



South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board
Minutes of the regular meeting of the South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley Citizen Advisory Board on February 5, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. at South Valleys Library

1. CALL TO ORDER/ DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Present – Nicol Herris, Brad Stanley, Marge Frandsen, Drew Ribar

Absent – Penny Brock, Bill Coon, Colleen Winans

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge was recited.

3. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT –

Kelly Hyatt expressed appreciation for the CAB forum as an accessible way for community members to engage outside of daytime meetings. She voiced strong support for Phase 2 of the Public Safety Wildlife Fencing Project, noting her 14 years of involvement in local efforts to improve safety for both residents and wild horses. Hyatt shared that after touring the proposed fencing area and reviewing updated plans, she believes the revised design is well thought out and will effectively prevent wildlife from entering roadways, particularly in the Toll–Geiger area. She emphasized that this phase is a critical final component to reducing vehicle collisions and protecting both people and animals and encouraged continued public support ahead of upcoming discussions.

Cynthia Reed, a longtime Nevada resident and Firewise USA participant, shared her ongoing efforts to improve wildfire preparedness in her community. Drawing from personal experience witnessing rapid fire spread, she emphasized the importance of making homes and neighborhoods more defensible. Reed invited the public to an April 30 educational event at the library, featuring multiple agencies and organizations focused on wildfire prevention and preparedness. She also encouraged residents to stay informed and get involved through additional opportunities, including an upcoming insurance-related meeting and the Fire Adapted Nevada Summit at UNR.

JJ Phoenix introduced himself as a longtime local resident, Marine veteran, and incumbent candidate for the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees (District C). He highlighted his role with the Nevada Department of Veterans Services, which supports veterans through benefits assistance, nursing homes, cemeteries, and outreach programs. Phoenix shared his commitment to continuing public service through his school board candidacy, with a focus on strengthening special education by increasing staffing and classroom resources. He emphasized his hands-on approach, including visiting all schools in his district and engaging directly with principals and the community, and expressed his intent to remain accessible and involved through ongoing outreach, including CAB meetings.

Tom Daly raised concerns about delays and cost overruns associated with the Hexagon dispatch project, which is intended to improve coordination and emergency response times among regional agencies. He noted the project was originally budgeted at \$7.5 million with a 2025 completion date but is now projected to cost approximately \$9.4 million and be delayed into mid-2026. Drawing from a personal experience with a delayed emergency response, Daly emphasized the real-world impact of these delays, particularly in the south of the county. He questioned the lack of accountability for the project's increased costs and timeline, urging officials to provide explanations and stressing that delays could continue to affect public safety.

Drew Ribar, a candidate for Nevada Assembly District 40, spoke about his motivation for running for office, emphasizing concerns about government accountability and fiscal responsibility. Referring to earlier comments, he expressed frustration with perceived waste, errors, and lack of consequences for government mismanagement. Ribar highlighted his background as a private business owner and stated his goal is to bring greater accountability to government through legislation. He encouraged community members to share their concerns with him and support his campaign, noting his district includes parts of Reno, Sparks, Carson City, and surrounding areas.

4. COMMISSIONER/CAB MEMBER NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENT

Commissioner Clark thanked attendees for participating and sharing their concerns, emphasizing his role in listening and relaying community feedback to fellow commissioners and the county manager. He underscored the importance of issues like fencing and public safety, sharing a personal story about loose livestock to highlight how quickly animals can become a hazard. Clark reaffirmed his commitment to taking community input seriously and working to address concerns raised during the meeting.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brad Stanley motioned to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2025, South Truckee Meadows/Washoe Valley CAB meeting. Marge Frandsen seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

6. PUBLIC SAFETY UPDATES

Washoe County Sheriff's Office

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office reported an overall increase in calls for service in the South Truckee Meadows and Washoe Valley area during the last quarter of 2025, totaling 3,578—nearly 1,000 more than the three-year average. While assaults, property destruction, and fraud cases declined, DUIs, larcenies, and burglaries saw increases, though a recent arrest tied to a burglary series has already reduced incidents. The office highlighted ongoing enforcement efforts, including a dedicated DUI unit, and outlined new public safety investments such as a real-time crime center, expanded camera coverage in parks and trailheads, and a growing drone program. These technologies aim to improve response times, potentially getting eyes on a scene within minutes and enhancing crime prevention and enforcement across the region.

A community member asked about drone use during a recent missing child search on Toll Road, noting multiple drones appeared to be in operation. The Sheriff's Office clarified that in that area, drones are typically deployed by patrol deputies using smaller, mobile units rather than

permanently stationed drones. These are launched on scene as needed and can provide real-time visibility to assist search efforts. They also noted that drone technology is increasingly being used in coordination with fire response to quickly assess incidents before additional resources arrive.

The Sheriff's Office described a recent incident where a drone was quickly deployed after a vehicle went off a hillside. Deputies on scene initially had difficulty locating the vehicle and occupants, but a drone operator was able to launch a drone and provide a live aerial view to supervisors. This allowed responders to quickly identify the location and guide deputies directly to the individuals.

Brad Stanley asked how the Sheriff's Office determines where drones are deployed beyond those carried by individual deputies. The Sheriff's Office responded that current deployment is prioritized based on higher-crime areas. Looking ahead, the goal is to expand coverage so that within the next three years, most populated areas across Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County, including Incline Village will have dedicated drone stations. The program is being coordinated with Reno and Sparks Police Departments to ensure overlapping coverage in densely populated areas. A follow-up question asked whether the Sheriff's Office is coordinating with fire agencies on drone use and if joint operations are in place. The Sheriff's Office explained that coordination with fire agencies is in progress, with formal agreements (MOUs) still being developed. They recently received FAA certification to deploy drones for initial fire response, allowing them to quickly assess wildfire locations and spread before fire aircraft arrive. Once fire air resources are deployed, drones must be grounded, but early drone use helps improve situational awareness and response planning.

Nicol Herris asked about the Sheriff's Office policy on body camera use, specifically whether deputies are required to wear and activate them at all times. The Sheriff's Office explained that deputies are required to activate body cameras during calls for service and any situation that could escalate to enforcement action, with activation expected prior to arriving on scene. Cameras are not required for casual, non-enforcement interactions. In large-scale events like riots, body cameras are used, but continuous recording may be limited by battery life during extended operations.

Drew Ribar raised concerns about the use of drones and potential impacts on constitutional rights, particularly the Fourth Amendment, asking how the Sheriff's Office balances public safety with privacy protections. The Sheriff's Office responded that drone use is governed by policies aligned with constitutional standards and federal case law. Drones are primarily used for broad, public-safety purposes, such as traffic accidents and operate at higher altitudes, focusing on areas in plain view rather than private interiors. They emphasized that drones are not used to look inside homes or invade privacy, and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with Fourth Amendment protections.

7. COUNTY MANAGER KATE THOMAS MEETING & GREET

County Manager Kate Thomas introduced herself and shared her background in public service, highlighting her experience with the City of Reno, the Nevada Secretary of State's Office, and Washoe County, where she recently assumed the County Manager role. She emphasized her commitment to public service, accountability, and working closely with the Board of County Commissioners to implement community-driven priorities. Thomas outlined key areas of focus,

including strengthening internal accountability, improving organizational culture, and ensuring county employees deliver services efficiently. She also emphasized a shift toward upstream, preventative solutions particularly in areas like homelessness and behavioral health aimed at diverting individuals to treatment rather than more costly interventions like incarceration. She reaffirmed the importance of Citizen Advisory Boards as a vital connection to the community and noted there are no plans to eliminate them. On the financial side, Thomas acknowledged ongoing budget challenges due to rising costs outpacing revenues but stated the county remains fiscally stable. The current approach is to “hold the line” on spending avoiding both cuts and growth while focusing on efficiency, process improvements, and strategic use of resources moving forward.

Pete Todoroff expressed concern about the county’s financial condition, criticizing recent salary increases for commissioners and leadership while the county faces budget challenges. He stated that raising salaries while in a deficit is inappropriate and questioned overall compensation levels.

County Manager Kate Thomas responded that the county recently conducted its first comprehensive salary study in about 20 years, finding that Washoe County’s compensation is generally in line with comparable West Coast jurisdictions, falling in the middle range. She emphasized that competitive salaries are important to retain experienced staff and avoid costly turnover, which can lead to operational issues and inefficiencies. Thomas acknowledged the concern but reiterated the need to balance fiscal responsibility by maintaining a capable workforce to manage a large, complex organization.

A resident asked several questions regarding staffing, layoffs, and the role of technology in county operations. Regarding hiring, Kate Thomas explained that the Assistant County Manager position is being filled after she vacated it to become County Manager, and that while the county is “holding the line,” it will continue to fill existing vacancies but not add new positions. She clarified this is not a hiring freeze, but a strategy to maintain current staffing levels without expansion. When asked about potential layoffs, Thomas said layoffs are not planned and the county is working proactively to avoid them. She noted that layoffs would be complex due to union agreements and seniority rules and emphasized her commitment to preventing that scenario based on past experience. On the use of artificial intelligence, Thomas shared that the county is actively exploring AI to improve efficiency. She highlighted tools that can quickly generate staff reports and assist with administrative processes, significantly reducing time and workload. She also noted AI applications in departments like the Public Guardian’s Office to help manage increasing caseloads. The county is currently using a system called Madison AI, developed locally, as part of these efforts to streamline operations without adding staff.

Pete Todoroff criticized the Board of County Commissioners for approving salary increases during a time of budget challenges, stating that raises were inappropriate while the county faces financial strain and suggesting compensation should have been frozen instead.

8. SOUTH TRUCKEE MEADOWS FLOODPLAIN RISK MAP UPDATE

Rob Wimer provided an overview of Washoe County’s ongoing FEMA flood risk map updates, explaining that floodplain maps are used to identify community flood risk and guide decisions by FEMA, insurers, and local governments. He clarified that a 100-year flood event represents a 1 percent annual chance of flooding, meaning risk accumulates over time. He noted that flood

risks change due to development, improved mapping and modeling, updated regulations, and shifting weather patterns, requiring periodic updates. Washoe County's role includes implementing FEMA requirements, adopting local regulations that may exceed federal standards, coordinating with partner agencies, and conducting public outreach. Wimer highlighted several recent and ongoing mapping projects, including updated maps for Boneyard Flat and Swan Lake, as well as a current effort to remap southern tributaries such as Thomas Creek, Whites Creek, and Dry Creek in coordination with the City of Reno. He said preliminary results show fewer structures in the floodplain in unincorporated areas and emphasized the county's commitment to maintaining accurate maps, improving safety, and providing resources to help residents understand their flood risk.

A resident asked whether Toll Road would be fixed to address ongoing flooding issues. Rob Wimer responded that the issue is actively being evaluated. Washoe County is coordinating with the City of Reno, RTC, and a contractor to study the area and determine necessary improvements. He noted that both jurisdictions are working together to align efforts and avoid duplicating work, and that updated modeling is underway to guide future fixes.

Jack Greenhall raised concerns about drainage and runoff from new development, questioning whether stormwater systems and retention features would be sufficient and properly maintained, especially given past flooding and mud issues in the area. Rob Wimer responded that as part of the subdivision review process, developers must demonstrate that post development runoff will not increase impacts downstream compared to predevelopment conditions. He explained that retention basins are required to capture and manage stormwater on site, noting the project includes multiple proposed ponds supported by hydraulic analysis. He also clarified that long term maintenance of these systems is the responsibility of the homeowners association, which must follow an approved operations and maintenance plan to ensure the basins continue to function properly.

Bill Naylor expressed concern about relying on modeling to reduce floodplain boundaries for a proposed development, noting the area has a long history of documented flooding and questioning whether models adequately reflect real world conditions. Rob Wimer responded that while historical flood data is considered, modeling represents the best available science and engineering tools for assessing risk. He explained that any development impacting a floodplain must submit detailed analyses to FEMA and the county demonstrating how changes will manage water flow and reduce impacts. If approved, these models are intended to improve conditions both within the development and downstream.

Marge Frandsen raised concerns about a past flood in Hidden Valley, attributing the damage to inadequate maintenance of county infrastructure and questioning whether Washoe County is doing enough to maintain drainage systems and prevent future impacts to homeowners. County Engineer Dwayne Smith responded that while maintenance is important, the primary cause of such events is extreme weather, including intense flash floods and erosion that can overwhelm systems regardless of upkeep. He emphasized that the county cannot control natural events but works to manage risk through improved development standards, updated floodplain mapping,

and better modeling tools. He noted that newer technologies and data, such as LiDAR and enhanced precipitation tracking, provide more accurate assessments than in the past. Smith also explained that flood risk exists everywhere to varying degrees, and updated FEMA maps help identify higher-risk areas. He added that the county is proactively updating outdated maps and working to better inform residents and reduce future impacts, while acknowledging that not all flooding can be prevented.

Bill Naylor asked how Washoe County plans to notify residents about upcoming floodplain mapping projects and whether there will be opportunities for public meetings and input. Dwayne Smith acknowledged that the county needs to improve its outreach and communication efforts and said that is part of why staff attend community meetings. He noted that in past projects, such as in Lemmon Valley, outreach increased following major flood events but emphasized a commitment to doing better moving forward. Smith also highlighted the county's participation in FEMA's Community Rating System, which rewards proactive floodplain management with benefits like reduced flood insurance costs for residents, and reiterated the importance of continued public education and engagement.

A resident shared frustration after experiencing damage from a mud event in Hidden Valley, arguing that poor maintenance of culverts and infrastructure contributed to the problem. They also expressed concern that flood mitigation efforts have not been effective, noting that mud damage is not covered by flood insurance and questioning whether current projects and modeling can be trusted to prevent future issues. Dwayne Smith acknowledged the impact of the event and explained that while maintenance plays a role, extreme weather and highly erosive conditions were the primary drivers. He clarified that flood insurance typically covers structures, not land or mud damage, and emphasized that mitigation efforts are designed to reduce risk, not eliminate it entirely. Smith noted that tools like updated flood maps, engineering studies, and development standards are used to better protect homes over time, but improvements take time and funding. He added that the county is actively working to update outdated maps in areas like Hidden Valley and continues to prioritize reducing future impacts while recognizing that flood risk cannot be fully eliminated.

A resident emphasized the importance of considering both modeling and historical flooding data when evaluating development impacts and asked how Washoe County ensures that HOAs properly maintain drainage systems like culverts and basins. Dwayne Smith responded that the county reviews and approves drainage designs during development to ensure they meet standards, but long-term maintenance is primarily the responsibility of HOAs and property owners. He explained that the county typically becomes involved through code enforcement when issues are reported, using letters and communication to prompt compliance. While stronger enforcement tools exist, he noted they are rarely needed, as most situations are resolved through cooperation. Smith acknowledged the concern about maintenance and downstream impacts, encouraged continued engagement, and offered to meet with residents to review technical details more closely.

Marge Frandsen clarified that most of Hidden Valley is not part of a homeowners association and emphasized that drainage ditches along roads and within parks are the responsibility of Washoe County, not residents. Dwayne Smith acknowledged this and explained that Hidden Valley is an older community built under different standards, which means much of the stormwater infrastructure is limited or outdated. He confirmed that the county is responsible for maintaining ditches in public areas such as parks and along roads, while also noting the broader challenge of balancing modern infrastructure needs within established neighborhoods that were not originally designed with current drainage systems.

9. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HUB & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Sally Johnston provided an overview of Washoe County's online tools for public engagement, highlighting the Neighborhood Meeting Hub and Development Hub as resources for tracking upcoming projects and development applications. She explained how residents can access these tools through the county website, view projects by district, and explore details about active applications. She also encouraged residents to sign up for email updates tailored to their interests, such as district news or specific topics like animal services or audits. Johnston offered after the meeting to help anyone navigate the site or subscribe to updates, emphasizing the county's efforts to improve access to information and community involvement.

10. CAB MEMBER/ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS/REQUESTS

Mike Clark thanked staff for presenting and explaining ongoing flood and mapping efforts, noting that while these solutions will not eliminate all issues, they are intended to improve conditions for the community. He acknowledged the significant impact of recent flooding events and expressed empathy for affected residents. Clark emphasized the importance of continued communication and encouraged residents to take advantage of opportunities to meet directly with staff to better understand maps and technical details. He reiterated the value of community input and participation in helping the county address concerns.

11. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.