

# EUREKA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 20, 2022

STATE OF NEVADA        )  
                                  :SS  
COUNTY OF EUREKA     )

## CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on September 20, 2022. Present were Chairman J.J. Goicoechea, Commissioner Rich McKay, District Attorney Ted Beutel, and Administrative Assistant Jackie Berg. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. The interactive video conferencing system was connected and utilized between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The following items were removed from the agenda: Commissioners #2 (appointment to a vacant seat on the Recreation Board). Chairman Goicoechea noted that the Sheriff would be taken earlier than the time listed on the agenda. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Chairman Goicoechea began the Pledge of Allegiance.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Goicoechea opened the floor for public comments.

Michael Mears encouraged the public to observe the new art exhibit at the Courthouse in honor of Mr. Cuchine.

Chairman Goicoechea recognized the passing of Eureka County's well-known artist, Wally Cuchine, last week at the age of 75.

Chairman Goicoechea wished Commissioner McKay a Happy Birthday.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 07, 2022: Commissioner McKay motioned to approve minutes of the July 07, 2022 meeting; Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

## SHERIFF

Dispatcher Intern: Undersheriff Tyler Thomas presented to the Board starting a Dispatcher Intern Program for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders for future recruitment. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve the program. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Out-of-State Travel: Undersheriff Thomas requested to attend the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, between January 8<sup>th</sup> – March 17<sup>th</sup>, from which Eureka County Sheriff's Office was selected by the FBI National Academy. Some of the travel will be reimbursed. FBI will pay for lodging, airlines and mandatory trainings. The only non-reimbursement is the bus travel to the airport after graduation. He informs the Board he may be traveling from Virginia to Washington D.C. for mandatory training and possibly Philadelphia for non-mandatory training, pending approval from Sheriff Jesse Watts.

Sheriff Watts and Undersheriff Thomas will review training funds prior to presenting to the Board. Chairman Goicoechea recommended that Deputy Thomas get the Philadelphia trip on the next agenda with a dollar amount. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve the out-of-state travel to Quantico, Virginia. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

### **IT DEPARTMENT:**

Update Report: IT Director Misty Rowley and IT Support/Helpdesk Technician I Jessica Santos reported on IT projects and activities.

Crescent Valley Projects: Quest is working on the cameras at the Crescent Valley Substation, the Firehouse and the Park.

Eureka Projects: Syber Networking switched to a new state router and IT has been working with Quest on the incident response plan. IT has been working on licensing issues with Cisco and developed a migration plan for the cloud phones. They continue to work on issues with PSAP. Five new work stations have been set up for Natural Resources, Justice Court and Public Works. New cell boosters were set up at the Annex and more are being set up at the Road Department Shop, Opera House and the Courthouse. Met with Sheriff's Office, Public Works, AT&T and the Radio Engineer's to discuss upgrades to dispatch. After IT researched requirements for the NCGIS modification, they contacted the State to check the status of the project plan. Ms. Rowley met with Undersheriff Thomas to discuss what app they would like to deploy for public communication.

Quest Technology Management: IT Director Misty Rowley presented that Quest Technology Management for engineering and design services for a fiber-to-home project design to assist with the broadband grant application, in an amount not to exceed \$31,200.00. Quest is offering 100% funding for the grant if IT can prove 90% of residents do not have access to 100meg down/ 20meg up service. Ms. Rowley asked Quest to help Market Research and provide that information when the grant is submitted. Quest would reimburse all new fiber, pole leasing cost (up to five years), trenching for roadways to cover Eureka, Crescent Valley, and Pine Valley. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve fiber-to-home to Crescent Valley, Eureka County and Pine Valley. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

### **COMPTROLLER**

Payment of Expenditures: Expenditures were presented for approval by Comptroller Kim Todd. After review, Commissioner McKay motioned to approve expenditures in the amount of \$623,784.58. \$6,226.19 to the NV State Controller and \$171.00 to the Washoe County Crime Lab for a grand total of \$6,397.19. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Fund Balance Report: The Board reviewed the current fund balance report.

Fiscal Year Expenditures for 2022: Treasurer's Office went over budget \$425.00 in employee benefits. Human Resources went over budget \$4,335.00 in employee benefits, which left them with a budget of \$8,164.00. Juvenile Probation went over budget by \$4,369.87 in services and supplies, which was covered by grants. \$7,000 is left in their budget. Justice Court was over \$990.00 in salaries, wages and pro-temp salaries due to a new position and overtime. \$27,000 is left in their benefits budget. Public Works went

over budget in salaries, wages, and employee benefits. Senior Center budget was set at \$80,000. Public Parks went over budget in salaries, wages and employee benefits, placing Crescent Valley Parks under this category. Fire Department, went over budget on employee benefits \$163.00 with wages being \$263.00. The Television District went over budget on Tank Hill, Mary's Mountain and Prospect Peak. Weed District went over budget on employee benefits but still have \$176,000 in their budget. Public Guardian and Landfill went over budget on employee benefits. Chairman Goicoechea stated that the Board is reviewing all over-budgeting to be more transparent to Eureka County taxpayers.

### **PUBLIC HEARING-Renewable Energy Tax Abatement Application**

Nevada Gold Energy: Carson Coleman, Project Manager with Nevada Gold Mines (NGM), presented to the Board having to file an extension on the REDA Application due to delays in the construction schedule. He stated major procurement has started to secure the initial REDA Application and construction has started. The main delay was change in the solar module. It will be a 200MW generated facility North of Dunphy, and plans to start construction the next two weeks. They are trying to contract through Northern Nevada areas locally, expecting to hire 200-250 site employees. Chairman Goicoechea expressed concern about the impact 200-300 residents would have on Eureka County resources. Eureka County Assessor Michael Mears said in his visit at the site and discussions with Caitlin Bullock from NGM, he was told they plan to utilizing all generated power from the solar farm and there are no plans to sell the surplus.

Mr. Coleman states that NGM will be receiving their materials directly to project site. Chairman Goicoechea states NGM owns majority of the road and will need to present a plan for repairs. Mr. Coleman agreed to discuss concerns with NGM. Michael Mears estimated the project to cost \$500,000,000.00-\$600,000,000.00 after completion, when compared to Humboldt County's cost of a similar facility.

Close Public Hearing: Chairman Goicoechea considers sending a legally-drafted letter to the Governor's Office of Energy to not recommend Nevada Gold Energy, LLC Renewable Energy Tax Abatement Application AFN 220815 SPB, not limited to N.R.S. 701(A).365 based on the limited information presented to the Board. The letter is to be signed outside the meeting. Commissioner McKay motioned to send a letter. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

### **COMMISSIONERS**

Consulting Hydrogeologist, LLC: The Board discussed and reviewed the one-year contract extension with Dale C. Bugenig in the amount not to exceed \$80,000. Natural Resources Manager Jake Tibbitts shared that Mr. Bugenig will only exceed 50% of the \$80,000 and that he only does the work when it is done his way. Chairman Goicoechea stated that he is hesitant in reducing that \$80,000 Because Mr. Bugenig may need to hire more help. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve one-year contract extension in the amount of \$80,000 to Dale C. Bugenig. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Credit Limits: Chairman Goicoechea motioned to approve a monthly credit limit of \$1,000 per supervisor, \$500.00 per employee with a grand total of \$30,000.00. Venders and possible vendors will be paid with vouchers and credit limit increase requests must

be placed on the next available agenda and approved by the Board. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Eureka County Personnel Policy: Comptroller Kim Todd explained LP Insurance's recommendation to change the HRA with two additional options: Retiree has their own, or a spouse's insurance plan. Ms. Todd stated the only downside is if an employee removed themselves from a Eureka County Insurance Plan, they are no longer eligible for that retiree subsidy. This is a benefit for Eureka County since the employee will not be able to hit our planes and they will still be able to receive that retiree subsidy through a different avenue which is currently unavailable. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve setting retiree health insurance premium subsidy rates for Calendar Year 2023. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

Public Hearing: Approve or deny scheduling a public hearing to invite input from employees, retirees, and members of the public and to take action to adopt a resolution amending Section 7.5.2 of the Eureka County Personnel Policy. Chairman Goicoechea motioned to approve public hearing on October 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner

### **SENIOR CENTER**

Update Report: Senior Center Program Director Millie Oram reported on activities at the Eureka Senior Center and Fannie Komp Senior Center. In August, Eureka served 869 meals, Crescent Valley served 894 meals. Eureka and Crescent Valley Senior Centers received a deposit of \$15.37 from the CSBG. Dishwashers were installed in Eureka and Crescent Valley. ECO-Lab arrived in Crescent Valley and Eureka. The electricity at the Eureka County Senior Center will be out this following Thursday, but Center will remain open. A total of \$10,337.55 was deposited for both centers in August, with receiving grants for Nutrition. Ms. Oram will be attending the Food Bank Conference.

### **AMBULANCE & EMS**

Report on Activities: EMS Director Kenny Sanders reported 47 calls for ambulance service in August, with two transported to Battle Mountain, eight transported to Elko and REACH and one transferred to White Pine. There was a total of eleven flights, some were patient preference calls. There was a total of 7 standbys for Eureka County High School football games and the Eureka County Fair. Mr. Sanders informed the Board that all but one of Eureka County's AEDs are up to date. EMS will meet with Ruby Hill I-80 Gold Mine to locate a spot to put a helipad on site. Many patients have been reporting various issues regarding being billed from MedEx. The Board states that Eureka County residents should not see any bills from a care flight.

### **TREASURER**

The Treasurer's Report for August was submitted by Treasurer Pernecia Johnson. Ms. Johnson stated that they have a meeting next month to discuss possible higher returns on investments due to increased cost of everything.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Chairman Jayme Halpin said they met with LP Insurance and Prominence Health Insurance regarding plans and premiums for benefited employees and retirees. He stated that Life Insurance increased and all other plans will stay the same.

Insurance Plans: Medical, Dental, Vision and Life insurance will stay the same. The POS (Point of Service) 500 will be the sponsored plan. Commissioner McKay motioned to approved insurance plan and the recommended POS 500 plan. Chairman Goicoechea seconded motion; motioned carried 2-0.

Base Premium Rates: Commissioner McKay motioned to approve setting the base premium rates and affirming dependent subsidies for Calendar Year 2023. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion, motion carried 2-0.

Retiree Health Insurance: Commissioner McKay motioned to approve setting retiree health insurance premium subsidy rates for Calendar Year 2023 for Eureka County retirees hired prior to July 1, 2009. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion, motion carried 2-0.

## **ROAD DEPARTMENT**

Road Department Update: Assistant Public Works Director Raymond Hodson informed the Board they are short-handed with Bill Hicks and another employee not returning. Mr. Hodson asked permission of recruitment for an Equipment Operator I/II. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve recruitment for Eureka County Road Department. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

## **OLCESE WASTE SERVICES**

Update on Waste Services: Olcese Water Services Operations Manager Rick Lake gave an update on residential and commercial waste collection in Eureka County. The following were added during the quarter: Twelve new residential services in July; three new residential services in August; one 96-gallon residential service and one 2-yard new residential service in September.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

Public Works Update: Public Works Director Jeb Rowley reported on projects and activities.

Eureka Senior Center: The sidewalks in front of the Senior Center will be blocked off for maintenance on the brick wall.

Emergency Management: Mr. Rowley met with state partners of public safety and last week for a workshop to participate in multiple threat and response plans. Our current plan with White Pine County expires in 2024 and will require assistance of a consultant or a third party to create a new plan which will be due in 2024 and administered by Eureka County. Currently the state has no contractor to conduct the work. Eureka County is responsible for self-funding and grants. Mr. Rowley listed various grants that Eureka County and their partners (Ely, Shoshone, and Duckwater) may apply for. Support may come from our state partners and public safety and Emergency Management for items listed as capabilities in Federal level workshops. The State will then disperse funds to participating counties and jurisdictions in the regional planning efforts. Hazards are identified at a local level, then prioritized and ranked for mitigation funding if the application is set up for that plan.

Wildland Fire, Flood, and Earthquake: Eureka County declared wildland fires, floods, and earthquakes as top concerns for hazardous priority through fire and SPR plans submitted through the State in 2016. Mr. Rowley stated the drought resiliency threat

will be at the top of their list when the local plan is submitted. He supports the idea of more of our local hazard and threat planning recovery and response plans being submitted and accepted by the State. It provides another element of support and documentation to the request of what we have with the State. It's necessary for our water consolidation.

Additional Water Source: Public Works is receiving requests for 2 new commercial hook-ups in the Devil's Gate District which could have an impact on 30 additional residential hook-ups. Jake states they are currently reviewing the latest water model update from 2013 that shows the system capacity for Devil's Gate was accessed for the General Moly Subdivision and the trailer park. Jeb and Chairman Goicoechea had a lengthy discussion regarding the wells, arsenic water and the significant decrease in water table in the Devil's Gate District. Chairman Goicoechea expressed concern allowing 30 additional residential hook-ups in that draw. Mr. Rowley mentioned that this system is providing fire rating to areas that apply to commercial hook-ups and that model needs to be updated and accounted for. In August, Mr. Rowley reported on a duty cycle on Frontier well and how they can connect mechanically but this isn't intended to operate that way because it isn't apart of the Devil's Gate System. Chairman Goicoechea has concerns on how to slow the process when we have those applications coming forward, when it takes months for these plans to be put in place. Mr. Rowley suggested diverting town wells. Mr. Buetel suggested that new additional hook-ups be denied due to over-extension until re-evaluation of the time lag for additional capacity. Commissioner McKay explained the hardship on the mines as they expected water availability. Chairman Goicoechea believes areas that are being pushed, shouldn't be. We don't have the infrastructure or supply. The County Engineer, Jake Tibbitts, and Mr. Bobzien are working toward a set plan set regarding Eureka County's water issue. Chairman Goicoechea asked for an update in two weeks to show the direction they're headed in. More information from the engineer needs to be gathered for and update in the future. Jeb Rowley stated that if a resident completes the application process for water hook-up, they will most likely be granted.

Boulder Valley Road: Mr. Rowley reported a hazardous truck accident August 22<sup>nd</sup> that required an NDP report on a 10-yard contaminated soil due to lack of communication with road maintenance. Chairman Goicoechea voiced his concern of 200-300 new people traveling on Boulder Valley Road.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Report of Activities: Natural Resources Manager Jake Tibbitts reported on national resource issues affecting Eureka County. He mentioned the last administration updated BLM grazing regulations. The new administration will likely continue to update regulations. A letter was sent in correspondence a couple of weeks ago that asked the County if we wanted a cooperating agency. On behalf of Eureka County, Mr. Tibbitts responded "yes." The initial meeting to restart process with the agencies is on Thursday. Mr. Tibbitts will not be able to attend the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority meeting on Friday as it conflicts with the Eureka Firewise Wildfire Awareness Event at the Fairgrounds from 11am-1pm.

Wild Horses: Mr. Tibbitts reviewed and made minor changes to the preliminary environmental assessments for Robert's Mountain Complex. The last gathering on the Complex was in 2008 and is currently overpopulated by 700%. The BLM conducted a

flight census to see where the horses were and how many. A large majority counted were not in the herd management area. Battle Mountain District push Robert's Mountain Complex as one of their main priorities for gatherers annually to National DC and recently were allowed to do the EA. The EA doesn't address issues specific to Eureka County. Mr. Tibbitts requested that those be covered in the final EA. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve preliminary gather EA for the Roberts Mountain Complex. Chairman Goicoechea seconded motion; motion carried 2-0.

Mining Activities: Mr. Tibbitts presents to the Board getting a notice from (NDEP) Bureau of Mining Regulation of Reclamation. The comment period is due on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and will review the reclamation permit for Golden Lake Nevada. They have to submit an EA or an EIS. They are also working on getting permits from State agencies. NRAC discussed the contents of the draft permit in detail at their meeting last week. They're being penalized for upgrades to existing public roads. The issue was addressed by NRAC. NDEP and BLM don't have authority to give out a permit on public roads. If these are existing roads and it's within the historic disturbance footprint, there is no permit required. Commissioner McKay motioned to approve reclamation permit for Golden Lake Exploration Project. Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

BLM: Mr. Tibbitts states Natural Resources Office received two letters in the mail relating to the Nevada Gold Mines (Phoenix Mines) not in Eureka County but has major implications statewide. These are AUM cancellations and were analyzed in EIS. They analyzed the AUM impacts in 2002 and 2016. in those EISs, there were 751 AUMs proposed to be cancelled, that is 15% of the total AUMs for the ranches combined. Ruby Hill took 10% of the AUM's that were placed in a suspension. The Federal Law states the grazing permittees are given a two-year notice before cancelling. The BLM claimed the EIS's were in the notice. Chairman Goicoechea state historically when mines came in, they impacted someone other than themselves but there was mitigation offered to offset what you were going to lose. Mr. Tibbitts said the issue was that Eureka County received this letter five days ago and they only gave us fifteen days to put something together. He recommends that Eureka County protest against this cancellation because every EIS Eureka County deals with analyzes AUM loss and this is the first cancellation where they used the EIS as the cancellation notice. Chairman Goicoechea motioned to approve protest on behalf of Eureka County. Commissioner McKay seconded the motion; motion carried 2-0.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Correspondence

### **PUBLIC COMMENT AND DISCUSSION**

Chairman Goicoechea called for public comments; there were none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner McKay motioned to adjourn the meeting; Chairman Goicoechea seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 12:03.

Approved by vote of the Board this 6<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

  
Rich McKay, Chairman

I, Katherine J. Bowling, Clerk Recorder of Eureka County, acknowledge and accept the attached minutes as approved by the Board of Eureka County Commissioners.

  
Katherine J. Bowling, Clerk Recorder