

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

TUESDAY

10:00 A.M.

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

PRESENT:

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

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

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 10:01 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:

**26-0119**      **AGENDA ITEM 3A1** Invocation to be given by Karen Durst, Executive Pastor of Grace Church Reno.

Chair Andriola announced that the Invocation would be rescheduled due to the weather. She then stated that the Board would move on to Agenda Item 4A1.

**26-0120**      **AGENDA ITEM 4A1** 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. TMFD. (All Commission Districts.)

Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District (TMFPD) Fire Chief Richard Edwards greeted the members of the Board. He stated that he was before the Board to share important fire safety updates. He stated that in the last month or so, after his department began sharing information about wildfire preparedness with the wider community, they had received a number of questions about home hardening and related topics. Chief Edwards stated that because of that, he wanted to provide the Board with a quick overview. He requested use of the overhead screens and announced he would briefly discuss fire safety and wildfire preparedness.

Chief Edwards stated that, given the inclement winter weather, people might not realize it was already time to begin preparations, as fire season would begin soon.

He added that residents should take advantage of current opportunities to prepare, specifically by hardening their homes. He specified that there were different zones around homes that homeowners should consider, with vegetation management as a priority.

Chair Andriola asked Chief Edwards whether he had an overhead presentation for the Board to view on their overhead screens. Chief Edwards asked for his image, *Is Your Home FireWise*<sup>®</sup>?, to be displayed on the overhead screens. He displayed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. After his image was displayed, Chief Edwards continued, stating that vegetation management was key. He declared that the goal was to limit flammable vegetation across three zones. The immediate zone, he stated, was the 0 to 5-foot zone closest to the home, where the home was most vulnerable, and which should be rigorously maintained for fire resistance. He explained that during large wildfires, that immediate zone was what firefighters worried about most. He detailed how ember casts from the fire could travel through neighborhoods, landing on homes, and that if those zones contained anything combustible or flammable, those would be the primary agents that would catch the home on fire. Chief Edwards suggested using rock instead of mulch in the immediate zone around a home to help combat a fire scenario. He also suggested removing any plants and pruning back overhanging bushes and shrubs. He added that the fire department did not like seeing any fuels within approximately ten feet of a chimney. He mentioned not to store things under decks, and that firewood piles were of special concern. That was because, Chief Edward said, residents of Washoe County used a lot of firewood, and the fire department tried to make sure the residents did not store the firewood on their decks. He acknowledged that there was a convenience factor to storing firewood in that manner, but that it was a great way to catch embers and cause the home to burn down.

Chief Edwards moved to the next home zone, the intermediate 5-to-30-foot range. That, he stated, was where it was important to reduce the intensity of encroaching fires by offering as little fuel as possible. He stated one best practice was to keep grass mowed below four inches. A second was removing excess vegetation. He stated it was preferable to see no trees within thirty feet of the home. He added that, if large trees were already in that zone, homeowners should trim them six to ten feet from the ground to prevent a ground fire from developing into a crown fire, which would allow the fire to spread even more rapidly. Chief Edwards stated that the branches of any of the trees should not hang over the house within ten feet of the structure. He added that once trees reached further out than the 5-to-30-foot zone, there should be at least ten feet between the tops of those trees to prevent fire from spreading between them.

Chief Edwards then touched on the extended zone, which was 30 to 100 feet from the house. He explained that the goal in that zone was to keep any fire on the ground if possible. His methods for achieving that included separating levels of forest vegetation to keep ladder fuels out, so fires do not spread upward. He gave an example of a fire starting in the grass, moving into the sagebrush, manzanita, or rabbitbrush, then progressing up into the trees. Trimming out that vegetation and keeping it thin, Chief Edwards stated, provided a better way of protecting homes. He added that the more homeowners could do to protect their homes, the more his department could do as firefighters, because Washoe County had

limited resources for a major event. If homeowners could do their part on the front end to protect their home, the fire crews could better protect it on their end, Chief Edwards stated. However, he added, if fire crews arrived and found overgrown vegetation against a home, there was very little they could do to protect it in the event of a major incident. He explained that the fire department simply did not have enough resources to park a fire engine at every home. He stated that was something homeowners should consider and mentioned that his office had received a number of questions about it in the past four to six weeks.

Chief Edwards stated that a community forum would be held on February 24 at 5:30 p.m. in the Chambers to discuss homeowner insurance laws related to wildfire. He explained that Nevada Insurance Commissioner Ned Gains would provide an overview of the new law and how it pertained to homeowners and fire-prone areas of Washoe County, including how insurers might implement provisions and what resources were available to all homeowners. He stated that following the presentation, they would also have representatives from Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue and Washoe County Emergency Management present to discuss wildfire preparedness and risk-reduction efforts, with personnel on hand to answer questions about vegetation management and related topics.

Chief Edwards said that the final item he wanted to share was a quick update on the Regional Fire Service Study Board. He stated that Senate Bill (SB) 319 was passed during the 83rd session of the Nevada Legislature and required Washoe County, the Cities of Reno and Sparks to jointly establish, by interlocal agreement, a board to study options for the delivery of regional fire and emergency services. He mentioned that in December, following a comprehensive request-for-proposal (RFP) process, the study board selected Emergent Global Solutions to conduct an independent regional fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) feasibility, efficiency, and service enhancement study. Chief Edwards detailed that the study board met on February 2, and at that meeting, the fire chiefs from Sparks and Reno, along with Chief Edwards, provided a joint presentation on the history of regional fire service delivery and governance in Washoe County. That was important, he said, because at the same meeting, Emergent Global Solutions (EGS) was present to hear the presentation and also provided an introduction and overview of their approach to conducting the study. He added that the previous Friday, Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue staff held a project kickoff meeting with EGS leadership and began collecting documents and data to support that process.

Chief Edwards said he hoped it would prove to be a helpful and beneficial study. He stated that he knew there would be a significant lift for each of the three agencies to provide all the information, with a final report due back to the Regional Fire Board in November. Chief Edwards concluded his brief update and stated that he was happy to answer any questions.

Chair Andriola thanked Chief Edwards and mentioned that Living with Fire was also holding an upcoming summit at the Joe Crowley Center at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), so residents would be well-informed on both insurance and prevention. She then thanked Chief Edwards for all he did, including his social media posts,

especially regarding the weather. Chair Andriola speculated that one might not think of a connection between fire and the weather, but that there was a correlation. She asked the Board if there were any other questions.

Commissioner Clark asked Chief Edwards for clarification on the date and to confirm it was February 24. Chief Edwards answered in the affirmative, and Commissioner Clark added that the meeting would be in the same Chambers room where the Board was currently, and asked Chief Edwards to confirm the time. Chief Edwards stated it would be at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Clark then asked for the name of the new state insurance director. Chief Edwards reiterated that the individual's name was Ned Gaines.

Vice Chair Garcia thanked Chief Edwards and stated that she wanted to add to one of his comments about the Regional Fire Services Study Board report. She clarified for her colleagues and the public that she and Chair Andriola served on that board and that they would acknowledge receipt of the report in November. She added that it was not within their authority to approve A, B, or C options that come forward in that report, and that the report will then go to the local jurisdictions for discussion and further development on that topic. She thanked Chief Edwards. Chair Andriola thanked Vice Chair Garcia for the clarification.

**26-0121      AGENDA ITEM 5 Public Comment.**

Alanna Fitzgerald greeted the Board and thanked them for the opportunity to speak. She clarified that she was a constituent in District 1 and expressed thanks to her Commissioner and the rest of the Board members who work on behalf of citizens. She also thanked them for the support the County provided to the Library Board of Trustees (LBT) for the 2026/2027 budget, the budget process, and the oversight of the library system during the absence of a Director and Assistant Director. She noted that the Assistant County Manager David Solaro was a stabilizing force, and she was thankful for all he and his staff did. That, Alanna Fitzgerald stated, led her to ask one question and bring up one issue. She stated that she knew the question could not be answered during public comment, but that it might be addressed at some point in the future. The question, she said, was why there was no Commissioner who served as a liaison between the library system and the Board of Trustees. She added that she knew it was asking for yet another duty for one or more of the Commissioners, but she hoped that it could be explained why that was not currently in place, and that it should also be considered for the future. Alanna Fitzgerald stated that the issue she wanted to bring up was twofold. First, she stated, there were two trustees whose terms would be up in June. She added that it would give the Board the opportunity to carefully consider the renewal or replacement of sitting trustees. If one or more were replaced, she stated, then the candidate's background, knowledge of how boards function, and willingness to honor the charge to protect libraries would be critical for any new trustee. The second part of the issue, she clarified, was the challenge from the previous year. She noted they had raised awareness about the need for significant training for new trustees. One example she provided was understanding the County budget and how it functions. That, she believed, would help mitigate the level of support the County needed

the year prior. In closing, she stated that the Board understood how important it was to have a healthy and vibrant public library system, which, in turn, helped keep the community and County healthy and vibrant as well. She thanked the Board.

Terry Brooks read a poem on the topic of discrimination in health and age.

Maricela Gutierrez Rodriguez thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak regarding Agenda Item 9.E.1. On behalf of the Community Foundation, she thanked the Board for their consideration of the allocation to support nonprofit capacity building in Washoe County. She stated that nonprofits were essential public partners, which delivered critical services, extended the reach of government, and responded quickly to community needs. However, she noted that many operated with limited administrative infrastructure, thinning staff models, and significant funding restrictions. She stated that when organizational systems were fragile, service delivery was also vulnerable. The nonprofit capacity-building collaborative, she stated, was designed to address that structural gap, and that rather than funding one-time programs, the initiative invested in the underlying systems of organizations and enabled them to operate effectively and sustainably. She noted that it included organizational health assessments, technical assistance, coaching, cohort-based leadership, and development to strengthen governance, financial management, and long-term sustainability. She detailed how the model supported 20 to 25 organizations based in Washoe County, and equipped them with the tools and practices to improve accountability, operational infrastructure, and financial resilience. She clarified that, in practical terms, stronger nonprofits delivered more reliable services, stewarded public funding more effectively, and reduced the risk of financial or operational instability. The allocation partially funded the first year of a three-year pilot program, supported by public and philanthropic partners. She stated that it really represented a shared commitment to strengthening the nonprofit ecosystem that so many Washoe County residents depended on. She noted that while capacity building may happen behind the scenes, its outcomes were visible. In closing, she stated that whether it was sustainable housing programs, reliable food distribution, or countless other community supports, her organization really appreciated the Board's leadership and recognition that strong nonprofit infrastructure was foundational to public service delivery. They thanked the Board.

Veronica Cortes self-identified as *your favorite lunch lady* and wished the Board a happy belated Valentine's Day. She stated that she was before the Board because the last time she spoke, she discussed running for County Commissioner in District Five. She noted there were seven people in that race, so she decided to withdraw. She mentioned there was a spot for the Nevada Legislature in District 27, which would be working with Vice Chair Garcia. She stated she would be running in the Nevada Assembly District 27 race. She said she had been giving some talks and had received some backing, and she was excited. She announced that she was before the Board because she posted on Facebook and alleged it had started a war in Sun Valley. She described the post as saying she was not okay with vendors selling in Sun Valley without proper licensing, that Sun Valley could definitely use the income, and that it was not fair that she had to take out the license and permits for her businesses, when Californians could come over and break the law whenever they wanted, and that the post concluded with *Veronica for a better Nevada*. She stated

that she had tagged Vice Chair Garcia in the post and said the situation she described in the post was exactly why they were all in the situation they were in. She stated that they deserved respect and clarified that her post was directed at all the vendors who came on Valentine's Day and decided to sell their flowers, chocolates, and stuffed animals without proper paperwork. She stated that she thought it was fair to expect vendors to fill out the proper paperwork. She stated that it was \$25 for a Doing Business As (DBA), \$78 for the County license, and \$200 for the State license. She then shared that, as a notary, she approached the other vendors, handed out packets she had made, and offered to help them fill out the paperwork. She added that she was going to provide the service for free. But, she stated, all she received was backlash. She stated that she caused the Hispanic community to turn against her, and that they said she was a racist. She stated she would not say what they said to her. She claimed that Vice Chair Garcia had seen all the comments and replies and that now she wanted to know where the Board stood as a County and as leaders, and whether the community actually cared about taking licenses. She noted that she used to operate in violation of the law, and that it took much effort for her to get the legal paperwork and then show others how to do it. She hoped she had the Board's support in encouraging vendors to obtain the proper licensing to sell in Sun Valley, Reno, Sparks, and beyond. She stated that she knew she could call 311, and that she did call and released a lot of her aggression into the machine. She apologized to whoever had to pick up her message, adding that she was heated. She stated that everyone in Sun Valley who owned a business said her issue with unlicensed vendors was fair, and that unlicensed vendors should take their businesses out. She restated that the Hispanic community came back and said that she was racist. She stated that her father was Hispanic, and that she sat on the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) in Sun Valley and represented the Hispanics, and that she was very sad to see her community divided over legalities and not being legal, and that they had turned it into a race war. In closing, she thanked the Board.

Eileen Ecklund thanked the Commissioners and stated that she was before the Board to voice her concerns about the upcoming 2026 elections. She added that first, she wanted to thank the staff of the Washoe County Registrar of Voters (ROV) for all their hard work under difficult conditions over the past few years, which she said included major turnovers in staffing and leadership, staff shortages, technical and process challenges, and an unfortunate barrage of threats and harassment from members of the public. She noted that it seemed the department had made important improvements to help get things back on the right track. She commended the staff for persevering through the turmoil and coming to work each day, determined to make the voting process more accessible, transparent, accountable, and fair. She then stated she was concerned about the challenges that they and the voters would continue to face in the coming year. She stated that, in a time of extreme political division, citizens needed to be able to trust that their elections would remain free and fair. That, she stated, required not only transparency and accountability, but also a commitment to making voting accessible to all who were legally eligible to vote. She added that, unfortunately, voter suppression and intimidation were very real concerns in the current political climate. She stated there was the additional threat of the President asserting that the federal government should take over the administration of elections, which had always been the responsibility of state and local governments throughout the Country's history. She noted that that was in the Constitution. She stated that the threat of federal

oversight and control was unprecedented and clearly driven by partisanship, and that the Department of Justice (DOJ) was demanding that Nevada turn over its complete, unredacted voter registration list, which contained sensitive information about voters Statewide. She added that many feared the administration could use that information to disqualify eligible voters, to challenge the legitimacy of election results that do not favor their candidates and issues, and to target political enemies. She declared that she was before the Board to ask the Commissioners to make a promise to their constituents that they would stand strong in defending the election processes and the rights of all voters, regardless of political affiliations or beliefs. She added that it was not a partisan issue, though, she said, some would like to make it so. She declared that she would always fight for the right of each and every one of her neighbors to vote legally, no matter who they voted for. She added that she expected no less from her elected representatives. She thanked Commissioner Hill for requesting that the Registrar of Voters (ROV) report to the Commission to address the voters' rightful concerns in the County, and she hoped to see that on an upcoming agenda very soon. She concluded by thanking the Board for their time.

**26-0122**      **AGENDA ITEM 6** Announcements/Reports.

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas stated that she had items to cover. She explained that there were a couple of changes to the agenda due to the inclement weather, and she expressed appreciation for everyone who had made it in.

The first change was the removal of Agenda Item 7A1, which she clarified was the first presentation. She explained that the speaker, Milt Stewart from Nevadaworks, was unable to attend the meeting due to the weather. She stated the presentation would be rescheduled so that he could appear in front of the Board at another time. The second change, Manager Thomas added, was pulling Agenda Item 11.

She continued by saying that, after those changes, she also wanted to mention that she knew there was a question about when the Registrar of Voters (ROV) would be coming before the Board, and that it would be on March 17. She clarified to the Board that on March 17 they would be seeing a presentation from the ROV. She then stated that she wanted to remind everybody that, in light of the weather, she was looking at the shelter census and the dashboard that provided a real-time snapshot of bed occupancy across Washoe County for housing and homeless services, and she saw that eight beds were currently available. She stated that she wanted to remind anyone seeking shelter that Washoe County had an emergency overflow shelter, which was opened during extreme weather, and also warming centers, so that Washoe County always had capacity for individuals to get out of the weather. She clarified that she simply wanted to put that information on the record.

Commissioner Clark stated that he wanted to salute everyone who came out in the weather and made it in. He added that it was a long drive in from Washoe Valley, requiring snow tires and four-wheel drive. He mentioned he only saw one snowplow, and that it was a tough drive in, taking over an hour, but that he did not see anybody in the ditch, or wrecking, or spinning out, which was a good thing.

Chair Andriola stated that everyone made it safely and that she hoped that over the next few days, everyone would remain safe.

**26-0123**      **AGENDA ITEM 7A1** Milt Stewart-CEO Nevadaworks will be discussing overview of their services and grants they have received. (All Commission Districts.)

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas announced that Agenda Item 7A1 was rescheduled.

**26-0124**      **AGENDA ITEM 7B1** Presentation by Dr. Chad Kingsley, District Health Officer, on the Accountability and Impact of an Active, Well-Resourced Public Health District. Northern Nevada Public Health. (All Commission Districts.)

Doctor (Dr.) Chad Kingsley, District Health Officer, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Q3 & Q4 2025 Executive Summary; Purpose & Value; Office Of the District Health Officer (ODHO); District Health Officer; Communications & Public Information; Accreditation & Quality Improvement; CHA & CHIP; Air Quality Management; Division – 22.4 FTE; Community & Clinical Health Services (CCHS); Division – 61.35 FTE; Environmental Health Services; Division – 48.39 FTE; Population Health; Division – 45.6 FTE; What’s Good?; Lessons; Questions.

Dr. Kingsley greeted the Board and introduced himself. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to update them on activity over the previous six months. He stated that the Commissioners had received the presentations and executive briefs from his office and that he would therefore be concise, focusing on a few key themes from those presentations. He stated that at its core, Northern Nevada Public Health (NNPH) existed to prevent first, detect early, respond fast, and protect the community every day, not just during emergencies. He emphasized that NNPH was delivering measurable value, even during a year when public health funding volatility and workforce constraints had become the new normal.

Dr. Kingsley moved to the slide *CHA & CHIP* and stated that he wanted to discuss NNPH’s Community Health Assessment (CHA) & Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). He stated that it was a foundation for everything that would follow and for much of what NNPH did. He explained that NNPH, in partnership with Renown Health, conducted 15 focus groups and received 600-plus survey responses, which NNPH reported in a public forum in quarter one of the year, in January. He added that the process was not just a report, but a consensus-building tool for the entire regional health system. He stated that it was also a tool that their nonprofits could use to apply for grants. The CHA, he said, identified eight priority findings: mental health; access to health services; economic stability; health risk behaviors and early detection; violence prevention and crime; environmental sustainability; substance abuse; and maternal and child health. He mentioned that the newest one on the list was number three, economic stability, and

that it was the first time it had ever appeared. He noted that it implied the community was concerned about economic stability and its impact on the community as a whole. He stated that none of the priorities could be solved by public health alone, but that public health can lead the system to solve them. That, he noted, was the role NNPH increasingly played as a conveyor, a data authority, and a trusted operational partner.

Dr. Kingsley then presented the slides, *Air Quality Management and Division – 22.4 FTE*, stating that the numbers showed some great work. He added that NNPH helped advocate for clean transit, and subsequently, the \$2.15 million grant for hybrid buses was granted. He declared it a great community partnership and called out the wonderful work of their staff, with 99 percent on-time plan reviews.

Dr. Kingsley moved on to community health, presenting the slides *Community & Clinical Health Services (CCHS) and Division – 61.35 FTE*. He stated that there were two points in there they liked to emphasize. He noted that there was media coverage over the weekend on the topic, then specified he would begin with pertussis, also known as whooping cough, because it was a clear example of why surveillance capacity matters. He elaborated that in 2024, NNPH had eight cases. Then, in 2025, they had 40 cases. He pointed out that it was not a rounding error; it was a signal. He pointed out that NNPH had another exposure the past weekend at another school, along with another case that morning. He clarified that in 2025, NNPH had two high school exposure events with over 200 students. The key point, he said, was that pertussis was not just a school problem. Instead, it becomes a system problem because when exposure events occur, families seek testing, clinics run out of supplies, and providers quickly deplete post-exposure prophylaxis medications. So, he added, their epidemiology and disease surveillance team was doing what the public expected, including finding cases early, notifying contacts, and reducing spread. But to be transparent, he stated, they were approaching the practical limits of surveillance and contact-tracing capacity, not because of performance but because of volume and workforce constraints. That, he added, was exactly why maintaining disease surveillance remained one of their top priorities.

Dr. Kingsley mentioned that, going into 2026, NNPH would be transitioning to their new Tuberculosis (TB) building, which he noted was very exciting. He stated that it was not just a ribbon-cutting and invited all of the Board members to attend, hopefully under better weather. He then stated that TB was one of the most complex and resource-intensive infectious diseases that public health manages. He stated that as NNPH sustained TB control year after year with high adherence and case management, the new TB building, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), represented something very important, including long-term capacity, infection control, operational readiness, and a stable clinical home for some of their most valuable patients. That, he stated, was what responsible infrastructure investment looked like. He added that it was neither flashy nor optional, but essential. He stated that they expected the TB clinic to be up and functioning by April 1, that it had been 100 percent on time, and that it was a big success for NNPH, with no delays.

Dr. Kingsley shared the slides, *Environmental Health Services and Division – 48.39 FTE*, and mentioned that Environmental Health Services continued to deliver high-quality inspections for the community and maintained transparency throughout the process. He stated that NNPH conducted over 400 inspections at the Nugget Rib Cook-Off, despite a small tsunami of water on opening day, along with the Hot August Nights and Great Italian Festival events. He stated that NNPH also offered Active Managerial Control (AMC) courses, but, on average, handled approximately six to ten foodborne disease complaints per month. Dr. Kingsley stated that NNPH had also maintained 92 to 98 percent of the improvements in their commercial plan review since he had taken his current position. He stated they also met their 14-day goal and that a third party had evaluated. One thing from the pilot they were beginning to evaluate, he said, was announced visits to all of their permitting. He clarified that it meant not just surprise inspections, but also following two different articles or studies to deliver that level of service to the community. He stated that NNPH listened to their community and delivered on the expectation.

Dr. Kingsley mentioned that NNPH received a Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) grant for sampling safe drinking water, and that even though the federal government had removed all Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations on PFAS in water currently, NNPH still had the grant and would still be able to deliver for the community.

Dr. Kingsley shared the slides, *Population Health and Division – 45.6 FTE*, and stated that the Inner Health Care Community (IHCC) Health Career Collaborative (HCC) had its highest attendance the previous month. He added that it was a wonderful venue where Emergency Medical Services (EMS) hospitals come together to prepare for and discuss emergencies, and that they were also coordinating within their communities for cross-collaboration. He stated that NNPH had recently secured a new franchise agreement for EMS to continue delivering stable EMS service to the community through REMSA Health, and that they would continue delivering, analyzing, and providing enhanced data for performance. He noted that vital records were very strong and that, currently, there were more deaths than births, but that it was a trend seen across the Nation.

Dr. Kingsley shared the slide, *What's Good?*, and stated that in closing, overall, the value of NNPH was not theoretical, but measurable. It showed up, he said, in faster detection, fewer outbreaks, safer food, cleaner air, resilient EMS oversight, and stable services for families. He stated that it was often said that when NNPH did their job, they went unnoticed. He stated that as NNPH moved into 2026, their priorities were clear. He reiterated that NNPH had sustained disease surveillance capacity, opened and operationalized the TB clinic, finalized the EMS franchise revisions, and continued modernization and performance accountability. Dr. Kingsley thanked the Commissioners for their partnership and for supporting the staff at NNPH, adding that the staff was doing exceptional work for the community every day. He shared the slides, *Lessons and Questions*, and said he was happy to answer any questions the Board had.

Chair Andriola thanked Dr. Kingsley and asked the Board if they had any questions. Commissioner Clark thanked Dr. Kingsley for his report. He stated that he noticed in the report that Dr. Kingsley did not address the space for his staff. Commissioner

Clark observed that he had been to the NNPH building a few times, and it seemed very cramped, with many people and a lot of paperwork and files in the same space. He asked Dr. Kingsley whether there were any plans to provide more room for his team in the future.

Dr. Kingsley responded that NNPH was focused on a solution to that issue with the upcoming TB building. He stated that the new building was a nice motivator because it provided additional space where they could put staff, and that the County had also made available a section of the C building that was currently under construction. He added that they were trying to secure funding to move some cubicles around, update their equipment, and get some more room. He said he had been very transparent with his staff, then asserted that sometimes when you said you were going to move someone, it was very challenging and they felt at home where they were at in their cubicle or their office, but that NNPH was working with leadership and analyzing to provide everyone more room, and use building C as well. He stated that they should have more space by the end and that, by July 1, they should be able to move staff around. Dr. Kingsley said that thanks to them coming in under budget with their ARPA funds, since it was a capital improvement, they could use any remaining money from the TB building for a capital improvement in the current building, which should allow NNPH to provide more room for their staff, which Dr. Kingsley said he highly appreciated.

Commissioner Clark thanked Dr. Kingsley and asked if he could return and provide the Board with a report when that happened. He stated they knew it was good for morale among the staff who worked there, and that without the staff, they would have nothing. He observed that being jammed into work in a very constricted area was not good working conditions and offered his assistance if there was anything the Board could do to help Dr. Kingsley's staff get some room to move.

Dr. Kingsley added that they also wanted to thank the County for the recent move toward carpooling, which, he stated, would help many of his staff start in the field performing inspections or end the day in the field, and be more economical with their time at those points. He stated he would be in front of the Board every six months for accountability and would be happy to report on that when he returned.

Commissioner Hill thanked Dr. Kingsley for his report and stated she was glad to see mental health as one of the top priorities. She noted that they were all working as a region to support that. She stated she had major concerns about uninsured Nevadans and was curious about the discussions Dr. Kingsley was having about this. She also stated that they were limited in what could be done at the County level, but that she had heard from experts that Washoe County would face a more severe crisis than when Obamacare started. She said she was just curious about Dr. Kingsley's thoughts and what NNPH was looking at as a district.

Dr. Kingsley addressed the insurance coverage question, stating that it permeated almost everything that they were doing and that they had concerns, even with their EMS. Next, he said, was how it would impact their EMS services in the community. He wondered whether the average bill would go up and how they would best triage patients

who were not priority one. He wondered if they could better transport or meet their needs because, as a healthcare system, they could see the potential. Historically, he added, they saw that emergency departments became primary care, and individuals only went there when they did not have insurance because they had to be seen. He stated that NNPH tended to serve as the safety net at their clinic, but that about 46 percent of the clients they saw were uninsured, and he was afraid that might increase. He stated that NNPH was exploring whether they could be a *Look-Alike* or a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), but noted that it would bring additional challenges, so he was seeing what NNPH could do to prepare for that.

Dr. Kingsley stated that they would see numbers go up. He offered one example: their clinic was the only walk-in clinic for women available for family planning or sexual health needs. Therefore, he said, they kept many same-day appointments open for walk-ins. He suspected they would see those increase, so NNPH was preparing where they could, but had concerns they would be able to meet those needs. He stated that they had seen too many times that if they were no longer able to provide a service, they hoped there was a redundancy in the community. But, he added, he had seen two nonprofits that had closed their doors and directed patients to the health district for services. He thought it would be a collaboration within their community to determine where NNPH could best meet those needs and identify the sources. He compared it to the analogy of circling the wagons and really working together as partners to provide those services. As an example, he recalled that when the Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) was not funded, Washoe County went seven weeks without WIC funding, and that if WIC funding had ceased, NNPH would have been the only open WIC provider. He stated that during that time, he was able to provide six months of staff coverage in all of Nevada. He stated that they always tried to ensure they met their clients and provided them with access to care where possible, but that there would be limits. He added that he thought it was important to always be reaching out and that the WIC process was a wonderful collaboration with the community. He mentioned seeing Catholic Charities say they had diapers and formula and were ready. He reiterated that working with their community partners would help NNPH be ready. He quoted Chair Andriola, saying that they would have to utilize forgotten resources. He stated that he thought they could do it as a community, focusing on active, ongoing communication.

Commissioner Hill stated that they had heard from some constituents who had suffered falls and ended up in the emergency room (ER), and that attempting to transfer to a hospital bed had been a longer wait. She stated she did not know if that was simply anecdotal. She requested that Dr. Kingsley keep the Board posted as they collected data, and that they let the Board know if there was anything they needed to know and discuss as a region. Commissioner Hill concluded by thanking Dr. Kingsley.

Commissioner Herman thanked Dr. Kingsley for his report and stated that it had been a long time coming.

Vice Chair Garcia thanked Dr. Kingsley and stated that the current times felt scary. She acknowledged she could not speak for her fellow Commissioners but stated

that, eight out of ten times, when she picked up the phone to speak with a concerned constituent, the call was related to the top three issues the CHA identified that year: mental health, access to health services, and economic stability. She stated that the document was an important tool the County could use and lean on. She noted that she had used the document when writing reports for her other job, that it was available and very comprehensive, and encouraged everybody to take a look at it. She mentioned the continuity of WIC services during the government shutdown. She asked Dr. Kingsley if there were any other services that he was nervous about during the government shutdown. Dr. Kingsley replied that WIC was NNPH's primary concern. He added that they were always concerned about the EPA due to recent staff cutbacks and air quality, and the impacts of interventions over 20 years. He stated that Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grants were canceled one day, then re-initiated the next. He expressed relief that they were not officially cut back and mentioned that the same had happened to their public health infrastructure grant. Dr. Kingsley shared that the health infrastructure grant was cut back at eight a.m. on a Saturday, which would have affected eight to nine staff members directly involved in the CHA and in delivering it to the community. Thankfully, he said, it was reversed in two hours, so they were able to get that funding back. He noted that the public health infrastructure helped ensure they delivered their CHA, or what came after that, the Community Health Improvement Plan.

Dr. Kingsley stated that since then, four states had been targeted, with up to 60 of their grants targeted, and that the NNPH were monitoring it as national partners and speaking with representatives in D.C. to address those concerns. But, he said, it was day-to-day.

Vice Chair Garcia asked Dr. Kingsley to confirm whether there were three official health districts in the state of Nevada. Dr. Kingsley stated that it was correct. Vice Chair Garcia stated they assumed Dr. Kingsley was in contact with the other health officers in those jurisdictions. She asked what kinds of conversations were happening between Dr. Kingsley and the other health officers. She stated that they knew public health concerns were continuing to rise and that everyone was facing budget challenges. She reiterated their question to Dr. Kingsley regarding what he and his colleagues were discussing.

Dr. Kingsley stated that it was a great question. He explained that he was the director of the Nevada Association of Local Health Officials, which met monthly. He noted that they also met quarterly with all the counties and chief medical officers, but were often in daily and weekly contact, usually through email, with Southern Nevada District Health Officer Dr. Cassius Lockett, as well as Shannon Ernst, Interim Administrator of Central Nevada Health District in central Nevada, talking to the district and the State Board of Health regarding the recent changes in immunizations and the protocols that were set forth. He explained they were working through those with their State partners to confirm what their Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) said, and how they delivered those services equally across Nevada, so that they were consistent and able to provide guidance that Nevada had determined was best. He mentioned Dr. Lockett down south as also part of Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) and stated that he had those resources. Dr. Kingsley stated he focused on the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) component at the Nevada

Association of Local Health Officials. He explained that they combined those together to make sure when they needed to focus on certain areas, and working with Central Nevada Health District and Carson City, that they did not want to duplicate their services, especially when it came to public health emergency preparedness, but that they did want to support them where they could from all points and that they had great collaboration.

Chair Andriola thanked Dr. Kingsley.

### **DONATIONS**

**26-0125** **8A1** Recommendation to accept monetary donations from various donors in the amount of [\$3,690.29] and donations of dog/cat food and treats from the SPCA with an estimated value of [\$1,355.75], and recognize numerous citizens and businesses who donated animal food and various goods with an estimated value of [\$2,663.82] (see attached donor lists) and a donation of 300 Feline 1-HCP doses and 300 canine 1-DAPPv doses from Petco Love with an estimated value of [\$2,457.00] to Washoe County Regional Animal Services (“WCRAS”) retroactive for the period of July 1, 2025 through September 30, 2025, to be used for the humane care and treatment of sick and/or injured, stray, abandoned, or at-risk animals; express appreciation for these thoughtful contributions; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Regional Animal Services. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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

### **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – 9A1 THROUGH 9E1**

**26-0126** **9A1** Recommendation to 1) approve roll change requests, pursuant to NRS 361.765 and/or NRS 361.768, for errors discovered on the 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 \$243,425.15]. Assessor. (All Commission Districts.)

**26-0127** **9B1** Recommendation to reject all bids received for the Galena Creek Schoolhouse Restoration - Phase 2 (Building Interior Rehabilitation) Project, due to insufficient available funding pursuant to the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 338.1385(6)(d). Community Services. (Commission District 2.)

- 26-0128**      **9B2** Recommendation to approve a State of Nevada Importer/Wholesaler Liquor License application for James Grimes, et.al., dba Comstock Distillers LLC, at 140 Inventors Place, Spanish Springs, Nevada, and if approved, authorize each Commissioner to sign the Nevada State Liquor License Application with direction for the County Clerk to attest the license application. Community Services. (Commission District 4.)
- 26-0129**      **9C1** Recommendation to acknowledge receipt of the Interim Financial Report for Washoe County Governmental Funds for the Six Months Ended December 31, 2025 recognizing a total funds balance increase of \$31 million year-to-date and \$31 million year over year. This unaudited interim financial report is provided quarterly, in addition to the audited annual comprehensive financial report, to provide information on Washoe County's primary operating fund and accounts and identify significant variances between the years. - Unaudited Comptroller. (All Commission Districts.)
- 26-0130**      **9D1** Recommendation to accept two subgrant awards from the State of Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division for the following Older Americans Act Title III Programs: (1) Congregate Meals [\$186,291.20; \$27,944.00 county match] retroactively from October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026; and (2) Home Delivered Meals [\$816,590.53; \$122,489.00 county match] retroactively from October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026; authorize the Director of the Human Services Agency to execute the grant award documents; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Human Services Agency. (All Commission Districts.)
- 26-0131**      **9E1** Recommendation, to approve award of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) in the total amount of [\$155,000], approve associated resolutions, and authorize the County Manager to sign necessary award documents for the following two subrecipient agreements. Both agreements are focused on nonprofit capacity building as included in the Community Reinvestment Administration Memorandum of Understanding executed prior to the December 31, 2024, obligation deadline. 1. Community Foundation of Northern Nevada, in the amount of \$100,000, to support the nonprofit capacity building initiative including standardized assessment, facilitation, and structured debriefs to help participating Washoe County organizations identify strengths, gaps, and priority capacity needs; technical assistance and systems building customized consulting and one-on-one coaching to 20-25 Washoe County participating nonprofits. Assistance will be tailored to each organization's priority areas identified through assessments; and leadership development and training group learning experiences, including cohort-based workshops and peer learning sessions, focused on improving operational systems. 2. Aha Projects, in the amount of \$55,000 to support a nonprofit resource center nonprofit. The 16,000

square foot building will provide Northern Nevada's nonprofits access to shared space through offices, conference rooms, and event space. Providing a collaborative environment for all to share. This award will fund critical infrastructure and workspace improvements at Aha Connects, including the installation of a WiFi mesh network, one year of fiber internet service, and the purchase of two private, soundproof meeting pods. These investments will ensure reliable, high-speed connectivity and provide dedicated quiet spaces for video conferencing, phone calls, and one-on-one meetings, supporting nonprofit tenants' productivity while maintaining a functional and collaborative shared workspace. Manager's Office. (All Commission Districts.)

Chair Andriola stated that Commissioner Herman had a question about 9C1 and that she, too, had pulled some information on 9C1. She asked if the Board would like to hear something about 9C1 first, or if they would like to pull anything. She suggested hearing 9C1 first, and then, if there was nothing to pull, voting fully on 9A1 through 9E1. Chair Andriola then asked to hear the information about 9C1.

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas stated that the Washoe County Comptroller Cathy Hill was there to give information on that item. Cathy Hill took the podium and asked the Commissioners what she could answer for them on the quarterly financial report.

Chair Andriola asked Commissioner Herman if she would like to ask her questions of Ms. Hill. Commissioner Herman stated that it was just a matter of the amount allocated for the Agenda Item. She stated that her constituents were always asking her why things cost what they did. She asked Comptroller Hill to explain the cost.

Comptroller Hill stated that it was a great question. She explained that the report that came to the Board arrived quarterly and at a specific point in time, and that it was an unaudited report. She elaborated that with some of the numbers, there were many different variables that came into play when the revenues were recognized, and as they continued to work with the State, such as when the State cleaned up its tax processing, when expenditures and invoices were presented for payment, and when the transfers were made to the other funds in the department. Interest rates, she noted, were a smaller portion, but still in the millions, and when those rates increased, that increased the rest. She stated that, currently, relying on the \$31 million fund balance was not an accurate picture for the whole year, but it was for that point in time only. Chair Andriola stated she thought that was an important clarification and pointed out that the report really was a snapshot of the current moment and would likely look different in the next quarter. Chair Andriola asked Commissioner Herman if she had any follow-up questions. Commissioner Herman stated that she did not.

Commissioner Clark commented that whenever he saw unaudited reports, he was not the least bit impressed. He reiterated that it was a snapshot and may change. He acknowledged that a lot of hours of work were involved, but that when a report came in

unaudited, he thought, *so what*, and would rather the staff tell the Board after it was audited. Comptroller Hill stated that the Board would see the report again during audit season, once the financial report was completed.

On the call for public comment, Joanna Katz stated that she wanted to introduce 9E1 and explain the project, in case the Board was unfamiliar with it. She stated that Aha Projects was a nonprofit that supported capacity building, and that when they came to Reno, they knew they would get a building. She clarified that they just did not know exactly what they were putting in that building. She explained that they took about a year and conducted a needs assessment with local nonprofits, discovering a strong need to reduce overhead, share resources, and provide storage. So, she stated, Aha Projects asked how they could help, and that was the feedback they received. She mentioned they originally thought they would build a large theater in the building, but now they had a 16,000 square foot (sq ft) building off Moana, centrally located with access to transportation and bus stops. She stated they were using half of that space as an event space for nonprofits, specifically so they can do events and fundraising at a very affordable rate. She added that that side of the space could hold up to 240 people. She detailed the other side of the space, which included six office suites, co-working office space, conference rooms, and a nursing/quiet room. She added that they were focusing on sharing resources daily with that side of the building, and that they already had many nonprofits interested. She noted that they currently had their permits approved and that they just had all of their rough-ins approved as well. She stated they were looking to open the building for nonprofit use, specifically for the community, in June. She noted her boss hated it when she mentioned specific dates, but that was where she felt they were headed. She explained that they asked people how they could help instead of stating specifically what they were offering. They learned from the nonprofits they spoke with that the nonprofits needed great internet, along with privacy rooms where they could have confidential conversations with the people they were serving. Those things, she stated, were exactly what was in the Agenda Item and that Aha Projects would be providing. She added that they had access to fiber, along with everything else listed, and that those would be in effect beginning in June. In closing, she thanked the Board.

Clerk Jan Galassini stated that no one else was signed in for Public Comment, but that she had an email to place on the record.

Chair Andriola stated that she would entertain a motion.

On motion by Vice Chair Garcia, seconded by Commissioner Hill, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Consent Agenda Items 9A1 through 9E1 be approved. Any and all Resolutions or Interlocal Agreements pertinent to Consent Agenda Items 9A1 through 9E1 are attached hereto and made a part of the minutes thereof.

**26-0132**      **AGENDA ITEM 10** Recommendation to accept a FY26 Adoption Savings subgrant award from the State of Nevada, Division of Child and Family Services in the amount of [\$607,022.00; no county match] retroactive for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 to provide supportive services

to facilitate and maintain the successful adoption of children from the Washoe County Child Welfare System; authorize the Agency Director of Human Services Agency to execute the award and related documents; and direct Finance to make the necessary budget amendments. Human Services Agency. (All Commission Districts.)

County Manager (CM) Kate Thomas pointed out that she had received the grant for three previous years. Chair Andriola thanked her.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Hill, seconded by Vice Chair Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 10 be accepted, authorized, and directed.

**26-0133**      **AGENDA ITEM 11** Possible Closed Session for the purpose of Board training and development.

Chair Andriola reminded the Board that Agenda Item 11 had been pulled and that they would move to Agenda Item 12.

**26-0134**      **AGENDA ITEM 12** Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

**26-0135**      **AGENDA ITEM 13** Announcements/Reports.

Commissioner Clark asked if it was the shortest Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) meeting they had held in the last decade.

Commissioner Herman stated that she wanted to thank the County Manager (CM) for attending her Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) meetings, adding that the citizens in those areas were very impressed by her attendance and really appreciated it.

Chair Andriola said that she hoped everyone would be safe and huddled at home, and if they did not have to travel, she advised them to stay home.

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**10:58 a.m.** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

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**CLARA ANDRIOLA**, Chair  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared by:  
Andrew Garnand, Deputy County Clerk*

Pending Board Approval