

**Staff Report**  
**Board Meeting Date: April 2, 2026**

**TO:** Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation Hearing Board

**FROM:** Latricia Lord, Senior Environmental Health Specialist  
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**SUBJECT:** Variance Case H26-0002VARI; Variance to Section 040.100 Table 1 of the Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Sewage, Wastewater and Sanitation, allowing for a reduced setback from a building sewer line to the existing on-site well on Parcel 038-132-12, 2425 Warrior Lane, Reno, NV 89523.

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**SUMMARY**

This staff report summarizes the Environmental Health Services Division's (EHS) review of the submitted variance application for your decision to recommend or deny approval to the District Board of Health (DBOH), a variance request for APN 038-132-12, owned by Kenneth Greenwell and Micheline Becker. The variance requests a reduction in the 50-foot setback from a building sewer line serving a proposed shop expansion to the existing on-site private well.

**Previous Action**

There has been no previous action with this variance request. The applicant has yet to apply for a building permit for the proposed shop expansion because the plan, as currently designed, would not be approved by EHS without an approved variance. If the variance application is approved, a building permit will be submitted, and it will continue through the plan review process and eventual inspection process. A proposed site plan and floor plan are included in the variance packet.

**Background**

The Regulations of the Washoe County District Board of Health Governing Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation (regulations) require a minimum 50' setback between a building sewer line and any private well. The subject property contains a small shop that the property owners would like to expand, including the installation of a bathroom. The sewage from the shop is proposed to be discharged out the north side of the shop through a building sewer line that connects to the existing house and then into the existing on-site septic system. The existing on-site private well is located on the east side of the shop, and approximately 35' of the 65' foot proposed building sewer line would be located within the 50' setback to the private well. The applicants are proposing to encase the entire 65' of building sewer line between the shop and the existing home in 6" of concrete on all sides as a mitigation measure to receive approval of a reduced setback. The proposed sewer line material is welded High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) with a clean out installed at each end of the building sewer line, resulting in a jointless building sewer line in the concrete encasement between the two foundations. All such decisions require approval by the Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation Hearing Board and the District Board of Health through the variance procedure.

The applicant consulted with EHS staff prior to applying for the variance and the concrete encasement and jointless building sewer line as an acceptable mitigation was agreed to by EHS staff as it follows

standard commercial construction practices and any leaks from the building sewer line would be fully contained within the concrete.

### **Findings of Fact**

The Board must consider the following when making a recommendation on this variance to the DBOH:

1. Will the proposed variance result in contamination of water to the extent it cannot be used for its existing or expected use?

**Reply:** If the building sewer line is installed as proposed, and septic system functions as intended, then there should not be effluent discharge to surface water or groundwater and should not pose a threat to groundwater contamination. Therefore, it should not pose an increased threat to groundwater contamination.

2. Will the proposed variance pose a threat to public health?

**Reply:** There are two primary ways that sewage can pose a threat to public health, direct exposure and groundwater contamination in areas with domestic wells. Sewage discharged underground should not allow for direct exposure as long as the system functions, the same as any onsite sewage disposal system. All other setbacks and designs to regulatory requirements designed to be protective of public health will be required to be met.

3. Are there other reasonable alternatives?

**Reply:** In order to maintain all applicable setbacks, the applicant could perform one of the following alternatives:

- a. Relocate the well to the east of where it is currently located. This alternative is not consistent with the property owner's wishes for their property, would be substantially more expensive than encasing the building sewer line in concrete, and may not be achievable due to the location of neighboring septic systems.
- b. Build the shop expansion without a bathroom. This alternative is not consistent with the property owner's wishes for their property.

### **Conditions of Approval**

EHS staff are recommending the following conditions of approval:

1. The installation of the building sewer line and the concrete encasement shall be inspected by EHS staff.
2. All instances of system non-function must be reported to NNPH for review and repaired immediately. In the event of failure to maintain or lack of system function, NNPH may require sampling and/or impose restrictions on the property based on the functionality of the building sewer line, up to and including complete replacement of the building sewer line and concrete encasement.
3. The variance, with all conditions of approval, must be recorded to the parcel, with language that does not allow for the removal without NNPH approval or connection to municipal sewer or water.

## **Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Sewage, Wastewater and Sanitation (SWS) Hearing Board support the presented Variance Case # H26-0002VARI (Greenwell & Becker) to allow the installation of a building sewer line within the 50' setback to a private well on Parcel 038-132-12, 2425 Warrior Lane, Reno, NV so long as the entire building sewer line is encased in 6" of concrete on all sides, as proposed.

## **Possible Motion**

Should the SWS Hearing Board wish to approve the variance application, the three possible motions would be:

1. "Move to present to the District Board of Health a recommendation for approval of Variance Case # H26-0002VARI (Greenwell & Becker) to allow the installation of a building sewer line within the 50' setback to a private well on parcel 038-132-12, 2425 Warrior Lane, Reno, NV, so long as the entire building sewer line is encased in 6" of concrete on all sides, as proposed, including all recommended conditions."; OR
2. "Move to present to the District Board of Health a recommendation for approval of Variance Case # H26-0002VARI (Greenwell & Becker) to allow the installation of a building sewer line within the 50' setback to a private well on parcel 038-132-12, 2425 Warrior Lane, Reno, NV, so long as the entire building sewer line is encased in 6" of concrete on all sides, as proposed, without conditions."; OR
3. "Move to present to the District Board of Health a recommendation for approval of Variance Case # H26-0002VARI (Greenwell & Becker) to allow the installation of a building sewer line within the 50' setback to a private well on parcel 038-132-12, 2425 Warrior Lane, Reno, NV, so long as the entire building sewer line is encased in 6" of concrete on all sides, as proposed, with the following conditions (if the Board wishes to impose conditions, they would list them here)."
4. "Move to present to the District Board of Health a denial of Variance Case # H26-0002VARI (Greenwell and Becker).

The SWS Board may also formulate their own motion or request additional information from the applicant if desired.