



Warm Springs/Rural Citizens Advisory Board
Minutes of the regular meeting of the Warm Springs/Rural Citizens Advisory Board
held on May 13, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Washoe County Regional Shooting
Facility.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION QUORUM

Present: Chair Larry Chesney, Members Jan Mortensen, Carolyn White, and Nicole Black

Absent: Vice Chair Kevin Cook

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Katherine Yriarte indicated she was a candidate for the District 5 seat on the Board of County Commissioners. She provided her personal and professional background. She advocated for responsible growth and better communication between the County, the Regional Transportation Commission, and the Nevada Department of Transportation to alleviate congestion and protect local resources. She said she was endorsed by the Public Safety Alliance of Nevada and was also working on issues related to the Nevada Cares Campus. She urged people to vote for her.

Tammy Holt-Still indicated she was also running for the District 5 Commission seat. She said she had been an activist for appropriate development since 2017, and she echoed concerns about the Cares Campus. She commented that 45 percent of the patrons at Cares were bused in from California, and she thought the County should receive its tax money back for that. She expressed concern about the realignment of Lemmon Drive and the high cost to do so. That money needed to be spent the right way, and she encouraged people to reach out to her.

Another member of the public spoke about receiving a letter from Northern Nevada Public Health about the opportunity to have his water tested, and he wondered whether anyone else received such a letter. It was suggested that a future agenda item could be requested for a presentation by Northern Nevada Public Health.

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Agenda Item 5 was called next.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District Captain James Solaro reviewed the agenda packet materials provided for this item. He stressed the importance of having 30 feet of clearance around the home to help with fire prevention, adding that there were three recently confirmed wildland fires. Responding to questions, he confirmed that that area of clearance should be

free of trees, and cutting the grass low also helps reduce fire risk. There was no expectation to clear vegetation all the way down to the dirt. He noted that a fire earlier today covered 3.8 acres and was likely caused by an NV Energy crew clearing weeds.

Washoe County Sheriff's Office

Office Specialist Casey McDonald stated that no one from the Sheriff's Office (SO) was available to give a presentation, but a quarter 1 report was included in the staff report, and questions could be submitted to the department.

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Agenda Item 4 was then called, after which Agenda Item 5 was reopened.

Member Black brought up the CFS Status statistics included in the SO's Quarter 1 report and wondered how they arrived at those figures. Specialist McDonald indicated he would send an email to the SO to try to get an answer for the Board.

4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF March 11, 2026

There was no public comment on this item.

Responding to Member Mortensen's query, Office Specialist Casey McDonald confirmed that the minutes are usually created from video recordings.

Member White moved to approve the March 11, 2026, Warm Springs/Rural Citizens Advisory Board minutes as written. Member Mortensen seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved on a 4-0 vote, with Vice Chair Cook absent.

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Agenda Item 5 was reopened. See that item for details.

6. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (RTC) COMMUNITY PROJECT UPDATE

Paul Nelson, Government Affairs Officer for the RTC, conducted a slideshow presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Metropolitan Planning Organization; Project Process; FY26 Budget (Revenues); FY 26 Budget (Expenses); Impact (2024); How Roads Are Funded Today; 2026 Pavement Preservation Program; Vehicle Miles Traveled; Taxable Gallons Sold; EVs & Hybrids are Growing; Paying for Growth – RRIF; Public Transportation; and Future Riders.

Officer Nelson mentioned that the RTC updates its 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every four years, focusing on safety, capacity, congestion, and air quality. The most recent RTP was through 2050. He noted that the RTC does not own the roads, Washoe County and the Cities of Sparks and Reno do, which is why they enter into interlocal cooperative agreements. Some of the funding for RTC's larger projects comes from discretionary grants. He pointed out that expenses were set to exceed revenues in fiscal year 2026, but that was because money was previously set aside for critical projects. The \$23 million in debt service was for the Southeast Connector project that was completed several years ago. He said that fuel taxes, by law, needed to be spent on roadway improvements,

while sales tax was used to fund public transportation. Pavement preservation projects include maintenance such as patching and crack sealing, corrective maintenance like replacing the top layer of pavement, and full-depth reconstruction.

Officer Nelson remarked that better fuel efficiency in cars and increases in the number of electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrids were reasons for the reduction of fuel sold even though more miles were being driven each year. The fuel tax was set to increase on July 1. He noted that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) would consider an item at its May 26 meeting to potentially approve an advisory ballot measure question about charging a \$250 registration fees for EVs. Nevada is one of only ten states without a fee or mileage use charge for EVs. If passed, it would not automatically become law, but it would go to the State Legislature to authorize the County to implement the fee. A survey was conducted, and 64 percent of respondents said there should be a fee; most agreed with \$250, the highest of three potential fees. The fee for hybrids was \$100.

Officer Nelson described the FlexRIDE rideshare service. Member Black wondered whether programs like RTC ACCESS, Washoe Senior Ride, and Youth Ride Free would come to the Warm Springs area. Nelson responded that RTC ACCESS would come to within three-quarters of a mile of a bus route, though he did not think FlexRIDE would come this far. Seniors are able to purchase passes for \$60 a month. He spoke about the RTC VANPOOL service, for which the RTC provides subsidies, and he mentioned that employers can also provide subsidies. The program was one of the top 10 in the country, driven in large part by commuters to and from the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center (TRIC) as well as visitors to Carson City and Lake Tahoe. He provided details about Washoe Senior Ride, a growing program. Keolis operates the fixed ride buses, he noted, while MTM Transit handles paratransit and FlexRIDE vehicles. He stated that the Youth Ride Free pilot program was created in response to an increase in tardiness and absenteeism, and any School District student can sign up for the program through an app. More than 1,400 students have signed up for it, and most students use the service to get to jobs after school.

Officer Nelson concluded the presentation by reviewing the following slides: Sparks Boulevard Capacity Improvement; Eagle Canyon Safety and Operations; Sparks Boulevard/Ion Drive Traffic Signal; La Posada Drive Corrective Maintenance; Pyramid Hwy Operations Improvements; Highland Ranch Parkway Capacity; Pyramid Highway – Preliminary; Northeast Connector; Commuter Rail Study; and 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.

Officer Nelson mentioned that in addition to widening Sparks Boulevard, the RTC was adding safety improvements for cyclists, pedestrians, and people with disabilities. Construction on that project should be completed by summer of 2027. The primary goal of the Eagle Canyon project, he pointed out, was to install a multi-use path to provide children in that area with a safer way to get to school. He felt there might also be an opportunity to make pedestrian improvements at the roundabouts along La Posada Drive. In addition to the improvements being made to Highland Ranch Parkway by the developer, the RTC planned to widen the road from two lanes in each direction to four. He discussed an original plan to build an overpass at the intersection of that road and Pyramid Highway, ultimately connecting Disc Drive to Parr Boulevard, but not only would it have cost \$100 million, it might not have solved the congestion issues. Other solutions are being considered.

Officer Nelson stated the Northeast Connector project was currently unfunded, and RTC is collaborating with the federal government because it would likely need to use Bureau of Land Management land to complete it. 80 percent of employees at the TRIC live in Reno/Sparks,

and 80 percent of them were in the north, making an additional route in the north highly beneficial. He expected that a potential connector utilizing Vista Boulevard would generate around 4,500 vehicle trips a day, about 10 percent of the number of trips on I-80. He addressed a question from a member of the audience by describing the City of Sparks' consideration of a toll road, though it did not appear that the road would generate enough traffic to warrant trying it, even if toll roads were legal in Nevada.

Officer Nelson explained that Union Pacific Rail was a challenging partner because they did not care about commuter rail, only freight. He estimated that it would cost \$175 million to begin the process of implementing commuter rail and \$30 million to purchase the trains. He thought that around 14,500 would take that train to work every day, including to Tesla, who would be able to use the rail for free, alleviating some truck traffic. He was unsure whether the commuter rail idea would happen, but good discussions with multiple stakeholders were occurring. Responding to additional questions by the public, he commented that Tesla, Panasonic, Storey County, and Redwood Materials all helped pay for the commuter rail study. Federal funding will absolutely be needed, but opportunities for additional partnerships with companies like Apple were possible.

Officer Nelson explained that the RTC conducts an audit every three years to evaluate every program within its transit system, including elements like ridership on bus routes. He expected the latest iteration to be finished by early autumn. During these audits, they hold public meetings and distribute surveys to gather input. Providing an example of an expensive yet poorly utilized bus route between Reno and Carson City, he said they also needed to consider costs. He noted the RTC experienced 44 straight months of ridership growth, and the goal was to place bus stops where they would be used. He spoke about the decision to move a bus stop from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport to just outside its perimeter on Terminal Way. Unfortunately, that has not resulted in more ridership, but the route has become more efficient.

A member of the audience asked about project prioritization. Officer Nelson confirmed that the Highland Ranch Parkway Capacity project was high on the priority list. RTC construction is expected to begin in 2028, though the developer is currently improving that intersection as well.

Another commenter inquired about high fuel prices in Washoe County. Officer Nelson said the voters approved a gas tax in 2008 which automatically increases based on a 10-year rolling average with an annual cap. Other counties without that gas tax do not have the funding to do the same types of road maintenance projects. He reiterated that the BCC is currently considering a ballot question to impose a fee for EVs and hybrids to make up lost revenue. Clark and Washoe Counties are the only two in the state which index their fuel, which they try to do to overcome inflation. He expected that the gas tax would increase again, though that was done through indexing, and no one would need to vote to approve it. He confirmed there was nothing in place to account for Washoe County residents who traveled to neighboring counties to buy their gas, but Carson City has some roads that have fallen into such disrepair that they were changed to gravel roads.

Officer Nelson spoke about regional road impact fees (RRIFs), which are paid by developers for each unit they put in: \$5,200 per unit north of I-80 and around \$4,800 or \$4,900 for those south of I-80. Those funds are then used for projects in that area, such as a Sky Vista project

in the north and a Steamboat project in the south. A project on Military Road will also be funded through the RRIF program.

A member of the public pointed out that the proposed EV tax was only \$250. Officer Nelson said that figure was determined by calculating how much those vehicles would use in gas tax over a year. EVs and hybrids only make up 5 or 6 percent of all vehicles in the county. It was possible that the Legislature, if they were to approve this, might also allow it to be indexed to change in the future, or they might choose a different fee amount altogether. The federal government is also considering charging an EV fee. While EVs weigh more than other cars, he continued, studies have shown that they do not impact pavement more than regular cars.

Regarding the possibility of charging a fee for EV charging stations to generate revenue from tourists, Officer Nelson responded that chargers are not equipped to be able to track the amount of electricity provided, but that could be something to consider in the future. Power companies also do not have the ability to differentiate what specifically the electricity is being used to charge. Another member of the public believed that sort of technology was already possible through NV Energy. Officer Nelson discussed the challenges of mileage-based EV fees.

Rob Pierce asked about the interaction between the RTP and RRIF fees. The RTP, Officer Nelson responded, does not change based on the RRIF program, though RRIF fees make up the budget for the RTP. Speaker Pierce brought up a situation where the RTC planned an expansion project on Red Rock Road, but after two zone amendments were approved by the BCC, the timeline of the RTP's expansion project changed. Officer Nelson explained that the RTC does not work with developers; that was the job of the Regional Planning Agency. Chair Chesney encouraged anyone with specific questions to speak with Officer Nelson after the meeting.

Responding to additional questions from the Board, Officer Nelson indicated that the RTC's offerings for public transportation are restrained by their budget. They do not have the capacity to increase the 20 routes they currently offer, but other programs were created to provide more options. He remarked that the RTC prioritizes areas that need help right now, so it will schedule projects in areas with heavy traffic before areas that are expected have a lot of development but do not currently have much.

7. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Office Specialist Casey McDonald stated there was nothing on the hub pertinent to District 5. He announced there was an opening for Washoe County retirees on the County's Deferred Compensation Committee with applications being accepted until June 30, and vacancies for two full-time members and one alternate member on the Board of Equalization with applications closing on June 5. He noted the County is looking to expand more into social media, and he urged people to reach out with suggestions for local Facebook groups on which to post meeting information. The hub's portal to provide input on Citizens Advisory Board bylaws was still open, he noted, and the item would be heard by the Board of County Commissioners at one of its next meetings.

8. CAB MEMBER/COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

There were no announcements.

9. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Rob Pierce stated he was running for the District 5 seat on the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). He provided his background information and said he would fight for Warm Spring residents. His areas of focus include, wasteful spending, a strong community, and first responders, the latter of which earned him endorsements from the Sheriff's Office and the Firefighter's Association. He reviewed the various boards and commissions on which he sat, mostly as a volunteer. He reiterated his concerns about the RTC possibly changing their RTP after zoning amendments are approved, something he planned to investigate.

ADJOURNMENT

There was no response to the call for public comment.

Chair Chesney moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and carried on a 4-0 vote, with Vice Chair Evans absent.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.