesh screening that prevents embers from entering. He noted that newer building codes require smaller mesh sizes, while older homes may still have larger openings that should be upgraded. He recommended simple, low-cost fixes like installing finer mesh over vents and emphasized that vegetation and defensible space around vents, especially near crawl spaces, are also critical to reducing fire risk.

Susan VanNess raised concerns about fire protection in Lemon Valley, noting the closure of the local station and asking whether a new station will be opened, especially as development and infrastructure like hydrants are being added. Brett Taylor responded that he did not have specific information on future station plans but explained that the Lemon Valley station is still used to house wildland crews, who may not be there full time but respond when needed. He added that staffing is split between locations, helping provide coverage in the area.

Melissa Wiseman asked whether the wildland crew stationed in the area could respond to fires in residential neighborhoods. In response, Brett Taylor clarified that while wildland crews can assist with wildfire incidents, they are not equipped or assigned to handle structure fires or routine 911 calls. He noted that they are not a full-time, 24-hour fire station, which also affects how they are considered for insurance and emergency response coverage.

A resident asked for clarification on fire coverage in the area, specifically whether services are still supported through mutual aid between agencies and covered by nearby stations. In response, it was confirmed that the area remains covered through mutual aid agreements and nearby station support, with an invitation to follow up offline for additional questions or details.

## **8. SWIFT EXIT: EVACUATION STUDY PLAN**

A resident asked how to sign up for targeted emergency alerts and how to confirm they are receiving them. Brett Taylor explained that residents should register through the Smart911 system via Washoe County Emergency Management. By signing up with contact and property information, individuals can receive location-specific alerts and share important details with first responders. He noted that this system provides more precise notifications than traditional reverse 911, which sends broader alerts based on cell towers or landlines, and encouraged everyone to register.

Tammy Holt-Still questioned how an out-of-state company could effectively evaluate local evacuation needs without firsthand knowledge of traffic conditions. Brett Taylor responded that the selected vendor would conduct on-the-ground analysis in the area and specializes in emergency planning and preparedness. He noted that while they are based out of state, their role is to provide expert analysis and recommendations to improve evacuation planning.

Katherine Yriarte encouraged residents to complete the county's evacuation study survey before the March 30 deadline, emphasizing that it allows individuals to share specific concerns about their areas. She also raised issues around livestock evacuation, noting that efforts are often unorganized and that trained professionals are sometimes denied access during emergencies, which can lead to unsafe situations. She suggested better planning, training, and coordination for handling large animals in fire evacuations. In response, Brett Taylor agreed that the concern is valid and noted that trained groups and partnerships, such as those supporting animal control, can help serve as additional resources to assist with animal evacuations, reinforcing the importance of incorporating these considerations into planning.

## **9. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Sally Johnston demonstrated how residents can use the Washoe County website to stay informed and engaged, highlighting tools like the Neighborhood Development Hub to view upcoming projects and applications in their area. She showed how to navigate to district-specific

information, sign up for email updates, access Board of County Commissioners agendas, and submit public comments. She also offered to help attendees sign up for notifications after the meeting.

#### **10. CAB MEMBER/ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS/COMMENTS**

Susan VanNess shared that Commissioner Jeanne Herman was unable to attend due to a lengthy Board of County Commissioners meeting scheduled for the next day, expected to include extensive public comment and discussion. She noted the commissioner's apology and said the meeting would be closely followed.

Scott Finley announced an upcoming public input session for a regional fire services study involving Washoe County, Reno, Sparks, and fire and EMS partners. The meeting will take place on March 19 at 6 p.m. at Northern Nevada Public Health and will provide an overview of the study, its timeline, and an opportunity for community feedback, with additional input opportunities to follow online. He also noted that future meetings will include presentations on parks and structured deliberation.

#### **11. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Susan VanNess emphasized the need to better inform and engage the community about CAB meetings, noting that many residents may be missing out on important information and discussions. She expressed concern about limited outreach beyond social media and asked for help finding more effective ways to reach people. She also raised concerns about potential fire service regionalization and its impact on local service levels, urging greater community involvement and awareness.

Melissa Wiseman asked why a proposed development at Arkansas and Lemon Valley Drive was not discussed as expected and sought clarification on whether she could raise additional topics. Scott Finley responded by directing her to the posted agenda, explaining that only items listed can be formally addressed during the meeting. Melissa Wiseman raised additional concerns during public comment and proceeded to highlight several issues, including traffic problems at the Virginia Street and U.S. 395 interchange, lack of beautification and maintenance along Lemon Drive, and questions about ongoing and future road projects and costs in the area. She also sought clarification about upcoming meetings and local development plans, expressing frustration about limited information and coordination.

**ADJOURNMENT** The meeting was adjourned at 7: 09 P.M.