BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

TUESDAY 10:00 A.M. OCTOBER 21, 2025

PRESENT:

Alexis Hill, Chair
Jeanne Herman, Vice Chair
Michael Clark, Commissioner
Mariluz Garcia, Commissioner
Clara Andriola, Commissioner

Janis Galassini, County Clerk
Kate Thomas, Interim County Manager
Michael Large, Chief Deputy District Attorney

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:00 a.m. in regular 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, County Clerk Jan Galassini called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

25-0732 **AGENDA ITEM 3A1** General Update from Truckee Meadows Fire & Rescue, Chief Richard J. Edwards may be available to provide the Board of County Commissioners a verbal report on fuel management and emergency planning, and any other updates as requested monthly to the board, to update to the community related to fire activities. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Chief Richard Edwards said he had the distinct privilege of leading the men and women of the TMFPD. He noted that temperatures changed with the seasons and the area received welcomed precipitation. He stated that the changing seasons meant a reduced fire risk, which was very important for the community. He shared that the number of larger fires had significantly decreased, and there had not been any fires larger than five acres in over 45 days. He mentioned that national preparedness levels had dropped. He explained that Level Five typically occurred at the height of fire season, in the middle of summer, when all crews were committed to incidents. He said that preparedness was currently at Level One, which indicated that many federal resources were available. He noted that federal partners began transitioning from fire protection to fuels mitigation. He emphasized the importance of remaining vigilant, as cold fronts could bring significant wind events. He added that some of the region's largest and destructive fires occurred in November and December. He reminded the community that fires could still happen, even with some moisture, and urged the public not to become complacent.

Chief Edwards shared that vegetation management and fuel mitigation should be considered year-round. He suggested that favorable weather provided an opportunity to address overgrown vegetation that may have been overlooked during the summer or winter months. He explained that fire protection specialists examined three zones around homes to prevent ember casts during wildfires. He noted that during large wildfires, a significant number of embers could blow through and cause damage to homes. He noted that the first zone was 0 to 5 feet (ft) from a home, where noncombustible materials were preferred, with no plants or vegetation, and only rocks or hardscape. He added that, with proper maintenance, embers blown across that zone would encounter nothing flammable. He explained that the second zone was 5 to 30 ft from the home and included ladder fuels, such as brush and shrubs, which could carry the fire up into the trees. He advised keeping vegetation in that zone no higher than 2 to 3 ft and trimming tree branches to a height of 6 to 10 ft. He stated the second zone helped prevent fires from spreading from the ground into the trees, which could lead to crown fires burning through the forest. He noted that within the 30 ft zone, trees should be spaced so their canopies were at least 10 ft apart, and no trees should be within 10 ft of a home. He described another zone from 30 to 100 ft, where tree spacing should be similar, with at least 12 ft between trees. He mentioned that home hardening included cleaning debris from roofs, rain gutters, underneath decks, and other areas where debris could collect. In preparation for the winter months, he advised ensuring that firewood piles were not stacked against the house and that 30 ft of open space was maintained. He noted that vents should be inspected to ensure that vent screens had openings no larger than one-sixteenth to one-eighth of an inch, which could prevent embers from being blown into attics or underneath crawl spaces. He explained that the TMFPD recognized the most significant hazard as lingering embers after a fire, which could remain in an area for days and potentially cause serious damage. He said that those embers were often difficult to track and could ignite combustible materials that could burn the home. He advised the community to keep their driveways and roadways clear to maintain a 10-foot clearance for fire apparatus access. He stressed the importance of ensuring that addresses were clearly marked so that the TMFPD could easily locate the house in an emergency. He said it was essential to know how to open garage doors without power in the event of larger fires, in case evacuations were necessary. He noted that the energy company might turn off the power, which would render the garage door inoperable. He mentioned that those tips helped firefighters, who had limited resources and needed to focus on making the biggest impact in stopping the fire. He commented that the homeowners who complied with home hardening made it easier for firefighters to defend their homes compared to those who had not taken home hardening steps. He encouraged the community to take care of their vegetation so that their homes would be protected during wildfires.

Chief Edwards shared that the TMFPD was conducting several collections for the Green Waste Program during October, which he believed was important for the community. He mentioned that during the first weekend in the Eastlake area, 354 loads of vegetation were dropped off. He added that another collection in the Silver Lake area brought in 366 loads, which the fuels team chipped, placed in dumpsters, and partnered with Waste Management to dispose of. He said that there would be another collection on October 25, 2025, for Spanish Springs and Palomino Valley. He directed the community to the TMFPD's website for additional information. He shared that the TMFPD had hoped to begin the open burning program earlier in the year. He mentioned that property owners with parcels larger than one acre, who were eligible to burn, could participate when the program opened on November 1, 2025. He added that the TMFPD's website would be updated with any changes to help reduce fuels and wildfire risk across the region.

Chair Hill thanked Vice Chair Herman for requesting that Chief Edwards provide the Board with monthly updates.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Chief Edwards for his report. She brought up the federal government shutdown and asked whether federal partnering agencies had communicated about how the shutdown could potentially impact incident command when working with the US Forest Service (USFS) or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). She inquired whether contingency plans were in place in case something went wrong.

Chief Edwards stated that nothing currently impacted federal partners, who were transitioning from fire suppression activities to fuels mitigation projects as the weather changed. He said that federal agencies began downsizing staff, as was typical for the winter season, but maintained the ability to recall staff if needed. He noted that recalling staff could take some time. He added that mutual aid across the State was available, so regional partners could be called in to help should a significant event occur.

Commissioner Andriola thanked Chief Edwards for his report and expressed her appreciation for the hard work of the TMFPD, as well as their decision to initiate the open burning program earlier in the year.

Commissioner Clark thanked Chief Edwards for his report and mentioned that he had used the Green Waste Program to drop off a load of branches and limbs. He praised the TMFPD crew for being professional and phenomenal in helping unload the vehicles and noted that the program was run efficiently. He indicated that he had observed many community members taking advantage of the free program, which he believed was important to the citizens.

25-0733 **<u>AGENDA ITEM 4</u>** Public Comment.

Mr. Terry Brooks shared an original poem about the act of discrimination in education and gender diversity in schools.

Ms. Vicki Railton said she was thankful that State law required the Verdi Television (TV) District to maintain a website. She suggested that the Board search for the Verdi TV District on Google to see what information was available. She mentioned that she attended a Verdi TV District Board meeting in April 2025, where she requested transparency and accountability regarding how her tax dollars were spent. She inquired about revenues and expenditures and received two similar versions of the budgets. She felt that a budget that listed only office expenses and salaries was not an acceptable form of financial accounting and did not meet her request. She mentioned that over the past year, since KOLO 8 News Now aired its stories on the Verdi TV District, the accessibility and clarity of public information remained largely unaddressed. She shared that the Verdi TV

District claimed all its information was publicly available; however, she noted that obtaining the information required visiting several separate government offices. She believed that KOLO 8 News Now had encountered similar deceit and that many questions remained unanswered. She expressed concern about how her tax dollars were being spent. She said her understanding was that the Verdi TV District used those funds to maintain a single tower on Peavine Mountain, which provided residents with basic programming and a means of receiving news during emergencies. She suggested that the Peavine Mountain tower worked intermittently at best. She believed that over the past year, it had become apparent that the Verdi TV District lacked awareness of who it served, despite covering a very large area. She said she felt insulted during the April 10, 2025, meeting by board member Olivia Banbury, who remarked that if information could not be located, it was not the board's problem. She asserted that the Verdi TV District Board remained unaccountable, non-transparent, and evasive. She reiterated her request for a financial investigation into the Verdi TV District Board to determine how taxpayers' money was spent over the past several decades.

Ms. Nicol Herris said that she assisted the *Senior ResQ Magazine* and the Reno Elks Lodge in hosting a senior cooking class on October 15, 2025, which featured guest Chef Becky Degn. She thanked Vice Chair Herman for her $5,000 donation in support of the senior cooking class. She thought that there had been considerable discussion regarding the services available to seniors and added that a previous senior cooking class had nearly 80 seniors in attendance. She noted that the class was free for seniors and took place from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., during which seniors learned cooking tips from Chef Degn. She stated that the program was expanding to include senior living communities that were interested in transporting their residents to attend a class. She highlighted that the no-cost cooking event was publicized in *Senior ResQ Magazine* and was open to all seniors. She stated that the organization provided a basket for anyone who wished to make a donation. She said that during a recent event, $226 was collected to support the program. She shared a recent inquiry she received from someone interested in additional information about upcoming classes. She noted that previous cooking classes with Chef Jonathan Chapin, owner of Reno Recipes, had drawn approximately 50 seniors. She thanked Vice Chair Herman for her financial support and encouraged the other Commissioners to attend future events and consider donating to the cause.

Ms. Tammy Holt-Still thanked Vice Chair Herman for her dedication to the North Valleys and acknowledged that Vice Chair Herman was serving in the last year of her final term. She announced her intent to run for Vice Chair Herman’s seat and displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She explained that she had lived in Nevada since her sophomore year of high school and graduated from Carson City High School in 1981. She stated that she had moved to the area in 2012 and had lived in the North Valleys since then. She said that she married her husband, who had owned his home for the past 40 years. She mentioned that she began advocating for the North Valleys in 2017 and had continued to do so. She highlighted her background with the State of Nevada, where she gained extensive knowledge of the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). She said that she believed in the Constitution, transparency in government, family, community health, infrastructure, and the importance of responsibility in government. She felt that she could make a difference by continuing to be a voice for the citizens of the North Valleys. She thought that the community was not in a healthy state, which motivated her to run for County Commissioner. She mentioned that she had worked closely with the City of Reno and emphasized the importance of its collaboration with Washoe County. She indicated that she had made progress in getting the two entities to work together, and being a Commissioner would be beneficial in accomplishing that. She looked forward to receiving the community's support and encouraged citizens to vote for her.

Mr. Russ Earle, a resident of the Silver Knolls community, commented on Agenda Item 17 regarding the Silver Hills East extension. He remarked that if a person looked up the definition of a *ghost* or *zombie project* in the dictionary, that project would fit the definition. He said that he had first worked with the developer around 2004 and later worked against them. He mentioned that the developer had initially worked with the community and reached an agreement on the project but later reneged on that agreement due to greed. He indicated that the project had previously been denied on July 6, 2021, when the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) determined that it did not meet the required findings related to water, sewer, and traffic. He suggested that the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had overturned that decision, and he expressed his own suspicions as to why the decision had been reversed. He stated that it appeared to be the second lapse in the project's timeline and noted that a similar incident had occurred previously, two months after the four-year timeframe for submitting documentation had expired. He mentioned it was the developer's third attempt to secure a water source. He questioned why there were so many opportunities offered to finalize the project. He believed that the previous approaches the developer had explored were all problematic. He expressed concern that the development would contribute to severe congestion in the North Valleys. He indicated that an infrastructure law, enacted under former President Joseph Biden's administration, was dismantled under the current administration. He said federal funds were being rescinded, even for projects that had already been awarded funding. He said that 40 percent of the United States (US) Route 395-improvement project from Golden Valley north to Stead was funded through federal infrastructure dollars, which were no longer available. He explained that he had attempted to obtain confirmation from the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) regarding the availability of those funds but had not received a response. He felt that the majority of current development was north of Stead, with no definitive timeline from NDOT to improve the affected roadways. He thought that while future projects might be planned several years out, no current improvements were scheduled. He noted that the Stonegate project included approximately 1,500 homes, and more than 7,000 zombie project homes had already been approved on Red Rock. He expressed uncertainty about how many additional projects could be introduced when existing timelines could not be met. He believed that the issues should not be deferred, as doing so would create additional leeway for the developer, who would likely request further zoning changes. He said that he opposed the project.

Mr. Blake Vander Well displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. He stated that he was the president and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the non-profit organization, Senior ResQ, which provided rental assistance to seniors and senior veterans in Washoe County. He thanked Vice Chair Herman for her generous donation that supported seniors in Washoe County. He asked the Commissioners who had not yet donated to consider supporting Senior ResQ, which had made significant impacts on seniors in the community since May 2024. He stated that Senior ResQ had worked closely with the Reno Housing Authority (RHA) to ensure their services worked cohesively. He explained that Senior ResQ needed additional funding and had recently planned future fundraising events and spoken to community foundations that supported housing. He stated that, with the help of individuals proficient in grant writing, the organization could begin applying for grants, though that process would take time. He added that available grants were being reduced in the current federal government environment, and community funding and Commissioner support were critical. He noted that seniors and senior veterans needed Senior ResQ's services more than ever, which made immediate additional funding crucial. He explained that many senior referrals came from the Washoe County Senior Services, the Washoe County Department of Welfare, and other County agencies, as well as the RHA, Catholic Charities of Northern Nevada (CCNN), and other organizations. He stated that lower-income seniors in Washoe County continued to face difficulties with increased rents. He felt the issue was not a lack of housing but rather a shortage of available Section 8 vouchers. He recognized that the problem was a federal issue, but wanted to ensure that he had communicated it. He shared that many seniors already lived in units that accepted those vouchers, yet he believed many were unaware that the vouchers existed or that they could apply for them. He said he was touched by how the seniors were deeply grateful, even for as little as $40 a month. He thanked Vice Chair Herman for her donation and expressed appreciation to Commissioner Clark for his continued support. He encouraged the BCC to support Senior ResQ.

Ms. Katherine Yriarte stated that she was a resident of District 5 and spoke as a resident, small business owner, and proud Nevadan who cared deeply about the direction of the Country and Washoe County. She mentioned that she was running for the District Five seat currently held by Vice Chair Herman and expressed her profound respect and appreciation for Vice Chair Herman's years of dedication and service to rural communities. She noted that, over the years, she had worked with local organizations and community groups to strengthen connections between Washoe County's rural and suburban areas. She explained that through that work, she had experienced firsthand the potential that came with a focus on listening, collaboration, and common-sense leadership. She stated that her professional and personal experiences had shown her that many people faced significant challenges. She explained that those individuals included small business owners navigating outdated regulations, families struggling to access resources for the care of aging and disabled family members, and rural residents who felt their concerns were often overlooked and believed that more could be done. She thought that change began with communication, compassion, and accountability. She stated that she was guided by faith, family, and a deep sense of responsibility to serve with integrity. She said that her goal was to help build a County government that worked efficiently while respecting property rights, protecting open spaces, and supporting the people who strengthen Washoe County. She mentioned that District 5 represented the heart of who Nevadans were, which she believed to be individuals who were hardworking, independent, and deeply connected to the land. She said she wanted to ensure that every decision made by the BCC reflected those values and that no part of the community felt left behind. She noted that it was not about politics, but about the people and ensuring that the voices of every resident were heard and valued. She thanked the Board for their continued commitment to serving Washoe County and expressed her eagerness to listen, learn, and contribute in whatever way possible to strengthen a shared future.

Mr. Oscar Williams stated that he wanted to discuss the organizational chart, which he felt was fatally flawed. He assumed that interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas was going to give a presentation. He expressed concern that there was no direct line of communication between the Registrar of Voters (ROV) and the BCC, despite the BCC being responsible for hiring or firing the ROV, setting their salary and other compensation, and certifying the canvass of votes provided by the ROV. He questioned why the ROV did not have a direct line of communication with the Board. He alleged that the County Clerk, who signed the certificates of election, did not have a direct line of communication with the ROV. He was unsure how that worked. He expressed his disagreement with the structure that required elected officials to communicate through the County Manager before presenting their concerns to the Board. He added that the Raftelis Report, which was based on what he described as a flawed organizational chart, was defective as well. He felt it was essential to start from the beginning and reevaluate the role of the County Manager, which he thought should serve the elected officials, not the other way around.

Ms. Susan Walls thanked the BCC and all Washoe County employees, acknowledging her appreciation for a Board she believed had a thankless job. She thanked the members of the library system and the community volunteers. She stated that she had recently shared her concerns about the future of libraries and the Washoe County Library System (WCLS). She stated that she was unable to attend the recent Library Board of Trustees (LBT) meeting in person but viewed the recording. She shared that she was pleased to see that the LBT voted to approve the recommended 2026-2027 budget, as presented by Assistant County Manager (ACM) David Solaro, which proposed funding at the level before the 2024 vote occurred and considered contractual salary increases. She said that she looked forward to the upcoming LBT presentation to the BCC. She encouraged the Commissioners to approve the budget and restore any services that may have been eliminated or suspended for budgetary or other reasons. She suggested filling existing vacancies to ensure the libraries were fully staffed. She noted that libraries provided essential services throughout the County, serving not only children but adults of all ages. She believed that library services could not easily be found elsewhere in the County, and that any loss or reduction would significantly affect residents who relied on the services. She commended County staff for providing excellent guidance to the LBT in reaching a budget agreement. She believed that the community members appreciated the importance of a strong, well-funded, and well-staffed library system. She mentioned that she had previously observed that the training for the LBT might be insufficient, as there appeared to be contention among board members. She believed the board often seemed confused about their roles, and not just their role regarding budget creation. She felt the LBT had difficulty following Robert's Rules of Order and other established meeting protocols. She indicated that, at most meetings, there appeared to be disarray, which was apparent with their questions, confusion, and second-guessing of budget recommendations. She explained that she understood that serving on a board was not easy, and she believed that not everyone could do it, including herself. She said she appreciated those who served. She stated that when there was disarray, one assumed there was also dysfunction. She added that confusion, disarray, and dysfunction, whether real or perceived, could create unnecessary contention among the community members who attended the meetings. She thought that good progress had been made regarding the 2026 and 2027 budgets, but she hoped that County staff would continue to review and modify them as necessary and provide training for the various County boards to improve their function and public perception.

Ms. Anna Pageau spoke on Agenda Item 12 and mentioned that her family had dreamed of starting a farm after her husband began transitioning into retirement, following 24.5 years in the military. She explained that they had done extensive research and purchased property in the north Red Rock area. She mentioned that, by 2023, they believed their research was complete and were ready to file the paperwork to obtain business licenses and certifications to establish a small farm that would grow produce and local herbs for sale to the community. She shared that she held multiple certifications in aromatherapy, herbalism, and gardening, and wanted to provide workshops to equip people with the knowledge to grow their own food and herbs. She added that they also hoped to sell seedlings to help people get started with gardening, and for those not interested in growing, they planned to have a farm stand that offered community members what they needed. She indicated that the application process proved to be very challenging. She mentioned that she had made several revisions to her application and was still required to pay fees, which she believed she should have been exempt from. She added that inspections were required for her property, which had nothing to inspect, and signatures were needed from regulatory authorities who had no authority over her current business activities. She stated that a challenge with the Envision Washoe 2040 document was the constant distinction between urban agriculture and traditional agriculture. She said that urban agriculture was crucial in developing areas near Reno, Sparks, and Incline Village, but it only encompassed approximately 200 square miles of the 6,600 square miles that represented Washoe County. She noted that farms such as Urban Roots and the Reno Food Systems were urban agricultural businesses that allowed nearby residents to access locally grown foods at a farm stand and walk through a small farm location. She shared that several unincorporated Washoe County residents wished to develop agricultural businesses to support local areas, but limitations within the current Code prevented them from creating a livable business opportunity. She stated that their properties were located in rural zones, which included low-density rural, general rural, or general rural agricultural areas. She added that, as stated in the staff report, the development code allowed activities such as agricultural sales, animal production, and produce sales. She provided an example of her farm, located in a low-density rural zone, where she could not have people on her property without obtaining a special-use permit (SUP). She indicated that a special use would be unprofitable, and due to the rural designation, her farm would not qualify under the proposed agriculture revisions.

Ms. Jill OLeary provided and read a document regarding her concerns related to the Washoe County Recorder's Office's document recording policies and processes, copies of which were placed on file with the Clerk.

Ms. Maureen McElroy stated that on Saturday, October 18, 2025, approximately 18,000 people gathered and participated in a peaceful rally in downtown Reno. She mentioned that the Reno rally was one of about 2,600 held Nationwide, with more than 7 million people participating. She indicated that the protests were directed against what she described as the federal government's despicable actions and edicts towards its citizens. She cited concerns that included the disappearance of individuals, obstruction of affordable health care for millions, and deployment of military forces against citizens. She described the crowd as invigorated, joyful, and determined. She said that moving forward, she urged elected officials to listen to the public's concerns and resist the federal government's involvement in abhorrent actions. She hoped that the BCC would take note of the public's dissatisfaction and act to ensure just, lawful, fair, and sane governance.

Ms. Trista Gomez said that she had been attending BCC meetings for nearly two years. She added that she started attending after she encountered an issue and had realized she was unaware of what was happening in Washoe County. She expressed concerns regarding the recruitment process for the next County Manager. She acknowledged that the public would learn which candidates were running for the County Manager position and then have the opportunity to meet them the following Sunday. She assumed that the special BCC meeting on October 27, 2025, pertained to the hiring process, as she had not yet seen an agenda posted for that meeting. She shared that she and her family had lived in Washoe County their entire lives. She believed that the government worked for the good of the people, but her recent involvement in the community had altered that perception. She explained that while attending the BCC meetings, she heard residents who felt disregarded, including those who pleaded that their lawsuits, experts, and scientists would sway the Board to protect their values, property concerns, and quality of life. She felt that while some populations in the County had benefited significantly since Chair Hill assumed the Chair position, most residents had not seen similar benefits. She said that she feared that the hiring process for the County Manager was not transparent. She stated that the short timeline for reviewing candidates, meeting them during a Sunday evening event that few people could attend, and a Monday morning meeting was insufficient for residents to evaluate the candidates thoroughly. She emphasized the need to identify a candidate who could address the County's challenges, including the overarching budget deficit and issues that had impacted residents. She hoped that the special BCC meeting would avoid repeating past mistakes and stated that she felt hiring ICM Thomas would be a disservice to residents.

25-0734 **<u>AGENDA ITEM 5</u>** Announcements/Reports.

Regarding Agenda Item 9E2, Interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas clarified that the Board was informed that although the Reno Elks Lodge was pleased to receive a donation from Vice Chair Herman, the organization was currently addressing an issue with its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reporting form. She added that an outdated version of the form would need to be replaced before the Reno Elks Lodge could receive the donation. Therefore, the organization had requested that the donation be postponed until it received clearance from the IRS. She indicated that Agenda Item 9E2 could proceed without the donation to the Reno Elks Lodge.

Vice Chair Herman said that nearly 11 years ago, she requested that an item be added to the agenda to provide oversight of the General Improvement Districts (GIDs), which she felt lacked legislative approval. She noted that she had reminded the Board for many years, but no action was taken. She requested that the appropriate department begin drafting a bill for the next legislative session.

Commissioner Andriola recognized the efforts of Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Sergeant Sonia Butler and the Homeless Outreach Proactive Engagement (HOPE) Team. She mentioned that she had the opportunity to observe the work being done in the community firsthand and hoped that communication with the public regarding successes would continue. She stated that she had interacted with the HOPE Team two years ago and more recently with the Sparks HOPE team. She explained the importance of regional collaboration across all jurisdictions, noting that jurisdictional boundaries were often only steps apart. She felt that, collectively, all unincorporated jurisdictions faced challenges related to budget constraints and finding ways to be more efficient. She believed that collaborative efforts among the three jurisdictions would be beneficial in reviewing processes. She acknowledged that some initial discussions had taken place and expressed hope that those would advance toward a formal plan. She commended Sergeant Butler, the HOPE Team, and the team's case worker for their efforts. She shared a story about a client who had transitioned from homelessness into permanent housing without any government subsidy, and she relayed how his life was positively changed. She thought that homelessness often involved many stereotypes and complexities. She added that she was not suggesting that all the answers were known, but she recognized that the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) would help everyone work together toward a common purpose. She emphasized the importance of focusing not only on assisting those in need but also on helping individuals transition from enabling situations to productive, long-term outcomes. She acknowledged WCSO Sheriff Darin Balaam, Undersheriff Corey Solferino, Sergeant Butler, and the HOPE Team for their efforts.

Commissioner Andriola encouraged everyone to observe the work firsthand. She said there was no guarantee when an opportunity to help someone in need would arise, but when it did, the teams were ready to assist. She stated that she had observed successes with the HOPE Team in Washoe County. She said that 91% of people who receive tenancy support are able to achieve long-term success. She said that she had requested additional information and would share it later, if Chair Hill approved a future presentation by the HOPE Team. She mentioned that information would highlight successes, challenges, and needs. She said the teams were engaged in that work for a long time, and the programs were continuously evolving. She acknowledged the efforts of Judge Egan Walker and the team that developed the SIM in Washoe County. She celebrated the individuals who found ways to assist those in need while creating long-term efficiencies and minimizing the burden on taxpayers. She mentioned that she had heard some individuals express concerns about the possible warehousing of people. She said that she was a fact-based person who kept an open mind and refrained from making judgments until she had all the information. She welcomed the opportunity to hear from the HOPE Team and believed they could provide valuable information.

Commissioner Clark asked if the Board could vote on the donation for the Reno Elks Lodge, hold the check, and, if the organization was unable to finalize its nonprofit status, have funds revert to the County. Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large said that, based on the Elks' request, the item would need to be addressed at a later time to ensure that the donation would not create issues with the IRS.

Commissioner Clark discussed a document and provided copies to the Board, which were placed on file with the Clerk. He explained that the article, written by Ms. Terri Russell of KOLO 8 News, was published on April 11, 2025, and pertained to Agenda Item 6A1. He referenced a paragraph he found concerning, which suggested that Ms. Michelle Zunino stated the Verdi Television (TV) District information could be found on the Nevada Department of Taxation's (NDT) website and indicated that the Verdi TV District's Board voted to exempt itself from any budget or audit reporting requirements. He said that he was alarmed that a board could vote to exempt itself from reporting its budget. He stated that he was uncertain about the accuracy of the article but felt that the information did not make sense. He remarked that other departments had faced similar issues, such as the Department of Alternative Sentencing (DAS), which experienced financial irregularities, and the Incline Village General Improvement District (IVGID) Board, which lacked transparency and financial information. He believed that it was the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to maintain complete oversight of any boards under its jurisdiction and to ensure that they were properly audited, through both internal and independent audits, to determine what was taking place. He thought that there were nearly 11,000 residents in the Verdi TV District area, which utilized the Washoe County Treasurer to collect property taxes to fund programs that did not appear to operate regularly. He felt that the BCC should examine situations in which taxpayers were funding services that may not be delivered. He added that if various boards were monitored more closely, financial issues would likely be identified internally rather than secondhand through the media.

Chair Hill announced that the recruitment process for the Washoe County Manager position was in its final stages. She shared that Washoe County would host a meet-and-greet on Sunday, October 26, 2025, at Lazy 5 Regional Park and encouraged the community to attend. She informed that a special BCC meeting would be held on October 27, 2025, to interview the candidates. She expressed her excitement that the recruitment process was moving forward.

25-0735 **AGENDA ITEM 6A1** Verdi TV Districts Hud Horton to provide updates on the financial and governance status of the TV District per request of the board. (Commission District 1.)

Verdi Television (TV) District Chair Hud Horton conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Understanding the Verdi Television District: History, Structure, and Impact; Agenda Items; Overview of the Verdi Television District; Introduction to the District; Geographic Location; Peavine Peak Communications Site Management Plan; Primary Functions and Goals; History of the Verdi Television District; Founding and Early Years; Residents Within the District; Evolution Over Time; Income and Expenses; Board Responsibilities and Governance; Structure of the Board; Verdi Television District Peavine Site; Compliance and Accountability; Map and Geographic Data; Detailed Map of the District; Geographic Influence on Operations; Photos Over the Years; Board Removing Ice Frozen On Antennas; Snow and Ice Caused Damage (2 slides); Air National Guard Transporting Board Member and Propane Tanks to Site (3 slides); Pole Markers Places on Road To Help Lead To Site During Low-Visibility; and Verdi Volunteer Fire Department Clean-Up After Fire Retardant Drop on Building and Antennas; Conclusion.

Mr. Horton indicated that the Verdi TV District was formed in 1961, allowing Verdi residents to access television. He explained that the area had grown, which created extended transmission signals to Verdi, Mogul, and western Somerset. He reported that the Verdi TV District was established under Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 318 with the purpose of overseeing the operation and maintenance of the transmission facility on Peavine Mountain. He stated that Peavine Mountain was located at an elevation of approximately 8,096 feet (ft) and that the Verdi communication site was first used for purposes under the authorization of the Truckee River TV Association in 1958. He pointed out photos of the communication site on the *Peavine Peak Communications Site Management Plan* slide and further explained the site's location on the *Geographic Location* slide. He mentioned that Verdi TV District ensured compliance with the Nevada Department of Taxation (NDT), the County, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, and the State of Nevada. He stated that Verdi TV District consultants were available to conduct radio frequency (RF) studies for residents to determine availability and reception.

Mr. Horton believed that the Verdi TV District had a rich history that showcased growth and transformation. He clarified that the Verdi TV District was not a TV repair service or a broadcasting facility and had evolved to adapt to changing technology and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requirements. He explained that the Verdi TV District's responsiveness to transmission interruptions or loss was timely. He reported the District's income on the *Income and Expenses* slide, including consolidated tax (c-tax), Local Government Tax Act (LGTA) Fairshare funds, and funding from Americom. He noted that the Verdi TV District's expenses were paid through the Washoe County Comptroller's Office and that anything purchased was approved by the County. He believed that effective governance was vital to the success of the Verdi TV District, and that the district was responsible for strategic planning, financial oversight, managing and maintaining equipment, and ensuring it met its goals. He explained that the Verdi TV District had 21 broadcast channels, 2 radio channels, the First Responders Camera and Telemetry System, the UNR Seismology Lab earthquake warning system, and a local amateur radio station.

Mr. Horton explained that, contrary to what was reported by local news stations, the Verdi TV District had never operated without a license. He pointed out that the map located on the *Detailed Map of the District* slide illustrated the area of coverage. He believed that the location of the Verdi TV District site made it excessively challenging to access due to winter weather conditions. He reported that technicians and board members had to hike, snowmobile, snowcat, or helicopter to respond, repair, and maintain the site. He referred to the *Board Removing Ice Frozen On Antennas; Snow and Ice Caused Damage (2 slides); Air National Guard Transporting Board Member and Propane Tanks to Site(3 slides); Pole Markers Places on Road To Help Lead To Site During Low-Visibility;* and *Verdi Volunteer Fire Department Clean-Up After Fire Retardant Drop on Building and Antennas* slides regarding photos and events that took place at the site. He concluded the presentation, indicating that the Verdi TV District was a significant entity that provided over-the-air transmission to its residents, had a rich history, was dedicated to the Board, and had a well-structured governance structure that understood its operations and geographical significance.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Horton for his presentation. She explained that there were concerns from the public regarding transparency. She noted that she could not locate the Verdi TV District's website, which was supposed to be available by October 1, 2025. Mr. Horton asserted that the Verdi TV District was working with the County to maintain and update the website and that it should have been available.

Vice Chair Herman expressed pleasure in meeting the Verdi TV District and explained that the district seemed to have a busy schedule. Mr. Horton said that it could be busy due to power outages, fires, and snowstorms. He explained that the site's generator was updated in case of a power outage. He noted that the Verdi TV District had not lost TV reception for longer than a few hours in years. Vice Chair Herman thanked Mr. Horton for his service.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Mr. Horton for the presentation and indicated that the Verdi TV District collected tax dollars and provided services to the community. She wondered why there was resistance to putting the Verdi TV District's information online. Mr. Horton believed that there was never resistance and that no one had taken it into consideration. He explained that the district had collaborated with the County to post the board members, agendas, and meeting information online, making the data more transparent.

Commissioner Garcia indicated that there was no clear pathway online to the Verdi TV District's website. Mr. Horton said that it should be housed on the County's website. Commissioner Garcia explained that she understood that the Verdi TV District was embedded on the County's website. Mr. Horton noted that he was aware of that, and the district was working on making the information available. Commissioner Garcia asserted that she understood the district was working on putting its information online; however, she wished to communicate how problematic it was as a constituent to have a lack of information. She summarized that Assembly Bill (AB) 301 required all TV districts to have a website with budgets, audits, expenditures, meeting minutes, and annual reports.

She pointed out that the Verdi TV District's audits and meeting minutes were not available online. She asked if the Verdi TV District would have its own website or if the information would be embedded at the bottom of the County's website. She wondered if the meeting minutes were linked to prior meetings and if audits would be listed. Mr. Horton confirmed that all financial information would be listed on the County's website and that the district would not have its own separate website, as he believed being listed on the County's website was sufficient. He speculated that a standalone website would cost taxpayers more money.

Verdi TV District Secretary Michelle Zunino indicated that she had spoken to an Office of the County Manager (OCM) employee about having the information listed online a few days ago and asked about a hyperlink. She stated that the OCM said they were working on it. She explained that the meeting minutes, dating back as far as two years ago, and the budgets were listed on the website. She speculated that if they were not listed, it was due to a County error because she recalled that the information was listed the previous week. She noted that the OCM indicated that the Verdi TV District would have its own landing page on the County's website. She asserted that the Verdi TV District had organized the required information to be posted on the website by October 1, 2025. Commissioner Garcia thanked Ms. Zunino for the clarification and explained that the Verdi TV District's meeting archives were confusing. She noted that she could see the meeting minutes and explained that if the Verdi TV District did not tell their story, then others would make it up for them. She encouraged the district to explore every possible avenue to become more transparent, as she felt they were rightfully under scrutiny due to concerns from constituents. She looked forward to seeing their website improvements.

Commissioner Andriola expressed similar concerns as Commissioner Garcia regarding the Verdi TV District's website and noted that the presentation stated that the County's Comptroller's Office processed the Verdi TV District's expenses. Mr. Horton indicated that the district sent its billing to the Comptroller's Office for purchasing and expenditures. Commissioner Andriola inquired whether all costs were processed through the Comptroller's Office and wondered where the funding originated. Ms. Zunino noted that all Verdi TV District funding was sent to the Comptroller's Office. Commissioner Andriola speculated that the information should be accessible through the Washoe Checkbook and available to anyone who wanted to review the funds. She stated that the Washoe Checkbook was updated every 24 hours, providing financial transparency to the public. She believed that the Verdi TV District had a statutory responsibility to be fully transparent. She stated that independent audits were crucial because they verified whether funding and expenses were allocated correctly and in accordance with NRS and the framework of operations. She opined that the County had a great Audit Committee and requested that an audit of the Verdi TV District be discussed on a future agenda.

Mr. Zunino agreed with Commissioner Andriola and inquired about who to discuss and send information to at the County. She recalled that she had recently sent the information required by AB 301 to Chair Hill and the County Clerk, but explained that she received a phone call from the County Clerk's Office because they were unsure how to proceed with her documents. She expressed that she was trying to follow the law and recalled that she had asked two to three County employees and the Verdi TV District's attorney how to proceed with certain documents, but they did not know. Chair Hill asked if the Verdi TV District's attorney was unaware of how to process the documents required by AB 301. Ms. Zunino indicated that their attorney did not know to whom the documents should be sent.

Interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas clarified that the Verdi TV District was a separate governmental entity and that the County acted as its fiscal agent, but she was unsure if its funds would appear in the Washoe Checkbook. She recalled that Assistant County Manager (ACM) David Solaro was working with the Verdi TV District and noted that it would be best if they sent their documents to ACM Solaro going forward. She explained that the hyperlink would be updated through the Communications team and that the single point of contact should remain as ACM Solaro. Chair Hill mentioned that she did not recall an email from Ms. Zunino.

County Clerk Jan Galassini indicated that the Verdi TV District's financials were submitted in the Communication and Reports agenda item as part of the Consent Agenda. She pointed out that General Improvement Districts (GIDs) were required by law to submit their financial reports to the Debt Management Commission (DMC) and that those reports were part of the public record. Chair Hill expressed that the issue was that no one could find the Verdi TV District's information in one location. She asserted that it was the Verdi TV District's responsibility to communicate with the public, and while she was glad that the County was supporting the Verdi TV District, it was not the County's responsibility to make sure the Verdi TV District was transparent or to ensure all the documents were listed on the website. She opined that the reason the public was frustrated with the Verdi TV District was that it required visiting multiple different places to access their information. She pointed out that taxpayer funds were utilized by the Verdi TV District and that taxpayers had the right to know where the information was. She was unsure whether the County's Audit Committee should conduct an audit of the Verdi TV District or if the Verdi TV District should pay for its own audit. She asked Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large for legal input regarding an audit of the Verdi TV District. CDDA Large stated that he was not prepared to answer the question; however, there were limitations regarding the County's auditing abilities. He noted that there were no barriers for the Verdi TV District to publish or request its own audits. Chair Hill believed there was a citation in NRS that allowed the BCC to request an audit.

Commissioner Andriola thanked ICM Thomas for her clarification. She pointed out that the County should charge the Verdi TV District a reasonable fee for expending funds through the Comptroller's Office, as the district was a separate governmental agency. She believed that the Verdi TV District should be aware of its own expenses and felt that if it were not for the County, the district would have to pay for its own audit and accounting services.

Commissioner Clark appreciated the Board for asking difficult questions. He wondered if the Verdi TV District voted to exempt itself from audit reporting for 2024, 2025, and 2026. Ms. Zunino indicated that the Board had the right to sign a petition and resolution to exempt itself from certain things. Commissioner Clark noted that he was astounded that the Verdi TV District voted to exempt itself from auditing and reporting. He appreciated his fellow Commissioners for providing criticism and advice on how to run the Verdi TV District. He recalled that friends of his had expressed concerns about the Verdi TV District for years, and that the community had long sought transparency. He stated that Verdi was not within his district; however, he had taken a personal interest in the community's concerns and asserted that the Verdi TV District should fund an independent audit. He stated that the Verdi TV District served roughly 11,000 residents who deserved transparency. Ms. Zunino contended that some of Commissioner Clark's comments were inaccurate and that all of Verdi TV District's expenses were in their budget. She noted that the Verdi TV District had an independent accountant who oversaw financials. She indicated that she had misunderstood Commissioner Clark's question regarding audit exemptions and stated that the Verdi TV District reported its budget to the Nevada Department of Taxation (NDT) annually. She explained that KOLO 8 News had issued an incorrect statement regarding the Verdi TV District.

Commissioner Clark inquired whether the district had voted to exempt itself from publishing a budget or audit for three years and asked who the Verdi TV District's attorney and accountant were. Ms. Zunino said that the Verdi TV District's attorney was Mr. John Gallagher, and their accountant was Mr. Michel Knott. She said that the exemption was a resolution that granted the Verdi TV District exempt from filing a tentative budget, an audit report, and certain publishing requirements, except for the annual publication of a notice of the budget. She explained that the Verdi TV District was exempt from maintaining accounting records on an accrual or modified accrual basis and indicated that the district was required to file an annual fiscal report, quarterly status report, and annual budget on or before April 15. She asserted that the Verdi TV District filed statements of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance, balance sheets for governmental fund types, expenses and changes in net assets, and balance sheets for enterprise funds on or before January 1.

Commissioner Clark indicated that, according to the NDT, the Verdi TV District voted to exempt itself from any budget or audit reporting for 2024, 2025, and 2026. Ms. Zunino explained that she was confused and asked where Commissioner Clark received that report. Commissioner Clark provided a document, copies of which were placed on file with the Clerk, and indicated that it was a report from the NDT published on April 11, 2025. Ms. Zunino expressed that the report Commissioner Clark presented was from KOLO 8 News and was inaccurate. She stated that the Verdi TV District shared what was done with public funds and followed the rules; however, she could not control misinformation.

Chair Hill believed that the Verdi TV District could help mitigate some misinformation by publishing data and maintaining a comprehensive website. She said that the Verdi TV District blamed the County for a website that the district should have had running by October 1, 2025. Ms. Zunino asked which part of the website was incomplete. Chair Hill indicated that all the financial documents were not listed. Ms. Zunino stated that all the financial records were available.

Commissioner Clark requested all financial and reporting documents from the Verdi TV District for the past five years. Ms. Zunino asked for clarification on what documents he wanted. Commissioner Clark stated that he would like to have all financial documents readily available and would share them with the public and news agencies upon request.

Chair Hill asked CDDA Large if he had any further input regarding the auditing of the Verdi TV District. CDDA Large reported that NRS Chapter 318.515 required 20 percent of the district's electorate to approve an audit or a request from the NDT. Chair Hill noted that she would peruse the County's Verdi TV District page and said she looked forward to continued discussion on the matter. She believed it was essential for the community to know how to access the district's information, how to contact the district, and what projects the Verdi TV District was currently working on. Ms. Zunino mentioned that she was able to locate the website and clarified that there were some inaccurate addresses and phone numbers listed online that she had been attempting to correct.

Vice Chair Herman felt that the Board had been rough on the Verdi TV District and apologized for some of the questions asked. Mr. Horton said that the experience that day had been taking place for roughly eight months, and he hoped other districts were being treated the same. He stated that a few months prior, the District Attorney (DA) and two news agencies requested financial records. He noted that the Verdi TV District had done nothing wrong and that he was willing to share any financial information requested. Ms. Zunino thanked Commissioner Andriola for wanting facts before judging the district.

25-0736 **<u>AGENDA ITEM 6B1</u>** Bill Thomas from the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to discuss the connection between RTC and the Guinn Center. The Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research center addressing key challenges faced by policymakers and all Nevadans. In addition, he will cover the Traffic Maintenance study, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and info about the Traffic Management Center (TMC). (All Commission Districts.)

Bill Thomas, Executive Director at the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), greeted the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas. He remarked that he was glad to be at the meeting and introduced Dale Keller, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Engineering at the RTC. Mr. Thomas explained that Mr. Keller appeared at the BCC meeting to discuss all the details about the RTC, should the Board wish to delve into those matters in more depth. He asked that the BCC indulge him by allowing him to provide a more holistic view of what was being done by the RTC prior to addressing the Guinn Center study, which he described as the focus of his presentation. He opined that an overview of the RTC's activities over the previous year would be helpful for members of the BCC who did not concurrently serve on the RTC's governing board, as it would enable them to better understand what the organization had accomplished during the year prior. He noted that he would display a brief video without audio that included details regarding the RTC's major projects. He explained that he had a presentation to conduct following the video that was comprised of information about the conclusion of the Guinn Center study and the RTC's recent maintenance study. He showed the video he had described and remarked that it reflected a portion of the $185 million that the RTC invested in the region the previous year.

Mr. Thomas conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: RTC Washoe 2025; Regional Transportation Commission; Core Services; Project Process; Maintenance Study; Key Findings & Recommendations; Guinn Study; Washoe County; Key Findings; Intelligent Transportations Systems (ITS); Traffic Management Center (TMC); Upcoming; Thank You!.

Mr. Thomas showed the slide titled *Regional Transportation Commission*. He stated he intended to begin his presentation by describing the RTC's governing board in detail, primarily for the public, as he was unsure whether they necessarily tracked that information. He noted that the RTC's governing board was created in 1979 and was likely one of the oldest regional agencies in Washoe County. He explained that the RTC's board consisted of elected representatives from the three local government entities in the County. He opined that the RTC's governing board functioned as a regional agency. He expressed pride in how the RTC's board members considered it their job to investigate the way transportation existed in the community. He explained that the average trip for County citizens was approximately six miles, which was a commute that often crossed multiple jurisdictions. He elaborated that the perspective of transportation officials was that people were somewhat blind to those jurisdictions, as they were more focused on their trip and the experience of their commute. He reiterated that the video he had displayed previously showed a two-minute highlight of a limited number of the RTC's past projects. He explained that 11,810 unique individuals were employed as a result of the money generated by sales and fuels taxes managed by the RTC on behalf of the community and the organization's governing board. He opined that a fairly significant number of people in the community had jobs as a result of the investments in the RTC. He noted that nearly 3,000 jobs annually were attributed to both the RTC's projects and the employees of the transit agencies the RTC had as contractors, including Keolis and MTM Transit.

Mr. Thomas displayed the *Core Services* slide. He reminded the Board and wanted to share with the public what matters the RTC conducted. He noted that the RTC provided three primary roles and services. He stated that transportation planning was the first of those services. He explained that the RTC's job was to manage and monitor the movement of goods and people throughout the community. He stated that regional transportation was the key function associated with the RTC's purpose. He noted that the RTC was a metropolitan planning organization, which he described as a federal construct mandated by the federal government's requirement for communities consisting of over 50,000 people to have an agency, such as the RTC, to access and spend federal funds. He explained that the RTC's status as a metropolitan planning organization was a key part of what the organization did. He recounted that the RTC had adopted a 20-year transportation plan the previous year, which was vital to how the organization invested its funds. He added that the RTC was responsible for all aspects of the design, planning, construction, inspection, and maintenance of the asphalt on regional roads. He acknowledged that those matters were associated more with Mr. Keller’s area of expertise, but he emphasized that such work was a significant part of the RTC’s operations. Mr. Thomas noted that the RTC was not responsible for local or State roads and highways, which he disclosed was a topic he would discuss in further detail later. He explained that the RTC oversaw the intervening portions of the roads, which consisted of most of the major roads used by the community. He described that the RTC also operated public transportation, which consisted of more than just the large blue buses. He noted that the RTC’s public transportation also included the disability service of RTC ACCESS, the newer FlexRIDE program, and several active programs for seniors, including Washoe Senior Ride, which utilized taxis and Lyft or Uber vehicles. He indicated that the RTC covered the entire range of efforts to help the public navigate the community.

Mr. Thomas introduced the slide titled *Project Process* by acknowledging that it could be frustrating for people who had heard questions from the public regarding what was happening on specific roads, what was not changing within constituents' neighborhoods, and why certain things could not be done. He explained that the RTC had a very involved decision-making process that began with a 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). He noted that any progress made at the RTC was approached through the RTP, which was revisited every three to four years to consider everything that could be needed in the region over the following 20 years. He stated that the 20-year RTP provided a general overview of what needed to be done, which was then reviewed again to create the RTC’s five-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). He elaborated that the five-year RTIP comprised the actual projects that would be conducted in the near future. He noted that following the RTIP, the RTC would conduct its Interlocal Cooperative Agreements (ICAs) through the organization's governing board. He stated that the BCC would review all of the ICAs, as the agreements could be for the Cities of Sparks and Reno, as well as Washoe County. He noted that all the ICAs had to go through the BCC because it was the agent that allowed the RTC to expend the tax money. That determination enabled the organization to ascertain when it would be able to conduct a project. He explained that the ICAs operated on a two-year outlook and represented the most crucial phase in determining whether a project would happen with certainty. He explained that, similar to the BCC, the RTC board approved an annual budget, which represented the actual expenditure of the organization’s funds. He stated that he had shared such information with the Board and the public to encourage understanding of the reason behind the RTC’s actions. He highlighted the substantial size and impact of the RTC’s projects by disclosing that the organization’s investments ranged in cost from $5 million to $80 million. He stressed the importance of completing the right projects correctly, as it ensured that their purpose was aligned with the best interests and needs of the community. He opined that when the RTC spent substantial amounts of money, it was essential to do so holistically for the good of the entire region.

Mr. Thomas showed the *Maintenance Study* slide. He said he wanted to discuss a previous study conducted by the RTC before discussing the Guinn Center study. He recounted that the maintenance study began after the RTC had heard conversations about issues associated with funding the comprehensive maintenance of streets, which included not only the typical RTC efforts, such as asphalt and sidewalks, but also snowplowing, potholing, sealing, and other aspects of road maintenance. He noted that the RTC had engaged a consultant to assess the situation, which revealed three main points, as displayed on the slide. He elaborated that the key takeaway from the study was that each of the jurisdictions was spending the revenue specifically generated by fuel taxes on road maintenance while often supplementing those efforts through the use of other funding sources. However, he reported that the approaches varied by jurisdiction. He reiterated that all jurisdictions were spending slightly more on road maintenance than was received from fuel taxes. He disclosed a projected shortfall of approximately $1.4 billion over the next 10 years. He opined that the jurisdictions would need that $1.4 billion to maintain the entire road network, which included snowplowing, street cleaning, and other related services.

Mr. Thomas introduced the slide titled *Key Findings & Recommendations* and explained that the maintenance study provided some specific recommendations. He described the primary purpose of the study as determining the magnitude of the maintenance issues, as there were no existing reports of that kind previously. He opined on behalf of himself and the RTC that the situation with regional roads was not in a bad state and was generally in good standing. However, he acknowledged that those efforts could not contend with the maintenance needs and issues, as well as roadside ditches and local roads, when all of those aspects were considered comprehensively. He stated that the RTC was aware of the region's infrastructure needs, and he noted that the organization recognized it did not have the monetary resources to do everything that was desired. He directed the Board to view the recommendations listed on the right side of the slide and remarked that one recommendation was to invest in intelligent transportation systems (ITS). He noted that he would discuss that topic at a later time. He stated that prioritization was likely the most important of the study's recommendations and was something the BCC did frequently. He acknowledged that the RTC was aware that there would likely never be enough money to complete every goal, so prioritization was a question of how the organization could best allocate its time and funding from the public to ensure a well-managed, positive transportation network.

Mr. Thomas displayed the *Guinn Study* slide and recounted that the RTC had recently received the results of a study from the Guinn Center, a nonprofit and non-partisan organization. He described the Guinn Center's specialty as investigating public policy in Nevada, with a primary focus on providing advice and identifying priorities for any major legislative policy issues. He reported that the RTC hired the Guinn Center to research the problems associated with electric vehicle (EV) policy, as EVs did not contribute payments toward the fuel tax, which was how the transportation system was built and maintained. He explained that the fuel tax was the source of funding that helped the RTC pay for the road projects he had previously presented.

Mr. Thomas showed the slide titled *Washoe County* and described the statistical findings of the Guinn Center study. He noted that the chart on the left of the slide reflected the number of EVs, which were depicted in green, and hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) in Washoe County since 2020. He suspected that everyone likely noticed an increase in EV frequency while driving. He reported that as of June, 5 percent of all vehicles seen on the road were either HEVs or EVs. He acknowledged that while there were great environmental and social benefits to changing to HEVs or EVs, those vehicles created a significant issue because they were not funding the maintenance and construction of roads. He referred to the chart on the right side of the slide and opined that the listed statistics reflected the quality, value, and fuel efficiency of new vehicles. He explained that despite the community's growth, the amount of gasoline being consumed was decreasing, which he described as a resource. He expected some might consider that to be a good shift, but he emphasized that such a change led to questions regarding maintenance. He reported that people were not driving less because the amount of driving increased as the community grew. He explained that EVs and HEVs were using the roads, consuming less fuel, and were therefore contributing less money to maintain a substantial and expanding transportation network.

Mr. Thomas reviewed the *Key Findings* slide. He explained that the slide depicted the recommendations the RTC received after the organization had asked the Guinn Center for guidance on what actions to take and what options were available based on the study's findings. He noted that the first type of recommendation was related to policy interventions, which included measures that would require legislative approval. He referred to the three listed recommendations and stated that levying either a tax or a fee on EVs was the option with the most traction and conversation. He noted that the concept of that recommendation was to find a way for owners of EVs and HEVs to contribute payments equivalent to, or nearly the same as, those made by people who purchased fuel for internal combustion engines to maintain the transportation network. He explained that the second recommendation was associated with vehicle miles traveled. He described the concept of that recommendation as being similar to the process of purchasing gasoline, wherein driving a vehicle more would require additional amounts of gasoline to be bought, and driving it less would result in less gasoline being purchased. He explained that the idea was to begin charging a tax based on the amount of driving people did in their vehicles, which he opined was a fair and equitable way to generate the necessary funding for maintenance of the transportation network. He disclosed that no state had yet figured out how to implement that recommendation, partly because the complexities of managing such a system and collecting the money would require a substantial portion of the funds to be contributed to overseeing those efforts. He acknowledged that there were serious concerns from the public about the privacy of such driving information being provided to the government. He thought that while everybody would ideologically prefer to utilize that recommendation, he believed it would be very difficult to implement. He reiterated that nobody had identified a way to apply the recommendation. He described the final listed recommendation as an electric charging station tax and explained that such an option would similarly require approval from the Nevada Legislature. He noted that the RTC had learned that not all charging stations were equipped to handle that recommendation, and a method to collect the data about vehicle charging would be needed to enforce a tax on such an expense. He reiterated that all of the listed recommendations were possible and disclosed that the RTC favored the first opportunity he had mentioned. He stated that the RTC would return to discuss solutions with the BCC in the near future, as the matter had remained unaddressed despite being debated in the Legislature for three sessions.

Mr. Thomas noted that the slide listed a second group of recommendations that did not require State approval. He explained that there were two options within that category, the first of which he suspected the Board would likely be familiar with. He described that recommendation as a Supplemental Government Services tax, which the BCC had the authority to impose to provide for services needed in the community. He explained that the second option was to implement an increase in sales tax. He noted that such an increase was permitted but would be subject to approval through a public vote. He indicated that the sales tax increase could be approached by asking the community to pay an additional one-eighth of 1 percent on sales tax to generate funds. He stated that while the Guinn Center did not provide further details beyond that, the organization did provide some general estimates of the revenue that those recommendations might generate to address the issues he described. He reported that none of the recommendations, aside from the vehicle miles traveled tax, would be able to solve the problem holistically. He described the recommendations as measures to prevent the funding shortfall from worsening further.

Mr. Thomas showed the slide titled *Intelligent Transportations Systems (ITS)* and noted his intent to discuss what he described as a new and novel solution. He explained that when traffic congestion occurred on a road in the past, people would become concerned, and the RTC would respond by widening the road, only for more cars to begin using it. He elaborated that people would be pleased with the roads' increased capacity for a brief period, but the new space would eventually fill up, and the RTC would have to continue expanding it. He noted that in an effort to move people throughout the community, the RTC would also investigate and time all local traffic signals every three years, often with the assistance of a consultant. He described ITS as a novel concept that was being implemented in many communities. He explained that the RTC was trying to be very smart about how the organization managed the capacity in the area. He noted that there was capacity on all the roads in the region, but he opined that the space was occasionally not used wisely. He surmised that one road could be experiencing all the traffic, while other roads might be able to handle some of that capacity. He reported that it was possible to defer everybody from simultaneously entering the roads with extensive traffic and to better account for traffic-inducing special events, such as crashes or concerts. He noted that software, computer devices, and other necessary elements could be integrated with traffic signals to enable them to communicate with one another, allowing the RTC to move the signals in real-time rather than having the signals be set without change for three years until the agency revisited them for manual adjustments. He explained that such a change would enable the RTC to respond to a future event that might not have been predicted or modeled by adjusting the timing of traffic signals on the main corridor and its feeder routes. He stated that the idea behind such a concept was to be very intelligent about how the flow of transportation within the network was managed at any point in time.

Mr. Thomas introduced the *Traffic Management Center (TMC)* slide by noting that the Board would be given additional details on the topic of the slide in the future, as the related efforts could only happen through an agreement between Washoe County, the RTC, and the Cities of Reno and Sparks. He explained that the RTC was an agent of those governing bodies and required concurrence on the matter for it to be applied effectively on a regional level. He disclosed that the RTC was moving forward with the creation of a physical manifestation of the ITS, which he explained was a Traffic Management Center (TMC). He described the TMC as a place where the RTC would have people physically gather to investigate how the ITS was being comprehensively operated. He noted that the current procedure was to send individuals out based on when an incident occurred, which was not collectively analyzed or discussed in a way that ensured everyone could understand the complexity of the situation. He opined that having the TMC would lead to significantly improved utilization of the road system, which he reported had occurred in other places. He stated that the RTC realized that it would never have enough money to build or maintain all of the roads, so he surmised that the organization would have to be smarter about how the roads were used instead.

Mr. Thomas displayed the slide titled *Upcoming*. He apologized for exceeding the ten-minute time allotted for the presentation and remarked that it was challenging to discuss a year's worth of updates within such a timeframe. He reported that the RTC was focused on increasing coordination with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). He opined that it was important for everyone to understand that NDOT was a State agency and approximately 73 percent of Nevada’s population was located in Southern Nevada. He explained that the RTC had to be extremely strategic in maintaining a good relationship with NDOT, as the region was competing with both Southern Nevada and the rural counties in the State to secure NDOT’s attention, funding, and time to address local issues. He mentioned that federal funding was changing and emphasized that the RTC had been very aggressive in pursuing it. He noted that federal funding was decreasing and in a state of flux. He acknowledged that, although he could not provide the Board with exact details on the matter, the RTC was aware that the nature of investments from the federal government would likely differ from previous experiences over the following three years. He suspected that funding that had been used in the past for pedestrian bicycle facilities was likely gone, and money that was focused on safety would likely be the target of the new administration. He opined that the most important thing to do was to inform the community and the Board that, in the future, there would likely not be the same levels of federal funding that had been invested into the region's transportation network over the previous four years.

Mr. Thomas indicated that there was an issue associated with the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center (TRIC) for the employees living in Reno and Sparks who need to travel along United States (US) Interstate 80 (I-80). He acknowledged that anyone who had driven that route would be aware that there were weekly crises on the I-80, which caused significant challenges for residents. He reported that 80 percent of the people who worked at the TRIC came from Reno, Sparks, or Washoe County. He emphasized that the occurrences on that road had a genuine daily impact on those individuals. He reported that the RTC approached the issue by coordinating with NDOT, the Governor’s Office, and Storey County to identify both long-term and short-term solutions. He clarified that he mentioned the topic during his presentation because the problem was not included in the organization's RTP or anything the RTC had done independently, as the issue did not exclusively involve Washoe County. He described the problem as being inter-regional and indicated that it was associated with the entire State. He thanked the Board for allowing him to extend his presentation. He remarked that he would be happy to answer any questions himself or direct them to Mr. Keller.

Chair Hill expressed appreciation to Mr. Thomas for his presentation.

Vice Chair Herman thanked Mr. Thomas for the report and for his timing.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Mr. Thomas and stated that it was a pleasure to serve on the RTC's governing board, as members learned a great deal. She opined that the various services the RTC provided to all ages and areas of the County, as well as the multi-generational projects in progress or already completed, were impressive. She remarked that people rarely have the opportunity to witness a bridge being rebuilt during their lifetime. She described ITS as innovative and expressed excitement about that project. She emphasized to the Board that the RTC did not favor one jurisdiction more than others. She stated that everything at the RTC was done with the support of substantial data collection and prioritization. She opined that everyone had to regard the issue with the roads as a nonpartisan and non-jurisdictional matter, as it was daunting to hear that there would be a $1.4 billion shortfall in the following ten years. She stated that it was incumbent upon the Board to consider the policy recommendations provided during the presentation to identify what was possible and feasible for the region. She thanked Mr. Thomas and Mr. Keller for their work and for attending the BCC meeting to provide their presentation. She described the RTC as a lean agency that was very efficient at doing a substantial amount with the resources available. She encouraged Mr. Thomas and Mr. Keller to continue their work.

Commissioner Andriola echoed Commissioner Garcia's comments. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the staff's hard work. She noted that she had a question for Mr. Thomas and referred to the statistics he had shared about EVs and HEVs, which represented 5 percent of the vehicles operating on the region's roads. She thought Mr. Thomas had said that there was nothing that could be done to solve that issue holistically, despite the matter being brought forward at more than three legislative sessions. She recalled that the topic had been discussed at the Nevada Legislature a long time before the three instances Mr. Thomas reported. She emphasized the fact that there were individuals who traveled the region's roads for free, including herself. She recounted having told NDOT Director Tracy Larkin-Thomason to come up with a solution, as she was willing to pay for it. She stated her support for addressing the matter and offered to personally write a check if it could solve the problem. She posed the hypothetical question of where such a check could be sent and asked how she could be assured that those funds would be invested back into the roads. She noted the increased presence of EVs and HEVs and stated that the rate of those vehicle types using roads had risen to 5 percent, which she had expected would be higher. She referred to the concept of balancing the decrease in consumption at gasoline pumps, as that action contributed to the fuel tax that was statutorily intended to help pay for road maintenance. She mentioned the analysis by the Guinn Center, noting that the organization was great and composed of genuinely bipartisan researchers who tried to identify viable solutions so legislators could investigate possible options for policy changes. She noted her intent to stay within the confines of the Guinn

Center's study while inquiring whether the analysis addressed a potential number that could be enforced upon the group of EV and HEV owners to compensate for the difference in gasoline consumption, considering that they utilized the roads for free. She reiterated that she never thought she would be one of the people who were unintentionally riding their vehicles on the road without contributing financially, but she emphasized that such things still happened. She asked whether Mr. Thomas could provide such a value and acknowledged that he had previously mentioned a $1.4 billion shortfall. She inquired what value could be assessed as an alternative to raising the tax, noting that the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and other entities that collected funds and sent out bills were already experiencing difficulties doing so. She referred to Mr. Thomas' earlier statements, noting that even if the entities collected the money, those funds would need to be reinvested into the collection process built to support that system. She acknowledged that she did not entirely understand that concept, as she did not have enough information on the matter. She reiterated her initial question by asking what could be assessed and whether the Guinn Center had provided the RTC with a value to associate with the HEVs and EVs.

Mr. Thomas asked for clarification on whether Commissioner Andriola was seeking a dollar amount, which she confirmed. Mr. Thomas affirmed that the Guinn Center provided the RTC with a matrix that had two primary variables. He explained that the matrix had a maximum value and a minimum value associated with an adoption level, indicating whether people would actually purchase EVs. He explained that the statistics were provided as a matrix because there was no certainty about that data. He reported that NDOT forecasted an increase in EVs and HEVs on the road to approximately 20 percent within five years. He acknowledged that while the current statistic might seem minimal, he suspected that the rate of EVs and HEVs would continue to grow. He thought that everyone could see the increased frequency of those vehicle types on the road. He stated that there were many kinds of new EVs aside from Tesla's, and that an individual needed to simply sit at a traffic signal to witness the number of electric vehicles passing them. He suspected that the median value of the matrix was likely a value between $200 and $250. Commissioner Andriola expressed disbelief at that number, recalling that the amount she had mentioned offering to write a check for Ms. Larkin-Thomason in the past for such an expense was $250. She stated that if she could be assured that the money from that payment would be contributed to the roads, she would pay it the same day.

Commissioner Andriola asked whether the Guinn Center provided the RTC with an indication of the dollar amount that would be given to an entity to process the payments. She questioned whether the $250 cost per vehicle would be a sufficient amount, as it would not be allocated towards road maintenance, but rather would need to be invested in building the infrastructure to implement the collection system. She suggested that if the State were lucky enough to find the necessary funding elsewhere, it could instead be invested in the infrastructure while allowing the original $250 tax to be contributed to the roads. She asked whether the initial $250 would be invested for the first year, with subsequent payments being allocated to the roads. She inquired about the period of time required to cover the infrastructure costs associated with an agency running the billing and collection of such a fee.

Mr. Thomas explained that the benefit of implementing the charge as either a fee or a tax, such as a flat registration fee, was that it was very inexpensive to implement because it would simply be another item on DMV's list of revenues. He did not remember the exact rate for implementing a flat registration fee, but he thought that it had been noted in the report as being a small percentage, which would result in minimal administrative costs if that method were chosen. He emphasized that he had tried to highlight a new approach associated with a vehicle miles tax that would eliminate the gasoline tax and instead charge an amount based on the number of miles driven. He thought the estimate of what would be charged for such a tax would be a detail that would naturally be resolved over time based on the RTC's knowledge of the matter. He noted that Nevada was one of only nine states that had not implemented such a fee, as the other 40 states across the Country had already addressed the issue. He reported that the cost of the vehicle miles tax in those 40 states ranged from $100 to $200 for EVs, with HEVs costing approximately half of that. He noted that the model already being used in other places demonstrated that authorization from the Nevada Legislature would be needed to move forward with charging that fee. He reiterated that determining the amount to collect for such a fee would likely be a policy decision that would possibly be made by the BCC. He anticipated that the Board would likely hear concerns about the new technology and whether setting the tax rate too high would discourage people from choosing EVs, which he reiterated were vehicles with social benefits. He suggested that the actual tax rate would likely be determined by finding and testing the balance between those factors. He proposed that the fee be indexed similarly to the fuel tax, depending on the extent to which the RTC might be able to influence those details. He explained that the goal with indexing the fee through that method would be to prevent it from remaining static, as the value of $250 in 20 years would decrease over time, and the fee needed to accelerate in the same manner as the fuel tax to account for rising costs. Commissioner Andriola agreed and noted that his explanation reflected why fees were typically indexed to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Commissioner Andriola thanked Mr. Thomas and noted that it seemed as though more information would be provided to the Board in the future. She voiced her intent not to take up any more time in the discussion. She expressed anticipation that the State Legislature would enforce a bill on drivers who used the roads for free, after the issue had gone unaddressed for several years, which she opined was harming everyone. She opined that no one wanted to have any tax implemented, but she stated that the reality was that nothing was being paid by those using the roads for free, which effectively made others pay the cost. She described an increase in vehicle efficiency and support for saving fuel across the Country since the 1970s. She noted that the benefits associated with that improved efficiency had been proven, and there had subsequently been a decrease in fuel usage over time. She explained that the fuel tax was indexed based on those past efficiencies. She recalled participating in legislative efforts to calibrate the tax so that it would be fair to everyone and ensure equitable payments for all. She looked forward to the Nevada Legislature taking meaningful and productive action that would generate a solution rather than making arbitrary decisions. She opined that it seemed like a promising first step, acknowledging that she did not have all the details but that she would be watching for further developments.

Commissioner Andriola referred to the video Mr. Thomas had shown, stating that it was incredible that the RTC's Students Ride Free program had increased by 34 percent. She noted that she had not seen a percentage associated with the RTC's FlexRIDE program and stressed its importance to the district she served and to many others. She thanked the RTC for the FlexRIDE program and shared that one of the first constituents she personally helped was assisted through the program. She reiterated her fondness for FlexRIDE, as it allowed her to see that constituent be enabled to receive transportation for the dialysis treatments that saved his life. She repeated that she had not seen the statistics associated with the program and requested to follow up on those percentages to learn whether there was an increase in the utilization of FlexRIDE and the Washoe Senior Ride Taxi Bucks voucher program. She thanked Mr. Thomas for thinking about how to move people efficiently and effectively at the smallest possible cost. She opined that the ITS model sounded fascinating. She thanked Mr. Thomas for regularly attending the Spanish Springs Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings and doing a great job there. She indicated that those CAB members felt the impact of infrastructure in the area alongside the RTC and NDOT. She opined that it would be helpful to have Mr. Thomas in attendance at the upcoming meeting at the Spanish Springs Library at 6:00 p.m. on November 5, 2025, so those living in the area could hear about what the RTC was doing and had planned. She referred to Mr. Thomas' earlier comments regarding the issues on US I-80 and opined that it was particularly important for Spanish Springs residents to be told at the meeting about the RTC's plans with that road, as 43 percent of the commuters who traveled to the TRIC lived in her district. She noted that there was a shared interest in determining how to approach that issue to efficiently transport commuters and identify short-term and long-term options. She expressed certainty that the Spanish Springs CAB meeting would be well-attended, given the substantial information Mr. Thomas would share. She agreed with Commissioner Garcia's earlier statements regarding the matter being about jurisdictions working together, as everyone was crossing those geographic boundaries in various ways. She encouraged everyone to communicate with their elected representative at the Nevada Legislature to promote finding a way to charge for EV and HEV use during the upcoming session, which she suspected would be held in 2027.

Commissioner Clark thanked Mr. Thomas and asked for confirmation whether he had reported a decrease in the volume of gasoline purchases. Mr. Thomas responded that the volume of gasoline consumed had decreased. Commissioner Clark described that data as interesting. He acknowledged that EVs and HEVs were a component in that statistic, but he recalled that Mr. Thomas had mentioned that those vehicles only comprised approximately 5 percent of the automobile market. Commissioner Clark wondered why gasoline purchases were going down while the population was increasing and more people were spending additional time on the roads. He asked if Mr. Thomas suspected people were purchasing gasoline outside of Washoe County to avoid the local taxes and whether he thought that was a factor in the decreased gasoline consumption. Mr. Thomas confirmed his belief that such practices were occurring based on having heard from people who reported that they were doing so. He attributed the decrease more to a reflection of modern fuel efficiency. He reported that the decrease was not exclusively related to EVs and HEVs and explained that the RTC had seen fewer large trucks while there was an increase in the amount of smaller vehicles. He acknowledged that there were more people in the region and an increase in road utilization, which everyone had experienced through witnessing a surge in traffic congestion. He explained that despite those increases, people were not pumping as much gasoline into their vehicles as they used to, which impacted how much money was raised to pay for the transportation network.

Chair Hill thanked Mr. Thomas and suspected that he had heard how the BCC wanted to help the RTC with the equity issue in the County. She encouraged Mr. Thomas to inform the Board about how it could support him, as the BCC wanted to ensure everyone was paying a fair portion. She opined that the County deserved great roads and stated that the BCC appreciated the update and the great work done by Mr. Thomas and his team in serving the community. She assured Mr. Thomas that the Board would stay in touch with him. Mr. Thomas thanked Chair Hill and noted his appreciation for the Board's time.

25-0737 **AGENDA ITEM 6C1** Status update on the implementation of recommendations from the Raftelis OCM Organizational Assessment by Interim County Manager Kate Thomas.

Interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: OCM Organizational Assessment; Implementation Timeline for OCM Recommendations; Completed!; In Process!; Deep dive "in process" recommendations (4 slides); On Hold!; Washoe County is committed…; Thank you.

ICM Thomas noted that she would provide the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) with a brief status update regarding the Raftelis recommendations the County had been given previously. She informed the Board that she would remain at the dais to conduct her presentation.

ICM Thomas displayed the slide titled *Implementation Timeline for OCM Recommendations*. She recounted that staff had received a request from the BCC for an outside entity to research the state of the organization, communication, and work allocation within the Office of the County Manager (OCM). She recalled that after a series of selection opportunities, a company called Raftelis was invited to conduct research and speak with numerous individuals, including elected officials and department heads, to create a recommendation that County staff subsequently provided to the Board. She noted that the recommendations were presented to the BCC on June 25, 2025. She indicated that, although an additional limited update on the Raftelis study had been provided to the Board during a prior briefing, she wanted to give another updated presentation on the status of some of the study's recommendations because she had assured the Commissioners that she would bring the matter before them again. She referred to the graph listed on the slide and explained that it listed 12 recommendations on the y-axis. She reported that efforts to address all but two of those recommendations had started immediately.

ICM Thomas introduced the *Completed!* slide. She explained that OCM began work alongside staff from various other departments, including those in Human

Resources (HR), to implement some of the recommendations from the Raftelis study. She stated that staff were happy to report that OCM began work on some of the important initiatives immediately. She reported that the Board had seen the implementation of weekly briefings rather than receiving a multitude of emails from the ICM, Assistant County Manager (ACM), or other department leads. She explained that staff were trying to communicate in a more meaningful way by providing information in a weekly publication for the BCC, which was also distributed to the County's elected department heads, non-elected leadership, and personnel throughout the entire organization. She noted that the publication was intended to provide information to the Commissioners, ensuring they were updated and effectively communicated with. She reported that the commission support function had been delegated to ACM David Solaro, who was working hard to align that responsibility with the requests made by the BCC regarding agendas and general commission support. She explained that regular meetings between herself and each of the Commissioners individually had started, which she enjoyed. She noted that those meetings occurred weekly, as often as possible, to enhance communication with the Board. She described that a quarterly meeting with the elected officials had been implemented, recalling that the first re-established luncheon was hosted the week prior. She affirmed that she would meet with the elected officials as often as she was invited to do so, in order to discuss some of the issues they experienced and those faced by other department heads. She clarified that she was referring to the seven elected department heads, not the elected officials on the BCC. She reported that the realignment of certain roles within OCM and the department's reporting structure had been completed.

ICM Thomas showed the *In Process!* slide and explained that staff had already begun work on some of the study's recommended items. She stated that several recommendations were being worked on and awaiting completion, including addressing agenda setting and the framework of BCC meetings. She recalled that the Board had heard staff mention a meeting structure that involved a more intensive workshop for the Commissioners, which Raftelis recommended. She recounted that staff had also received a recommendation to consider posting meeting agendas a few days earlier to ensure the Board would have enough time to digest the information and prepare meaningful questions if they needed staff to provide further clarification on an item. She reported that staff had begun work to restructure the ACM position and certain functions of the role. She noted that the effort had initially started with researching a potential name change for the ACM position, as the role operated more as an executive assistant to the County Manager (CM). She reiterated that the restructuring of the ACM role was in progress.

ICM Thomas reported that staff were working on addressing the process utilized to prioritize requests made by the BCC. She noted that individuals attended BCC meetings to seek answers and solutions by providing comments to the Board. She explained that many of those comments were echoed by Commissioners through requests to staff to investigate further. She stated that work had begun to identify the staff actions Commissioners would prefer to see taken to address their requests, such as adding an agenda item or scheduling a future presentation, to ensure that Board requests were prioritized and reintroduced to the BCC. She reported that staff were investigating some of the policy and governance roles for the BCC, which she noted would be further reviewed later in her presentation. She indicated that work was being done to strengthen the relationships, accountability, and collaboration within the Board. She recalled hearing discussion that working together was a central theme of that effort. She noted that staff were accounting for the future by considering a time when there might be new members of the BCC. She acknowledged that it was known there would be at least one new Commissioner joining the Board. She elaborated that the staff was primarily researching a very robust onboarding program for the BCC. She explained that she would further discuss the status of the recommendations that staff were actively working on and indicated that the information she had previously provided was a general overview of those efforts.

ICM Thomas introduced the first slide titled *Deep dive "in process" recommendations*. She reported that OCM staff sent a survey to the agenda coordinators in various departments to investigate what the agenda process looked like for them, specifically regarding a work planning order if OCM were to set or release an agenda a few days in advance. She noted that there was a relatively robust schedule associated with getting an item before the Board for a policy decision to be made. She explained that the survey inquired how it might impact the work being done in different departments, based on each department's perspective, if OCM staff were to advance the agenda schedule by a few days. She noted that staff were looking through the feedback they had received from the survey, which was something they expected to present to the Board with more information in December. She noted that staff were working on realigning the duties of the ACM. She explained that there had been discussions about transferring the duties associated with meeting agendas out of the ACM role to allow those responsibilities to become more of a coordinating effort of office managers, rather than having the Commission Support Team work on agendas. She noted that such a change would allow the Commission Support Team to be in more direct contact with the BCC. She reported that an agenda item would be brought before the Board at the next BCC meeting, allowing staff to explain how those duties could be realigned and strengthened based on the Raftelis recommendations.

ICM Thomas displayed the second *Deep dive "in process" recommendations* slide. She explained that the prioritization of Board requests was one of the two recommendations that staff did not begin working on immediately. She recalled that there had been a discussion about revisiting that recommendation when a new CM started their role in January. She noted the policy and governance role of the BCC was also being reassessed. She stated that more robust involvement from the Board directly in the strategic planning process was needed during discussions about how the Board would set the strategic objectives for the organization to follow. She explained that the BCC would see those changes in the future. She wanted to focus on the recommendation related to the ways the Board behaved and the BCC's relationships, accountability, professionalism, and collaboration. She explained that OCM staff had committed to setting up workshops. She clarified that the workshops were not necessarily considered training sessions, as the Commissioners all knew how to do their jobs, but she opined that every person needed training and professional development.

ICM Thomas showed the third slide titled *Deep dive "in process" recommendations*. She referred to the listed timeline on the slide. She indicated that the recommendation staff expected to be addressed in December was to establish the basis for considering some of the best practices associated with how boards in other jurisdictions successfully interacted with one another and employed effective communication styles. She reported that staff would invite individuals from outside the organization to discuss what methods worked best and were considered to be best practice around the Country. She explained that discussions would take place at the beginning of 2026 about bridging divides, which staff knew the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) had done strong work with. She noted that staff wanted to emulate NACO's framework to enhance Board collaboration. She reported that an organization named Convergence was considered to facilitate those efforts, which she thought would be exciting. She explained that staff would provide the BCC with additional information on specific dates and details about those workshops in the future. She explained that the fourth session would be held in March of 2026 and was based on bringing everything together for accountability, which would be facilitated by a consultant to help establish good regulations. She knew the Board was interested in bringing forward and continually refining the BCC's Rules of Procedures. She emphasized that staff were always willing to take direction from the Board on how to support the BCC in functioning collaboratively by providing whatever information was needed and identifying what training might be helpful. She reiterated that the slide included some of the items that would be brought about from the BCC retreats and training sessions staff were considering.

ICM Thomas introduced the fourth *Deep dive "in process" recommendations* slide by referring to her earlier comments regarding the onboarding processes for elected officials. She explained that staff were heavily focused on identifying how to facilitate providing, what they considered to be, a very robust opportunity throughout the onboarding process for newly elected officials into the organization. She emphasized that the staff had clearly heard that recommendation. She acknowledged that there had been some frustration with the onboarding process for new appointees to boards and commissions. She reported that staff would continue to work through the recommendations to ensure that everybody was happy with how the constituents appointed by the BCC to represent the boards they were chosen for could better serve the community.

ICM Thomas introduced the slide titled *On Hold!* by noting that two recommendations were paused pending the future CM's start in the position at the beginning of 2026. She explained that the paused recommendations were to reconsider the framing of strategic planning and finalize the restructuring of OCM. She acknowledged that there had been some discussion about whether another executive-level position should be created in OCM. She explained that the conversation would continue to evolve the longer staff worked together to figure out what OCM could do to serve the BCC. She displayed the *Washoe County is committed…* slide and noted her intent to conclude the presentation. She stated that staff were always looking to improve. She opined that the Raftelis report provided staff with the opportunity to do so, as well as with the framework that they had been following. She acknowledged that while the Raftelis report was not the only important factor for those efforts and did not need to be followed exclusively, it did provide staff with beneficial goals to follow. She stated that she would be happy to answer questions from the Board and was willing to consider any suggestions.

Chair Hill thanked ICM Thomas and appreciated seeing the work that she and her team had put into the update.

Commissioner Andriola thanked ICM Thomas for providing the Board with an update. She opined that it was important for everyone to hear about what was happening. She stated that everybody was working hard, and an individual might not always be aware of what was or was not occurring. She referred to the chart ICM Thomas displayed during the presentation that showed the targets provided by Raftelis. She explained that she had worked with many consultants, which she opined everyone had done as well in various capacities. She disclosed that she was not familiar with Raftelis prior to their work with the County and complimented the fact that they collaborated with the organization's leadership to create a timeline for establishing realistic goals that could be implemented. She opined that Raftelis's work on the report demonstrated that it was an organization that conducted its tasks very thoroughly, as opposed to being satisfied with submitting an assignment that left others to figure out the details. She expressed appreciation for the update and noted that she would continue to look forward to additional reports. She stated that she wanted to keep an opportunity available to offer any suggestions to staff as they arose.

Commissioner Clark thanked ICM Thomas for her report. He opined that it was good to see that progress had been made. He indicated that a lot of the information was unsurprising, as many of the details from the presentation were discussed during the individual Commissioner meetings that ICM Thomas had previously mentioned. He thought it was nice to see all of the information provided within a single presentation.

Chair Hill opined that the Board had already seen the improvements and details mentioned by ICM Thomas coming to fruition. She thanked ICM Thomas and expressed the Board's appreciation.

PROCLAMATIONS

25-0738 **7A1** Proclamation for the day of October 21 as Heroes Among Us Day. (All Commission Districts.)

This item was not heard.

25-0739 **7B1** Proclamation for the week of October 19 - 25 as National Friends of Libraries Week. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Garcia read the proclamation.

Development Officer Jamie Hemingway indicated that other Friends of Washoe County Library (FWCL) Board of Directors members were present; however, they had to leave early due to their final book sale of the year. She stated that the FWCL had raised over $2 million for the Washoe County Library System (WCLS) since its inception in 1980. She noted that the FWCL's year-round book sales were a great opportunity.

<u>12:38 p.m.</u> The Board recessed for a photo.

<u>12:38 p.m.</u> The Board reconvened with all members present.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Andriola, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 7B1 be adopted.

<u>DONATIONS</u>

25-0740 **<u>8A1</u>** Recommendation to retroactively acknowledge various one-time in-kind gift donations at a value of [$8,279.46] from the Reno Rodeo Foundation, at a value of [$250.00] from anonymous donors, accepted by Second Judicial District Court (SJDC) in support of the Reading Room Project during July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. District Court. (All Commission Districts.)

Commissioner Garcia thanked the Reno Rodeo Foundation (RRF) and the anonymous donors for the $8,279.46 worth of books, toys, and teddy bears for the reading room program. Commissioner Andriola congratulated the foster children whose lives would be influenced by the donations.

On the call for public comment, Court Administrator and Clerk of Court Administration Alicia Lerud acknowledged the reading room program and the great work performed by the RRF. She said that the reading room program was established in 2018 with the support of the community and the RRF to provide books for children. She believed that a court was not the friendliest environment for the community's youngest and most vulnerable patrons; however, books served as a celebratory momentum for children who were on the adoption docket, allowing them to leave with a positive experience. She recalled that she had provided books to children who were at court with parents filling out applications for a protection order. She asserted that the program was very valuable and special for the population. She noted that she felt it was fantastic that, in addition to books, there would now be small stuffed animals.

Commissioner Andriola acknowledged the Court staff and judges who curated certain books for children who might be experiencing situations that need inspiration. Ms. Lerud indicated that the staff were very passionate about the program and were there to help. She noted that she kept another box of books at the Second Judicial District Court (SJDC) because children occasionally visited.

On motion by Commissioner Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Andriola, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 8A1 be accepted.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – 9A1 THROUGH 9F1

25-0741 **9A1** Approval of minutes for the Board of County Commissioners' regular meeting of September 9, 2025. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.)

25-0742 **9A2** Acknowledge the communications and reports received by the Clerk on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, including the following categories: Communications, Monthly Statements/Reports, and Executed Contracts. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.)

25-0743 **9B1** Recommendation to 1) approve roll change requests, pursuant to NRS 361.765 and/or NRS 361.768, for errors discovered on the 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 secured and unsecured tax rolls 2) authorize Chair to execute the changes described in Exhibits A and B and 3) direct the Washoe County Treasurer to correct the error(s). [cumulative amount of decrease to all taxing entities $60,063.74]. Assessor. (All Commission Districts.)

25-0744 **9C1** Recommendation to approve and accept a Grant of Trail Easement from Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), a Joint Powers Entity, to Washoe County for non-motorized public use, maintenance, and installation of wayfinding signage on the existing portage trail located on approximately 1,950 square feet of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 038-112-13 at a cost of $0.00. [Four wayfinding signs will be installed in the easement area for an estimated cost of $120.00]. Community Services. (Commission District 1.)

25-0745 **9C2** Recommendation to approve the ArrowCreek Homeowners' Association Open Space Access Agreement between Washoe County and the ArrowCreek Homeowner's Association to allow construction and designation of non-motorized access points for its residents and non-residents on adjacent County Open Space Assessor's Parcel Numbers 152-010-25, 152-021-07, 152-051-22, 152-430-15, 152-430-17, 152-430-18, 152-850-04, 152-880-02, 152-880-03, and 152-880-06, and authorize the Director of the Community Services Department (Eric Crump) to execute the agreement and any temporary construction easements associated with improvements under the agreement. Community Services. (Commission District 2.)

25-0746 **9D1** Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to retroactively acknowledge a grant of $1,228.00 [no County match required], awarded to the Washoe County Law Library, Second Judicial District Court, by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records for the grant period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Grant funding will pay for the costs related to sending one staff member to a Library Law Conference. District Court. (All Commission Districts.)

25-0747 **9E1** Recommendation to approve, pursuant to NRS 244.1505, Commission District Special Fund disbursement in the amount of [$2,500.00] for Fiscal Year 2025-2026; District 3 Commissioner Mariluz Garcia recommends a [$2,500.00] grant to Desert Pigs - a nonprofit organization created for charitable, religious, or educational purposes - to support the great work they do throughout Nevada cleaning up illegal dumpsites on public land; approve Resolutions necessary for same; and direct Finance to make the necessary disbursements of funds. Manager. (Commission District 3.)

25-0748 **9E2** Recommendation to approve, pursuant to NRS 244.1505, Commission District Special Fund disbursement in the amount of [$10,000.00] for Fiscal Year 2025-2026; District 5 Commissioner Jeanne Herman recommends a [$5,000.00] grant to Reno Elks Lodge - a nonprofit organization created for religious, charitable or educational purposes - to support the cooking classes for senior citizens that are cooking on a budget; and a [$5,000.00] grant to Senior ResQ - a nonprofit organization created for religious, charitable or educational purposes - to support their endeavor to assist seniors with help when their rent has been raised; approve Resolutions necessary for same; and direct Finance to make the necessary disbursements of funds. Manager. (Commission District 5.)

25-0749 **9F1** Recommendation to accept a fiscal year 2026 Our Rescue grant award [amount not to exceed $5,000.00, $250.00 County match required] as administered from Our Rescue for a one-year Virtual Investigation Platform (VIP) Lite software subscription for the retroactive grant period of August 27, 2025 through subscription expiration date; authorize the Sheriff to retroactively execute the award document; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Sheriff. (All Commission Districts.)

Chair Hill indicated that part of the special fund disbursement, the $5,000 grant to the Reno Elks Lodge, for Consent Agenda Item 9E2 would be excluded.

There was no response to the call for public comment on the Consent Agenda Items listed above.

On motion by Commissioner Andriola, seconded by Vice Chair Herman, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 9A1 through 9F1, with the exclusion of the $5,000 grant to the Reno Elks Lodge for Item 9E2, be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 9A1 through 9F1 are attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

BLOCK VOTE –10, 11, AND 13 THROUGH 16

25-0750 **AGENDA ITEM 10** Recommendation to acknowledge receipt of the Change Log shown in Exhibit A, submitted in accordance with NRS 361.310(4), for the 2025/2026 Assessment Roll that results in a net increase of $504,450,968 in assessed value. Assessor. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be acknowledged.

25-0751 **AGENDA ITEM 11** Recommendation to award a bid and approve the Agreement to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder for the Emergency Operation Center Chiller Replacement Project, located at 5195 Spectrum Boulevard, Reno Nevada, PWP-WA-2025-453 [staff recommends American Chiller Service, Inc., in the amount of $721,975.00] and approve a project contingency allowance in the amount of $70,000.00 to be used if needed on a time and materials basis for a total project amount of $791,795.00. The project replaces an unreliable and inefficient chiller system with a new energy-efficient and reliable system that provides environmental control for Washoe County's Emergency Operations Center. Community Services. (Commission District 5.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 11 be awarded and approved.

25-0752 **AGENDA ITEM 13** Recommendation to acknowledge receipt of the reissued Washoe County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), auditor's report, and report on internal control for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, as presented; and authorize the Comptroller to proceed with distribution of the ACFR for public record, as required by law. Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 13 be acknowledged and authorized.

25-0753 **AGENDA ITEM 14** Information and acknowledgement of receipt by the Board of County Commissioners of contracts and purchases that have exceeded or are expected to exceed [$300,000] that may include services and supplies for all County departments. Pursuant to Washoe County Code 15.490, the purchasing and contracts manager is authorized, subject to the provisions of Washoe County Code and the applicable provision of state law, to approve purchases and contracts up to [$300,000]. As a matter of best practices, the purchasing and contracts manager will keep the Board of County Commissioners informed of all contracts and purchases for all county departments that have been previously approved that have exceeded or are expected to exceed the threshold amount. A full list of specific contracts, vendors, and amounts is viewable in the staff report. The aggregate amount of known expenditures under these contracts to date is $7,015,173.37. Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 14 be acknowledged.

25-0754 **AGENDA ITEM 15** Recommendation to approve Resolution R25-113 to augment the Building and Safety Fund in the amount of [$600,000] to increase Fiscal Year 2026 revenue and expense authority for permitting associated with multiple large-scale projects including hotel/casino projects in Lake Tahoe and multi-family apartment projects in accordance with Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 354.598005 and Nevada Administrative Code 354.481; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Finance. (All Commission Districts).

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 15 be approved and directed.

25-0755 **AGENDA ITEM 16** Recommendation to approve budget amendments totaling an increase of [$1,048,589.00; no county match] in both revenue and expense to the FY26 State Public Health Interlocal Contract, retroactive to August 7, 2025, through June 30, 2027, for Northern Nevada Public Health in the improvement of public health, and direct Finance to make the appropriate budget amendments. Northern Nevada Public Health. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Vice Chair Herman, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 16 be approved and directed.

25-0756 **<u>AGENDA ITEM 12</u>** Recommendation to receive an update and provide direction to staff by confirming or modifying the priority order of actions to implement the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan and changes mandated through the 2025 Session of the Nevada Legislature. Topics for prioritization may include, but are not limited to: County-wide affordable housing initiatives; public noticing; permitting requirements for equine businesses; dark skies; heat mitigation; and agritourism. Community Services. (All Commission Districts.)

Community Services Department (CSD) Planning & Building Division Director Kelly Mullin conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Master Plan Implementation Priorities; Washoe County Strategic Plan; Background; Implementation Actions; Status Updates (three slides); New Topics for Prioritization; Updated Recommended Priority Order; Recommendation; Thank you.

Ms. Mullin recounted that approximately two years previously, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted the Envision Washoe 2040 Master Plan (Master Plan), identified a priority order for items, and started Master Plan implementation. She noted that the priority order was updated in December 2024, and she provided an update on accomplishments that occurred since the initial Master Plan adoption. She asked the Board to confirm or modify an updated priority order, which she advised would include items recently mandated by the State Legislature. She showed her *Washoe County Strategic Plan* slide and explained her intention to base the Master Plan discussion on the County's Strategic Plan and the work County planners did, especially on long-range planning items like the Master Plan. She described that long-range planning required significant time and resources, and it was important for the work to stem from the priorities established by the BCC. She clarified that the BCC sets policy and direction with the Strategic Plan and Master Plan, and then staff worked on implementation. She pointed out that one example of an objective in the Strategic Plan was economic impacts, which included a goal to meet the needs of a growing community. She conveyed that staff focused on initiatives from both the Strategic Plan and the Master Plan, some of which were shown on her slide. She said that the goal was to ensure that the work done was driven by the priorities set by the BCC. She mentioned that there were complicating factors, like mandates from the State Legislature and the two regional planning agencies, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency (TMRPA) and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA).

Ms. Mullin reviewed her *Background* slide. She noted that the Board would be provided with some recommendations on the prioritization of new items. She displayed the first of her *Status Updates* slides and spoke about achievements related to the top priority previously set by the BCC regarding Countywide affordable housing. She described that significant work was done in the prior year to reduce barriers for missing middle housing types, which she explained included triplexes, quadplexes, and cottage courts. She revealed that Commissioners would be asked in the next month to introduce changes to incentivize senior housing. She elaborated that a series of initiatives would be presented over the next several months with the goal of reducing barriers to creating smaller homes, supporting redevelopment of infill parcels, creating incentives specific to affordable housing, and expanding ways to support homeowners who wanted to bring an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) onto their property. She noted that the recent legislative session generated mandates aimed at housing. She added that the County planned to implement initiatives soon in response to two of the mandates; one would allow for multi-family and mixed-use housing on commercially zoned properties, and the other would create an expedited review process for attainable housing.

Ms. Mullin showed the second of her *Status Updates* slides and summarized that a lot of progress was made on Countywide affordable housing initiatives, but she recommended that, due to the work still to be done, it remained the top priority. She highlighted a request in the current budget cycle that would authorize the creation of a net-zero position to allow for staffing dedicated to leading efforts on the Master Plan implementation. She recommended that, with the creation of that position, the priority item for resources to implement the new Master Plan be removed from the priority list. Similarly, she noted that the County component of the Tahoe Area Plan (TAP) was complete and the changes were adopted in August of 2025. She said recommendations were provided to the TRPA for their conformance review and analysis of the changes within the TAP, but she observed that the County portion of the TAP efforts was mostly complete, and she recommended removing the TAP from the priority list. She specified that work had not started on public noticing and engagement. She recounted that changes were made in 2022 that allowed projects requiring a public hearing to be presented to the community earlier in the process in an effort to provide community members more opportunities to present their concerns, learn more about the projects, and potentially influence the final applications. She said the public noticing and engagement item was aimed at evaluating and possibly enhancing some of those processes. She conveyed that the County wanted to ensure its engagement process was as effective and efficient as possible. She stated that because the prior two items were recommended for removal, she suggested moving the public noticing and engagement item up to number two on the priority list.

Ms. Mullin displayed the third of her *Status Updates* slides. She recalled that an equine businesses assessment and standards update was placed fifth on the priority list by the Board in the previous year. Based on the removal of two items from the list, she recommended moving equine businesses up to priority number three. She explained that the next item on the list, Warm Springs groundwater rights dedications, would be led by the County Engineering Division and would be completed separately. She added that County Planning staff would provide support and logistical assistance with that work, but because it could be completed separately and by another division, she recommended that it be removed from the priority list. She disclosed that the Engineering Division identified that efforts on that initiative would start in 2026. She said the last priority was dashboard indicators for measuring plan achievements, which she suggested scaling back and transitioning off the priority list. She indicated that there was information provided on the

County's website that identified what was accomplished and projected towards the implementation of the Master Plan, but she recommended that, because of the complexity of the other items on the list and where the initiative was prioritized, it be removed. She advocated for a more advanced dashboard to be implemented over time as resources allowed.

Ms. Mullin reviewed her *New Topics for Prioritization* slide and said there was a new mandate from the 2025 Legislative Session that required counties and cities to include heat mitigation provisions in their master plans. She added that the heat mitigation plans were required to cover a certain series of topics, and that the mandate went into effect on July 1, 2026. Accordingly, she recommended prioritizing heat mitigation. She said the other two new topics shown on her slide were Commissioner requests. She described that dark skies was one of the highest-ranked and most talked about items by some community members who participated in the Master Plan update process. She surmised that there was significant community interest in that issue, and she recommended that the Board prioritize it. She explained that the agritourism item was a request from Commissioner Andriola, who wanted the Board to consider creating an agritourism ordinance. She described that agritourism included a broad range of activities, but generally, it meant bringing members of the public to a farm or ranch for educational, recreational, or retail purposes. She noted that the County already regulated some of those activities. Ms. Mullin showed her *Updated Recommended Priority Order* slide and summarized that it indicated the recommended priority order as outlined in her presentation. She said she was available for any questions.

Chair Hill asked if there were stop-gap measures in place to help individuals whose agritourism businesses were not addressed by current regulatory requirements.

Ms. Mullin advised that, if a particular use type was not clearly identified in the Washoe County Development Code (WCDC), the County referred to similar uses to inform guidance on permitting requirements for the proposed business. She disclosed that there were differences of opinion on the permitting process and whether people wanted to go through it to establish their business, but she was not aware of instances in which the County refused such requests of that type.

Chair Hill remarked that a Special Use Permit (SUP) was expensive and time-consuming, and she asked if there was an annual limit on the number of SUPs a property could obtain.

Ms. Mullin advised that, to her knowledge, there was not an annual SUP limit.

Chair Hill expressed her support for dark skies but acknowledged there were people who had struggled with agritourism regulation issues for years. She stated she was inclined to respond to those struggles by ranking agritourism as a higher priority. She said she wanted to hear from public commenters and other Board members.

Commissioner Garcia asked Ms. Mullin to provide an overview of the public noticing initiative, including the status, the remaining work to be done, and the projected completion time.

Ms. Mullin responded that some processes were changed in 2022. She related that the vast majority of people seeking a discretionary permit with a public hearing were required to hold a neighborhood meeting prior to submitting the application, which allowed nearby residents who might be impacted to learn more about the project and provide input before the application was submitted. She said that process change was not yet codified, so one component of the public noticing initiative would be formalizing and codifying that new process, along with some other minor modifications. She reported that the initiative would also include a more thorough assessment of how the County's public noticing and engagement processes were working. She remarked that it was always a challenge to ensure that people interested in participating could do so. She wanted to make it as easy as possible for people to participate so the County could get representative samples of information from people with different perspectives, and she established that the public noticing project would further explore how to accomplish that.

Commissioner Andriola commented on the parallel challenges of prioritization and timing. She recalled having conversations about public noticing, and she thought that some processes could be enhanced, but she was unsure how that work might affect progress on other priorities. She stated that she brought the agritourism suggestion forward and added that she also recommended the dark skies initiative and others. She noted that there were agritourism provisions introduced to the Legislature, and although she did not advocate for the County simply adopting that language, she theorized that a lot of work had already been done. She mentioned an agritourism panel at a recent Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) conference that included representatives from the Lieutenant Governor's Office and the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA). She declared that her top priority was equine businesses, but she acknowledged the importance of other initiatives and perspectives. She observed that Countywide affordable housing initiatives were also legislatively driven, and there would be compliance mandates to consider. She supposed that while one thing was being worked on, even if it involved a lot of effort, other items could still progress. She asked about the scope and timeline for the remaining public noticing work and wondered what Ms. Mullin's predictions were regarding agritourism initiatives, considering the work and language that were already developed. She understood the challenge of establishing a firm timeline, but she said it was difficult for Commissioners to make decisions without insight into timing. She articulated that she wanted to do whatever she could to negotiate a way to move equine businesses up on the priority list because of the constituents who were directly impacted and awaiting improvements to those regulations. She shared that she had brought the item to the BCC and thanked her colleagues for moving it up from priority nine to priority five at the Strategic Planning meeting in 2024. She acknowledged that some work had been done, for which she thanked Ms. Mullin and the CSD staff. She noted the compliance requirements of Countywide affordable housing initiatives, but said that if it were possible to have a parallel top priority, hers would be equine businesses. After that, she thought agritourism should be next. She noted her uncertainty regarding how long heat mitigation, dark skies, or public noticing would take.

Chair Hill asked about the scope and timeline for completing the six identified priorities. She questioned whether they would be done at the end of 2026, even if everything went perfectly with staffing and execution. She understood there were people who needed prompt action from the County, and she wondered how long Ms. Mullin projected it would take to accomplish the six priorities identified.

Ms. Mullin expressed her appreciation to Chair Hill for understanding the potential challenges. She advised that the six items on the list represented another year's work. She elaborated that housing initiatives were underway, but there were still many months of work to do on them. She noted that the team was much closer to accomplishing those goals than it had been a year previously. She restated that there were two primary components of public noticing: codifying the changes made in 2022 and conducting further research. She explained that the process would be faster if the improvements were limited to codifying the changes, but additional efforts to explore effective community engagement could lengthen the process. She was unsure of the project's full scope, but anticipated significant community involvement. She echoed Commissioner Andriola's observation that much of the initial work on equine businesses was complete, but she predicted that a lot of work remained to refine language, work with the community, hold workshops, and modify plans. She summarized that there were many unknown factors, and she expressed appreciation for the question, the comments, and the concern about timing. She understood that it would be helpful to Commissioners to have timing estimates to inform their priority ranking, and she stated that she would endeavor to include time estimates in future planning sessions.

Chair Hill suggested using something like a Gantt chart to represent the duration and progress of different projects. She mentioned that high-water and high-energy users were an additional area of concern in the community. She pointed out that data centers fit that description, but were not the only ones. She said there were zoning recommendations from community partners, and she shared that she wanted plans to address those industries to be added to the priority list. She held that the BCC needed to be aware of and address potential drains on natural resources.

Commissioner Clark remarked that all items on the list were important, and he was unsure how to assign them a rank order. He suggested that they should all be worked on simultaneously. He theorized that if a private industry had those six challenges, it would be able to resolve them in less than a year. He speculated that the community could be engaged to further the dark skies initiatives by being told to turn their lights off on specific days, similar to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) assigned-day watering schedules. He thought that could advance the initiative more quickly than the timeline Ms. Mullin outlined. He also thought public noticing could be resolved quickly. He observed that people had been waiting for years for equine businesses to be addressed, and he thought there should be a way to streamline the process. He supposed the initiatives could be more detailed than they looked, but, based on the headings, he did not think the projects should take as long as Ms. Mullin predicted. He agreed with Commissioner Andriola that establishing equine businesses should be the top priority, as the affected citizens had already waited years for an answer.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Katherine Yriarte introduced herself as a Washoe County resident, an advocate for the local equine community, and an equine business owner with first-hand experience with the current WCDC. She said it was a process that she had been diligently navigating for 26 months for an existing community-supported and State-licensed business. She remarked that over two years, countless hours, hundreds of emails, several meetings, and two hearings with the Board of Adjustment (BOA), she saw the possibility of a resolution. She acknowledged and thanked the County Planning Department for their tireless efforts, communication, and willingness to explore alternative approaches. She noted that Ms. Mullin, Planner Timothy Evans, and Planning Manager Trevor Lloyd demonstrated unparalleled dedication to customer service, and made what began as a highly distressing experience an opportunity to collaborate and acknowledge shortcomings in existing codes while creating practical resolutions that satisfied all parties and agencies involved. She described that horse professionals, trainers, boarding operators, riding instructors, and rural property owners faced unnecessary barriers for years under the current WCDC. She explained that the regulations were written decades ago, before the equine industry became the dynamic and vital part of Washoe County's economy that it had developed into. She stated that too many small, family-run horse operations were being forced to navigate a code structure that did not reflect the realities of rural businesses. She related that the current system classified all equine activities in a way that often made compliance confusing and expensive. She revealed that it was nearly impossible for legitimate local businesses to operate legally at times. She specified that she was not asking for special treatment; she was advocating for common-sense reform. She outlined that equine businesses provided jobs, preserved open space, supported youth programs like 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA), and strengthened Washoe County's economy and rural identity. She felt that everyone deserved a fair, clear, and updated WCDC that recognized the contributions of equine businesses and supported responsible land use. She asked the BCC to prioritize the amendment and modernization of the WCDC as it applied to equine and agricultural enterprises. She viewed it as a great opportunity to tie agritourism in and thought horse training could realistically be categorized as agrotourism. She asserted that equine businesses brought in commerce from other states. She recounted that people as far away as Georgia and Montana brought their horses to the County, and she surmised that equine businesses generated revenue from other states just by existing. She concluded that the issue had been studied and discussed, and action was overdue. She summarized that by streamlining outdated codes, the County could reduce barriers to business, protect property rights, and strengthen one of the County's most historic and community-centered industries. She stated her belief that a balanced approach that maintained neighborhood integrity and safety while supporting the growth and sustainability of local equine operations could be found through stakeholder meetings and community input. She advocated for making Washoe County a model for how local governments could work with people who sustained its rural and agricultural heart. She thanked the Board for their time, service, and consideration.

Ms. Trista Gomez commented that she attended an equine businesses' public input session months ago and understood that the matter had been under discussion for a long time. She agreed with Commissioners Clark and Andriola that resolution on the matter was overdue. She supposed that there were easy modifications that could be made to the WCDC to make equine businesses viable and livable. She did not understand why the modifications had not yet been made. She discerned that agritourism was incredibly important and was similar to equine businesses in that it was a trade-like entity. She felt that both industries had been overregulated, and she observed that they helped children and families learn and provided services to the community. She thought it was important for young people to learn what healthy food was and how to have it. She shared that she had talked to some of the farms and stables, and nobody could understand why the codes and regulations were so extensive. She reasoned that there had to be a way to simplify the codes so educational and necessary equine and agricultural businesses could operate more easily. She said she had been advocating for better public noticing for years. She added that public commenters wondered if their input mattered. She recalled instances of witnessing people in distress about decisions the Commissioners made that the public was overwhelmingly against. She perceived that the Board sometimes proceeded with things despite public resistance and negative impacts on the day-to-day lives of constituents. She spoke about a young person she recently helped find housing. She described that one of the apartments he looked at was in a complex that had undergone changes and almost seemed predatory. She thought there should be a definition of affordable housing, and she remarked that more housing did not equate to more affordable housing.

Ms. Tammy Holt-Still spoke about the dark skies initiatives, which she contended were already included in regional plans for the area and did not need to be addressed separately by the BCC. She said lighting should be planned to conform to the existing dark skies regulations in the Master Plan. She recommended that the Commissioners focus on affordable housing, public noticing, and equine businesses.

Vice Chair Herman questioned the definition of equine business and recalled that people used to just own and train horses at their homes without the burden of excessive regulation. She wondered what the purpose of the rules was. She said she could understand the need for licensing if somebody had a large operation and collected enough income to justify having a business, but she contended that was different from someone who owned a small number of horses and gave a few riding lessons each month. She warned that there was an unnecessary amount of regulation that would make life miserable for people who were just starting out and doing something they loved. She thought it was too late to pursue the dark skies initiatives in the County because of the number of warehouses in Reno and Sparks with bright lights that could be seen from miles away. She did not know how that could be regulated, and she expressed her frustration with excessive regulation.

Chair Hill said she thought Vice Chair Herman raised good points. She commented that the County felt like they had to respond to complaints from residents of properties near equine businesses, but she understood Vice Chair Herman's perspective.

Commissioner Garcia commented that unincorporated Washoe County included areas from Verdi to Wadsworth and from Oregon all the way to Lake Tahoe. She liked that the priorities presented addressed the needs of the unincorporated parts of the County. She remarked that the Cities of Reno and Sparks looked at things from their perspectives, and she felt that County Commissioners should align priorities with the constituents they served. She established that her top priority was Countywide affordable housing initiatives, and she did not think Commissioners should ever lose sight of the importance of that issue. She said they needed to continue to streamline development processes and prioritize housing supply and affordable housing options. She related that she often heard about the amount of work left to be done, and she was excited to learn about the infill projects and incentives for senior housing, which she projected would largely impact District 3. She supported keeping housing initiatives as the top priority for the foreseeable future. She reported that, in the spirit of working with her fellow Commissioners and listening to public comments, she wanted to put equine businesses as her second priority and agritourism as her third. She explained that she selected those as her top three because she believed they would all remove barriers. She discerned that there were people waiting for those barriers to be removed, and it was the responsibility of the Commissioners to get that done. She advocated for heat mitigation to be the fourth priority and expressed her concern about the serious public health impacts the region was facing related to Reno being the fastest-warming city in the Nation. She noted that Assembly Bill (AB) 96 would go into effect on July 1, 2026, and she encouraged the BCC to move heat mitigation up so they could get ahead of the legislative requirement. She thought heat mitigation would help all constituents regardless of age, and that it was important to focus on it. She commented on the high interest from the public about dark skies and shared that she often received phone calls from concerned constituents when there was new construction. She said Sun Valley had dark sky issues, and she wanted to respond to those concerns. She felt that public noticing was progressing as planned, and she supported codifying the changes made in 2022. However, she advised that she preferred staff to spend their time on the other identified priorities.

Commissioner Andriola pointed out that there were compliance considerations related to Countywide affordable housing initiatives. She restated her desire to have equine businesses as the second priority. She hoped that, given the existing framework for agritourism initiatives, the work would not take too long. She acknowledged the impact of AB96 on heat mitigation and reported her recent attendance at a conference hosted by the Desert Research Institute (DRI). She shared that the conference included a panel session about AB96 compliance, which she believed Chair Hill attended. She felt that the dark skies initiatives needed to be clarified. She listed her priorities as Countywide affordable housing initiatives, equine businesses, agritourism, heat mitigation, dark skies, and public noticing. She advocated for a visual model of progress on the initiatives, such as a Gantt chart. She reasoned that it would be beneficial because some things might finish earlier than others, and a visual representation would help the Commissioners understand how to stagger the work and know when things were completed. She thought there might be an opportunity to accommodate public noticing work, depending on the availability of staff. She stated for the record that she really wanted equine businesses as her top priority, and she thought the County was close to making meaningful progress on that work.

Commissioner Clark recommended involving constituents in dark skies initiatives. He suggested having public service announcements to encourage those who support dark skies to turn off all the lights outside their property before 10:00 p.m., and he reasoned that people should want to have dark skies for both practical and aesthetic reasons. He pointed out that power bills would be lower. He understood that there were large warehouses that operated continually, but he supposed that those were far enough away from residential areas that they would not affect neighbors. He discerned that there were ways to effect change without having to create regulations at the governmental level. He voiced his agreement with Vice Chair Herman's observations regarding horse businesses being hobbies in many cases. He expressed his concern about a lack of County staff representation from horse owners who understood the culture, which he suggested addressing through a Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) for horse businesses. He noted that there were many horse businesses in his district and opined that the County should have moved more quickly to address outdated codes and restrictions. He recalled the public commenter who reported waiting for 26 months, and he questioned who had that kind of endurance. He reasoned that when someone wanted to start a business, they wanted to do so immediately, rather than waiting two to five years. He concluded that many things could move more quickly than they did in the County.

Chair Hill believed she had heard a consensus with the Board on the priorities. She relayed that the Board agreed about keeping Countywide affordable housing as the top priority, followed by equine businesses, agritourism, heat mitigation, dark skies, and public noticing. She wondered if there was a correlation between warehouses and rising heat in cities, and she expressed her support for staff efforts to investigate potential related regulations, either as part of the heat mitigation work or as an additional priority. She asked if her recollection of the priorities was correct.

On motion by Commissioner Andriola, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 12 be directed and the priority order of actions be modified.

25-0757 **AGENDA ITEM 17** Introduction and first reading of an ordinance pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes 278.0201 through 278.0207 to adopt a development agreement between Washoe County and Lifestyle Homes TND, LLC, to extend the deadline for recording the initial final map for Silver Hills, a residential subdivision (Tentative Subdivision Map Case No. WTM21-006), to August 24, 2029. The project is located on the east side of Red Rock Road, north of Longhorn Drive. The project encompasses a total of approximately 308.6 acres, and the total number of residential lots allowed by the approved tentative map is 358 lots. The parcel is located within the North Valleys Planning Area and Washoe County Commission District No. 5. (APN: 087-390-10).
And, if approved, schedule a second reading, public hearing, and possible adoption of the ordinance for November 18, 2025, and authorize the Chair to execute the Development Agreement. Community Services. (Commission District 5.)

County Clerk Jan Galassini read the title for Bill No. 1939.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Tammy Holt-Still provided a document, copies of which were distributed to the Board and placed on file with the Clerk. She indicated that her document contained the same information that the Planning Commission provided to the Board in 2021. She stated that the project did not align with the Master Plan and that the sewer facility lacked the capability to maintain the project. She speculated that the project would create overdevelopment because there were too many homes per acre. She asserted that Agenda Item 17 should be denied because she believed there was no reason to continue approving similar developments. She explained that Reno was experiencing a significant increase in heat, and the County approved development that would exacerbate the heat from asphalt and buildings. She felt that there was too much development in the Lemmon Valley and Stead area, an increased risk of flooding, and that Swan Lake was contaminated. She urged the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to deny Agenda Item 17.

Commissioner Andriola asked Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large to clarify the Board's legal responsibility and legal framework regarding Agenda Item 17. CDDA Large indicated that planners were available to speak if necessary; however, Agenda Item 17 was a first reading, pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and the Washoe County Code (WCC), for an extension of the previously approved development agreement. He noted that, if approved, the next hearing would be held to determine whether to extend the development agreement for four years, contingent upon findings within the WCC.

Commissioner Andriola said she believed that the clarification was essential to understanding the legal responsibility to act within the purview of which the Board made its decisions. She noted that if the extension were approved, it would be extended to 2029. CDDA Large reported that WCC required the Board to be in compliance with the Master Plan within the next hearing.

Bill No. 1939 was introduced by Commissioner Garcia, and legal notice for final action of adoption was directed.

25-0758 **<u>AGENDA ITEM 18</u>** Introduction and first reading of an ordinance amending the Washoe County Code by repealing Chapter 11 (Alternative Sentencing) and by retaining, modifying and relocating a provision authorizing the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a fee schedule for the cost of supervision of probationers and supervised releasees, and providing for imposition and waiver of those fees; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and properly relating thereto. And if supported, set a public hearing for the second reading and possible adoption of the ordinance on November 18, 2025. Manager. (All Commission Districts).

County Clerk Jan Galassini read the title for Bill No. 1940.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Abbe Yacoben conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Repealing WCC Chapter 11; Agenda – Repeal Chapter 11 of Washoe County Code; How did we get here?; What is our goal? Maintain or enhance service levels; What are the proposed operational changes? (4 Areas of Operation); What are the known proposed savings?; What is happening now and next steps? (two slides); Thank you & Questions?

Ms. Yacoben observed that Chair Hill was not at the dais and asked if she should wait to begin her presentation. Chief Deputy District Attorney (CDDA) Michael Large advised that because a quorum was present, she should proceed. Ms. Yacoben outlined that her presentation would provide an overview to accompany the first reading of an ordinance to repeal Washoe County Code (WCC) Chapter 11. She showed her *Agenda – Repeal Chapter 11 of Washoe County Code* slide and specified that WCC Chapter 11 created the Department of Alternative Sentencing (DAS). She said she would address the events that led to the proposed WCC amendments and outline the goals for the project and initiative. She recalled receiving questions about what the new service delivery model would entail, and she advised that she included that information in her presentation, even though it was not exactly what the Agenda Item 18 vote would be on. She commented that Commissioners had great questions in the past that she wanted to address. She revealed that there would be some minor savings associated with repealing WCC Chapter 11, but she noted that she would not have exact figures until the plan was fully developed and implemented. She described that her team wanted to wait until the vote on the first reading, then develop plans more fully and bring back more information on November 18. She conveyed that they would prepare more details for the November 18 meeting if there were an affirmative vote in the meeting that day. She explained that there would be a number of procedural steps that would occur between November 18 and December 31, 2025, if the vote were affirmative during both meetings.

Ms. Yacoben reviewed her *How did we get here?* slide. She explained that County staff was always thinking about how they could do things differently and better. She described that some of the ideas generated were great and the team pursued them, whereas other ideas did not advance past the discussion stage. She disclosed that as the DAS chief departed, her team started thinking about whether it would be possible to spread DAS functions to different areas of the County in ways that would create economies of scale and enhance customer experience. She advised that her presentation would include more details about those ideas. She informed that small departments often lacked the administrative support they needed to be fully self-sufficient, including financial reporting and comparisons of budgeted costs to actual expenditures. She added that, from the Human Resources (HR) perspective, policy development and compliance could be challenging for smaller departments. Her team determined that they needed to take action to address the problems and began discussing what to do.

Ms. Yacoben showed her slide entitled *What is our goal? Maintain or enhance service levels* and outlined the goals of the new model. She shared that, prior to the Second Judicial District Court (SJDC) moving to a different drug testing entity, there were two or three different drug testing agencies, which varied depending on the court involved. She noted that there were formerly two entities doing pretrial services, and the County wanted to consolidate pretrial services under one agency to improve consistency and reduce confusion for customers who were unsure where to go for services. She reported that pretrial services staff planned to create a new team to support the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), which she indicated was crucial for the mission to keep people in the workforce, functioning in society, and out of jail. She explained that the SJDC received a number of responses to their Request for Proposals (RFP) and selected a vendor with trauma-informed staff. She communicated that, as part of her work with the DAS restructuring, she learned that sometimes people in the criminal justice system were victims themselves and found the invasiveness of drug testing challenging. She conveyed that the staff of the new drug testing team had Nationwide experience and were sensitive in their approach. She stated that there would be less confusion with drug testing because all customers would be going to one place. She mentioned the added benefit of risk reduction for the County. She elaborated that anytime risk could be moved to a different entity or a willing private sector contractor, the County preferred to do that. She revealed that funding was no longer available for personnel for the Support in Treatment, Accountability, and Recovery (STAR) program, but the County aimed to continue the program in different departments in an alternative way. She acknowledged that there could be challenges, but she said the County was committed to continuing the STAR housing program even without the personnel funding. She theorized that when small groups of County staff joined larger departments, there were more training, growth, and development opportunities. She admitted that smaller divisions did not always get the same level of training and support as larger agencies and did not always know to ask for it. She informed that one of the intentions of the restructure was to offer more staff support and development opportunities. She noted that there were likely to be minor budgetary savings, and advised that, if there was an affirmative vote for the item, she would have more detailed information on projected savings to bring to the Board on November 18.

Ms. Yacoben displayed her *What are the proposed operational changes? (4 Areas of Operation)* slide. She reported that as the SJDC conducted its RFP, it learned that there were successful drug testing vendors. She explained that DAS staff would no longer conduct drug tests, and because that function was going away, four people formerly in that area would go to different departments. She disclosed that those individuals had successful interviews, and she applauded the proactive work HR did on a weekly basis to help those staff members move into other positions. She acknowledged the value the Board placed on not laying off County staff. She shared that as the SJDC began working with the drug testing company, Averhealth, other County departments, such as the Human Services Agency (HSA) and Juvenile Services, were also joining. She said the goal for those adjustments was December 1 because those employees had been so successful in securing other employment within the County. She described that there were currently four positions in pretrial services that were all proposed to go to the SJDC. All pretrial services would be provided by the SJDC; however, she noted that just because an individual reported to someone at the SJDC did not mean they would be unaware of the operations, needs, and caseloads of other courts. She described that there would be a cross-functional effort to handle caseloads as appropriate, and people might work with teams that differed from their reporting structure or physical location. She pointed out that the architects of the plan outlined in Agenda Item 18 were a cross-functional team. Ms. Yacoben communicated that post-sentence monitoring included support from caseworkers and law enforcement. She divulged that those positions were proposed to go to the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), where individuals could continue to collaborate with their current caseworkers. She noted that it was a high priority to keep service levels the same throughout the reorganization and not overburden any particular department with the change. She shared that a desire for more casework help in the justice courts was revealed during conversations about restructuring. She related that the Sparks Justice Court (SJC) had a vacancy and repurposed the position in response to the opportunities generated by the proposed DAS restructure. She said that if there was an affirmative vote that day and on November 18, the BCC would be presented with a staff report for the December 16 meeting to reclass the SJC position. She added that there was a new position being proposed for the Reno Justice Court (RJC) to ensure a smooth transition and help address the needs they expressed. She clarified that those positions would not exclude work with pretrial services or on any specialty court cases; she had simply listed them under post-sentence monitoring, but the courts could determine how to utilize those positions. She specified that there were four positions associated with the STAR Housing Program. She reported that there was a vacancy, people moved to other departments, and the County was doing its best to rehome everyone and minimize budgetary impact. She stated that STAR operations staff members would move to the HSA, the Office of the County Manager (OCM), and the WCSO, depending on whether their function was law enforcement, case management, counseling, or peer support.

Ms. Yacoben showed her *What are the known proposed savings?* slide and admitted that she was hesitant to commit to concrete numbers because work with stakeholders was not yet complete, and fiscal projections could change in the coming days. She explained the change in savings in the chief salary and benefits budget projection, which she pointed out was lower in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 than FY 2026. She acknowledged that it did not make intuitive sense, but she disclosed that there was an incumbent in that position when they budgeted for FY 2026. She stated that the policy, as outlined in the post-classification and compensation study, stipulated that employees start at the base of the salary range, which for the position in question was $202,834. She informed that there was a 6-month notification process for the building lease, after which savings would increase significantly. She mentioned that there were some savings projected for utilities and janitorial services, but she noted the savings would be minimal in the first year. She advised that moving costs would reduce the savings and should be kept in mind. She offered to present more detailed projections to the Board on November 18 if the item moved forward. Ms. Yacoben described her projections for cost avoidance and outlined that there were three consecutive years of budget overages. She said that overages increased significantly between the first and second year, then leveled off at around $375,000. She added that there would be no need for a DAS-specific HR or finance staff member moving forward, which would represent a cost avoidance of one or two positions. She said those savings would be reflected in the proposed budget if the restructure moved forward.

Ms. Yacoben showed the first of her *What is happening now and next steps?* slides and said her team was working with the DAS, the WCSO, the courts, HSA, and other stakeholders to discuss operational needs. She disclosed that they had already conducted multiple meetings and she knew that, for example, the WCSO met weekly with their new staff members to coordinate field visits and ensure they were welcomed on their new teams. She shared that they were also working towards some data exchange to ensure everyone had full caseload information, including which courts people were with and what type of supervision and case support were needed. She predicted that there would be additional changes as more information was learned about individual cases. She spoke about timelines for departments to transition their drug testing to Averhealth. She believed the SJDC was transitioning, starting on November 1, and she conveyed that other departments and entities were also beginning to join in for the transition in December. She restated that DAS employees were successful in securing other positions, which advanced the original December 31 projection. She established that the County would monitor the performance of the new vendor to ensure that the courts, law enforcement, and vulnerable persons were properly served by the drug testing company.

Ms. Yacoben showed the second of her *What is happening now and next steps?* slides. She said if there was an affirmative vote on the item that day, a second reading would be held on November 18, and the building lease would be terminated quickly thereafter on November 19. She reported that she had already been working with the District Attorney's (DA) Office on the lease termination. She restated that the timeline for the joinder with Averhealth by December 1 would allow those services to be transitioned. She advised that if there was an affirmative vote on December 16, her team would bring a very large staff report to the Board detailing all the budgetary and staffing moves. She shared that the staff report would include the SJC reclassification and the RJC new positions that she mentioned earlier. She specified that the changes would not be net-zero. She outlined that the transition would occur in the latter half of December and departments would continue to meet, move data back and forth, refine operations, and work to fully understand how to best address all caseloads and ensure a smooth transition. She disclosed that her team developed strategies to ensure everything worked and no stakeholder issues arose that could not be quickly figured out. She said the transition team planned to meet 30 days after the transition, which was early February. She communicated that the first meeting was already scheduled for February 4 with a follow-up planned for 60 days after that. She stated that plans were in place to continue meeting regularly for the first year in the hopes of maximizing communications on the SIM, maintaining existing services, and keeping people out of jail. She offered to answer any questions the Commissioners had.

CDDA Large noted that he invited SJDC Pretrial Services Program Manager Angelina Wencke to present due to Commissioner Clark's desire to have subject matter experts provide input. He believed that the Board should listen to the staff and thought that Ms. Wilke could give an accurate description of day-to-day work, goals, and future visions.

Ms. Wencke noted that she had been an employee of the SJDC for 10 years and had been a part of the legal community for 17 years. She explained that all staff members were certified through the National Association of Pretrial Services Agency (NAPSA) and that she worked with NAPSA on a leadership level for Pretrial Services. She mentioned that NAPSA would visit Reno in 2026. She stated that Pretrial Services consisted of an assessment team and a supervision team. She described that when someone entered the Washoe County Jail, there was no uniform bail schedule, and the individual was seen by Pretrial Services to undergo a Nevada Pretrial Risk Assessment. She reported that the risk assessment determined the individual's risk of fleeing and reoffending. She stated that Pretrial Services personnel were present during interview assessments to obtain necessary contact information and call the defendant's references. She expressed that Pretrial Services worked 24 hours a day, every day of the year, to ensure proper risk assessment for every court in the area. She mentioned that a criminal history review was conducted as part of the assessment and that Pretrial Services had the capability to determine if an individual should be released prior to their judicial review. She said that each court worked from the same matrix, except the RJC. She said her team was able to take the *if-then analysis* for up to Category B felonies and appropriate the analysis to determine if someone was able to be released prior to judicial review. She noted the Sheriff was concerned about the intake lobby times, and she acknowledged that her team worked with the WCSO to keep the times at around five hours. She explained that when a person came in, the team would see them and make a determination. She noted that occasionally, a person who was low risk and met the matrix criteria would be allowed to leave with a release acknowledgement. She explained that release acknowledgements listed the expectations that Pretrial Services had for a person. She noted that Pretrial Services wanted to ensure the community's safety. She said the two pillars of Pretrial Services were for a person not to get rearrested and for them to show up in court.

Ms. Wencke explained that her team would help facilitate bail, and once it was set, they would put together the packages, which would include the pretrial risk assessment and the Pretrial Services report. Her team would then assess for a public defender and an affidavit for the appointment of counsel. She said Pretrial Services conducted bail reviews for all courts every day of the year. She noted that the Pretrial Services supervision team conducted a resource assessment, which enabled the team to determine whether the individual qualified for resources such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or work eligibility. She mentioned that the Pretrial Services team collaborated with the Public Defender's Office (PDO) and the DA's Office to ensure that individuals met requirements and completed the correct processes. She explained that Pretrial Services organized compliance reports, which allowed for the process to be the least restrictive and individualized. She believed Pretrial Services could meet all of Washoe County's needs, as it had with the jail.

Commissioner Andriola asked Ms. Mencke to explain the RJC's matrix and how it was different. Ms. Wencke said that the RJC elected a different set of circumstances for her team to comply with. She noted that it would be preferable if all the courts worked within the same policies; however, her team was happy to comply with different criteria. She said her team understood that judges had the right to do different things. Commissioner

Andriola asked if Pretrial Services was still following the matrix set by the RJC. Ms. Mencke recalled that the team had followed the RJC's matrix for years and would continue to do so. Commissioner Andriola inquired about the differences in the process under the new plan. Ms. Wencke mentioned that some judges preferred to include individualized and least restrictive supervision conditions, and once the individual was released from jail, the Pretrial Services team would supervise the defendant as individually ordered by the RJC judges. She explained that defendants could be confused when going through the process; however, her team enjoyed the opportunity to discuss any questions the defendant may have to ensure clarity. Commissioner Andriola inquired whether the judge's preference would be followed by the Pretrial Services team. Ms. Wencke confirmed that the team would comply with judges' preferences.

On the call for public comment, Judge Kendra Bertschy explained that NAPSA recommended that every jurisdiction establish a dedicated pretrial service agency. She noted that the RJC wished to work with the Board to ensure that the core mission of the DAS continued to improve lives by providing accountability, opportunities to succeed, and enhancement of community safety. She expressed that the RJC had concerns with the current proposed model because it did not align with NAPSA standards or structures compared to similar Nevada courts. She mentioned that the RJC relied on the DAS for many critical services, including supervising high-risk individuals during pending cases and providing post-conviction support. She believed that the DAS was a vital partner to the therapeutic courts. She asserted that Sober 24 and the STAR program were evidence-based initiatives that provided a reduction in recidivism, enhanced public safety, and saved taxpayer money. She asserted that the programs fit within the SIM that the Board adopted. She reported that, according to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the total number of criminal cases for the Wadsworth Township Justice Court was 83, 195 for the Incline Village Crystal Bay Justice Court, 2,490 for the SJC, 2,823 for the SJDC, and 4,971 for the RJC for the 2024 fiscal year (FY). She explained that the proposed plan raised concerns about maintaining best practices for supervising safety for high-risk individuals within the community. She recalled that the RJC had served as a pilot project for innovative services such as the Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Risk and Needs Tools (RANT), Sober24, and other therapeutic courts. She expressed concern that the programs would be affected by the new plan and hoped the court's ability to serve the community would not be disrupted. She thanked interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas, the Board, and partnering agencies for their continued collaboration.

Mr. Mark Wickman noted that the DAS worked for the justice courts, provided sentencing supervision for misdemeanors, and performed pretrial supervision. He explained that the RJC and the SJDC were different. He stated that there were three years of financial mismanagement at the DAS that were brought to the attention of the Board on an annual basis. He expressed concern regarding training and lateral movement, as he indicated that the DAS had been told that if they wanted to continue with the County, they should apply for open positions. He explained that the DAS was a small department with minimal officers who supervised in the field to ensure compliance in a timely manner, whereas the pretrial services were in-house. He believed that the new plan was a step backwards in progress, and he thought that there would be a lack of efficiency.

Chair Hill shared that she and Commissioner Clark had recently attended a productive meeting where the involved agencies discussed issues surrounding the justice system. She felt that it was beneficial to have representatives from the different courts, the WCSO, and the DAS staff present. She believed that following those discussions, both the RJC and the DAS staff expressed concerns about proceeding with the new program. She said that she was encouraged that, if the item passed, it would not be effective until January 2026. She suggested to ICM Thomas that if the details regarding pretrial services were not finalized, the deadline could be extended to February, given that the holiday season would make it difficult to work through the remaining issues. She said that she requested Ms. Yacoben to schedule all necessary meetings with the DAS team so that discussions could begin to address the outstanding issues. She felt that an agreement could be reached that would benefit everyone, including implementing a drug testing process that would relieve some staff members from that responsibility. She suggested that the absence of the DAS chief had resulted in staff members not being supervised. She felt that the transition could benefit customers by providing individuals in the justice system with a clearer understanding of their next steps and where to go. She said that she would support any efforts to streamline the process and believed that the new approach would align with the SIM. She acknowledged the importance of considering the concerns of the RJC after speaking with judicial staff. She stated that she supported a first reading but emphasized that the Board should listen to its partners to create a successful program and address any additional issues that may arise. She noted her confidence in a professional and diverse team from different departments that could work together. She requested, if the item were approved, that regular status updates be provided to the BCC so that adjustments could be made as needed.

Vice Chair Herman said that she would continue to review the information presented and make her decision once she had obtained additional information before the second reading.

Commissioner Garcia acknowledged that many dedicated individuals worked tirelessly to serve the most vulnerable population within the judicial system. She expressed appreciation for the time, energy, and effort required to engage in difficult conversations. She noted uncertainty about the outcome of the next election and emphasized the importance of making decisions that supported the long-term vision and goals, recognizing that, although a strong Sheriff was in office, circumstances could always change. She felt that with those changes, there could be shifts in culture and leadership styles, whether from a new Commissioner or a new Sheriff. She believed that, from an operational standpoint, the Board aimed to find ways to improve efficiency and service quality, even though such decisions could be challenging. She appreciated hearing the discussions as she had not attended some meetings and acknowledged the difficulty of navigating differing opinions. She observed that many individuals had invested significant time and dedication to their work, and it was important that their legacy be carried on. She remarked that the process had been challenging and expressed hope that communication would continue. She asked Ms. Yacoben when the Board could expect additional updates, whether 30- and 60-day transition meetings would be held, and what the process would be beyond the 60-day mark.

Ms. Yacoben explained that the meetings had already been scheduled. She added that one meeting was scheduled for February 4, 2026, which was 30 days after the effective date of January 1, 2026. Another meeting would be scheduled 60 days thereafter for the first year, with the understanding that additional meetings could be scheduled more frequently if needed. She noted that the intent was for those conversations to occur naturally over time. Commissioner Garcia inquired whether there were any requested operational changes and whether those would be presented to the BCC or addressed internally.

Ms. Yacoben explained that internal discussions had been ongoing to address any concerns. She said that the team worked collaboratively to resolve many issues during their biweekly internal meetings. She added that if an unexpected issue arose outside of the 30- and 60-day periods, the team would reconvene immediately. She indicated that, if affirmative votes were received at both the current meeting and the meeting on November 18, 2025, the Board would vote to eliminate that portion of the Code. She added that change would ensure minor changes would no longer require Board approval unless they involved a budgetary increase, personnel change, or anything that only the Board had authority over. Commissioner Garcia stated that communication would be key to how the program would be presented and noted that the success of the communication would determine the success of the transition. Ms. Yacoben stated that she agreed.

CDDA Large interjected that the ongoing meetings referenced by Ms. Yacoben were intended to develop a comprehensive plan and noted that additional meetings would be scheduled in the future. He clarified that the Board's vote pertained to the introduction of the first reading. He explained that the ordinance submitted and posted had been slightly modified by the DA's Office and had been circulated to the Board. He stated that the purpose of the ordinance was to eliminate Chapter 11 of the WCC and update Chapter 50 with the fee schedule currently located in Chapter 11. He mentioned that he would be working with stakeholders, which included Public Defender Evelyn Grosenick, and the courts to establish a fee schedule that was reasonable and compliant with applicable laws. He shared that there could be minor modifications to the ordinance prior to the second reading.

Commissioner Andriola reiterated the difficulty with the approaching holidays and accommodating a 30- and 60-day plan, emphasizing the importance of clear communication among all parties. She indicated that Bertschy had raised some concerns about moving forward with the model. She disclosed that she had met with Sheriff Darin Balaam, Judge Pierre Hascheff, and Judge Scott Pearson. She believed that everyone wanted the best outcome, and creating a clear process would reduce confusion for individuals so they would not be penalized for not understanding pretrial services requirements. She voiced hesitation about having the new ordinance take effect on January 1, 2026, and asked CDDA Large for clarification while acknowledging that the current item was a first reading and not the finalized process. She inquired whether additional time would be available to make changes and potentially extend the January 1, 2026, deadline, prior to the second reading.

CDDA Large said that the Board could modify the effective date. He explained that the timeline presented was critical to allow sufficient time to transfer employees and ensure that services would not lapse. He stated that the purpose of the timeline was to allow for initial changes to be implemented, with the understanding that the process could be revised later if any deficiencies were identified. He mentioned that the additional meetings were intended to provide opportunities to discuss potential changes.

Commissioner Andriola acknowledged that accomplishing so much within a two-month period, particularly during the holidays, would be challenging. She emphasized the importance of involving all parties and considering their diverse opinions to develop a successful solution. She hoped that everyone would recognize the need for compromise in creating a process that benefited everyone. She stated that ongoing communication with the Board regarding updates would be crucial. She thanked ICM Thomas for her commitment to keeping the Board informed on specific topics, which had proven to be effective, and asked that communication continue. She thought that understanding the justice court's needs and obtaining their input would be helpful, given their long history with the DAS and various programs. She felt that no one wanted to eliminate processes that had been effective in the past, and she suggested reviewing the finalized plan as it developed. She added that everyone involved needed to be committed to active and engaged discussions. Ms. Yacoben said that ICM Thomas could expect to receive a memorandum that outlined high-level changes, so that new information could be shared with the Board during weekly discussions. Commissioner Andriola thanked Judge Bertschy for attending the meeting. She mentioned that after speaking with the Public Defender and others, it became apparent that effective communication was crucial to developing a mutual agreement that would work for everyone. She thanked the staff for their efforts in navigating a difficult situation.

Commissioner Clark said that he had the opportunity to attend a recent meeting with subject matter experts, including representatives from the judicial staff, the DA, the Public Defender, the Sheriff, and court administrators. He said it was important to hear from those individuals before voting on a permanent measure and stated that he had not heard any unreasonable requests from those in attendance. He commended ICM Thomas for organizing a plan and thought that the issues raised should be addressed by the subject matter experts. He added that the staff who dealt with those issues on a daily basis would be best suited to develop the plan. He felt that the financial aspect was secondary to having an efficient process. He questioned why the problems had not been brought to anyone's attention earlier and suggested that the issues may have persisted otherwise. He believed that former County Manager Eric Brown should have addressed the issues with the DAS and questioned why law enforcement staff had not inquired about ongoing issues. He stated that the DAS supervisor could have been replaced and business could have continued, but that was no longer an option. He added that Washoe County had the dubious distinction of having the federal government close a County department, which he believed was unprecedented. He stated that the problem needed to be addressed now that it had been brought to the Board's attention. He thought that since the Board were not experts, it was important to engage those who were. He said that his concerns were not with those who had been arrested. He felt that it was essential for the individuals who provided the services to establish a process that worked effectively for them, rather than continuing with the way pretrial services had operated previously, which was not an option. He trusted that the subject matter experts could fix what had been broken and wanted to let them mold the new organization to what would work best. He explained that the Board would vote on the new process but would not be part of the daily operation. He hoped that once an efficient process was established, there would be no further issues.

Chair Hill thought the Board had agreed on how to proceed but emphasized the importance of working with the RJC to address the concerns of its staff. She felt that determining staff reassignments was a management issue and that, once the ordinance was finalized, the Board should not be involved in the daily operations. She emphasized that it was crucial for those affected by any changes to work together. She recalled a comment from former Commissioner Kitty Jung, who stated that changes could always be made when making difficult decisions that were not final. She mentioned that there were occasions when processes required revisions over time. She believed that considerable consideration had been given to the item, and she thanked the staff for their time and effort. She thought that it was the Office of the County Manager's (OCM) job to get people together to collaborate. She thanked Ms. Yacoben for her work and acknowledged that she had brought people together, served as the arbiter, and offered support to everyone.

Bill No. 1940 was introduced by Chair Hill, and legal notice for final action of adoption was directed.

25-0759 **AGENDA ITEM 19** Public Comment.

Ms. Trista Gomez indicated that she understood that staff were invested in their work and sometimes found it difficult to accept change. She mentioned her previous social work experience and acknowledged that the system was hard for people to navigate. She believed consolidating duplicative services was a good decision. She relayed that since she started her campaign for Commissioner, individuals had asked her what kind of work the Board performed. She noted that the Board did not vote on federal-level issues, and communicating the exact function of the Board was difficult. She explained that she attended many of the meetings, and those that she did not attend, she listened to online. She explained that the one thing she heard consistently from the public was that the Commissioners did not listen to them. She believed that the County was in a bad financial position, and the reason she started paying attention to the Board was that her quality of life was being impacted by the decisions made by the BCC. She felt that interim County Manager (ICM) Kate Thomas would be appointed as County Manager and that many of the decisions made by the Board were made before meetings took place. She wondered why the Board would hire ICM Thomas when it was aware of the past outcomes.

25-0760 **AGENDA ITEM 20** Announcements/Reports.

There were no announcements or reports.

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<u>2:40 p.m.</u> There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

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ALEXIS HILL, Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

Minutes Prepared by:
Lizzie Tietjen, Deputy County Clerk
Jessica Melka, Deputy County Clerk
Heather Gage, Deputy County Clerk
Brooke Koerner, Deputy County Clerk