

BOARD OF EUREKA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

February 16, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

STATE OF NEVADA)
 :SS
COUNTY OF EUREKA)

CALL TO ORDER

1. Approval of the agenda notice with addition of any emergency item and/or deletion of any item. *Unless otherwise stated, items may be taken out of the order presented on the agenda, at the direction of the Chair. (For Possible Action)*
2. Pledge of allegiance.

The Board of Eureka County Commissioners met pursuant to law on February 16, 2024. Present were Chairman Rich McKay, Vice Chair Michael Sharkozy, Commissioner Marty Plaskett, District Attorney Ted Beutel, Jackie Berg, Deputy Clerk, and Clerk Recorder Kathy Bowling. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The interactive video conferencing system was connected between Crescent Valley and Eureka for the entire meeting.

Approval of Agenda: Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve agenda; it was seconded by Commissioner Plaskett. All in favor, motion carried, 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Public comment and discussion. *Notice: No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. Public comment may be limited to three (3) minutes per person. Public comment may be allowed on "Action" items, in addition to the two times specified on the agenda. (Discussion)*

Chairman McKay called for public comment in Crescent Valley, seeing none he asked for public comment in Eureka.

Audience member Sheriff Jesse Watts requested a moment of silence for Sheriff Ken Jones who passed away recently. Sherriff Ken Jones served the State of Nevada and the community for over 30 years, Mr. Watts noted.

Commissioner Sharkozy stated that he will be resigning as Eureka County Commissioner as of June 1, 2024. He thanked Eureka County for all they have done for him.

2. Consider items requiring action to be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting. *Notice: The public is welcome to request agenda items for future meetings during the Public Comment period or may consult with one or more of the Board of Commissioners to request agenda items for future meetings. (Discussion)*

There were no other items to be considered.

**ABSTRACT & BREAKDOWN
OF THE VOTES FOR
EUREKA COUNTY, NEVADA**

**2024 PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY ELECTION
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 6, 2024**

| | |
|---|--------|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS | 762 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST | 216 |
| NUMBER OF VOTERS DURING EARLY VOTING | 13 |
| NUMBER OF VOTERS AT POLLS ON ELECTION DAY | 17 |
| MAIL BALLOTS RECEIVED & COUNTED | 186 |
| VOTER TURNOUT PERCENTAGE | 28.35% |

RESOLUTIONS HONORING LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE

1. Discuss, approve, or deny adopting resolutions recognizing Joyce Jeppesen and Jerry Jeppesen for many years of loyal service to Eureka County. **(For Possible Action)**

Clerk Jackie Berg read aloud a resolution honoring employees Joyce and Jerry Jeppesen for their many years of loyal service to Eureka County.

Chairman McKay thanked both employees for their service to Eureka County. Sherriff Jesse Watts thanked Ms. Jeppesen for her years of service in the Sheriff's Office as well as the community. Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve adopting resolutions recognizing both employees. Commissioner Plaskett seconded the motion. Motioned carried 3-0.

Eureka, Nevada

February 16, 2024

RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING JOYCE & JERRY JEPPESEN FOR THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE TO EUREKA COUNTY

***WHEREAS**, the Board of Eureka County Commissioners wishes to honor Eureka County residents, Joyce and Jerry Jeppesen, for their years of dedicated service to Eureka County and the communities of Crescent Valley and Beowawe; and*

***WHEREAS** Eureka County acknowledges the following biographical information: Joyce and Jerry Jeppesen were married October 12, 1997, and share a passion for motorcycles and service to their community.*

Upon their arrival in Eureka, the Jeppesens became actively involved in the community, dedicating themselves to various volunteering roles, particularly in Emergency Services. Joyce contributed thirty-one years of service across different county departments. She spent thirteen years as a Volunteer Emergency Medical Technician and eleven years in full-time service with the Sheriff's Office. Additionally, she served eight years in the Juvenile Probation Office and six years in the Public Works Office. Notably, Joyce secured numerous grants, including one for the enhanced 911 system at the Eureka County Sheriff's Office, and played a key role in implementing Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) procedures. Jerry served nineteen and a half years with the Eureka County Road Department as an Equipment Operator and volunteered several years with the Diamond Valley Fire Department.

It is impossible to enumerate the countless hours Joyce and Jerry have given to their community, much less the lives they have touched with their service. For this reason, their commitment and contributions are hereby acknowledged.

fiber line would continue up McCoy and to the rear of the elementary school. This fiber could then be picked up in Phase B at which time it would continue to the Annex Building and tie in for a looped fiber circuit.

Due to Eureka's aging water and sewer system, there will be significant improvements made to the overall drainage system, water lines and utilities within the Townsite. Many of the utility lines are not only older but will also have to be re-located and cleaned up. It was noted that most of the private property boundary issues won't be faced until Phase C.

Mr. Lesperance presented some construction cost data to the Board. It was noted that they are about two-thirds into the project. He projected a \$7.5 million construction cost for Phase II which includes a 5% construction contingency based off approximately 75% design level.

It was noted that some work in Phase I still needs to be completed. The cost data presented today for Phase II does not include remaining costs for Phase I. Discussion and explanation of the cash flow analysis ensued. They are looking ahead to October and November for substantial completion. Some questions arose regarding the cost of the project, in addition to the County pausing construction of the project, if necessary, in the future. It was also noted that the planning of each phase was designed so that upon completion of each phase, you were left with a functioning system. Mr. Lesperance felt that Sierra Nevada Construction (SNC) would accommodate a request to pause the project but would also add a certain percentage to the cost to cover their labor overhead and material price depending on how long a period of cessation was.

Mr. Lesperance discussed upcoming phases and project costs, noting that a chance that the scope may change or gets modified as time goes on.

Discussion on project cost for varying phases ensued. Comptroller Kim Todd noted that the RTC fund has money in the budget however the water and sewer portion of the project would need funding, likely from transfers from another fund.

Infrastructure in Diamond Valley was discussed but it was noted that this is not a priority. Mr. Rowley pointed out that they are focusing on areas with utility infrastructure underneath roadways. However, he said, it is good to note the number of miles of pavement in Diamond Valley to get an overview of a potential future project. Approximately twenty miles of pavement here have been identified as being in poor shape, so far.

In summary, Lumos & Associates supported continuing into Phase IIA which would include the completion of Phase I which has already been budgeted for. Phase IIA would start in this fiscal year and may lead into upcoming construction seasons. It was noted that it is necessary that Phase IIA be completed as an intact project.

2. Discuss, approve, or deny accepting recommendations from Lumos & Associates and Public Works for the County-wide Road & Utility Project, or discuss an alternative plan for the project, and/or receive direction from the Board on how to proceed. *Note: If directions are given by the Board, Lumos & Associates may present alternative plans at a future meeting. (For Possible Action)*

Commissioner Sharkozy motioned to approve Phase IIA. It was seconded by Commissioner Plaskett. All in favor, motion carries 3-0.

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

1. Presentation from County Assessor on the proposed tax rate and what outcome a tax rate would provide should the Board decide to move forward with an increase. The Board will also review tax rates of all other Nevada counties. **(Discussion)**

Assessor Michael Mears appeared before the Board with a presentation on the proposed tax rate increase. Mr. Mears noted the ownership by mining companies versus property owned by private citizens. He added that Nevada Gold Mines' property accounts for 72% of the entire assessed valuation in the County. In addition, he added, their property is not subject to the tax abatement that Nevada has through the NRS. Some discussion ensued regarding ownership by the mining industry versus private including how much land is owned by various mining companies and how this ownership might affect the overall property tax amount paid. Mr. Mears noted that many mines are working off patented mining claims and therefore the taxes paid are not substantial. In many cases it is the improvement value that taxes are derived from.

Mr. Mears emphasized how the net proceeds of mines work as far as tax influx. The County receives their portion of the net proceeds based on the County's general tax rate with varying identified pass-throughs. Mr. Mears also provided some history on AB 489, which is the tax cap bill passed through the Legislation in 2005. He noted this is a tax cap, not a valuation cap. He mentioned the difference in tax caps for commercial and residential properties. Some discussion ensued regarding the tax abatement qualifications that would separate, or identify, residential, commercial and agricultural properties.

His presentation also allowed to view varying tax rate increases and what monetary effect these different tax rates would provide. This presentation showed how varying rates would also affect the net proceeds of tax, in addition to real property taxes.

Audience member Garney Damele voiced her support for a tax rate increase. She asked about the creation of a medical fund for a portion of the tax rate. She felt that because the County currently subsidizes varying expenses that such a fund would be beneficial for the community by helping secure the County's future medical needs.

Audience member Jesse Watts asked if RV rental spaces are considered as residential and therefore receive the 3% cap? Mr. Mears noted how this would work in regard to how much rent is being collected. He noted there are HUD guidelines that are followed. He added that there are not a lot of rental spaces in Eureka County that currently receive the 3% cap.

Mr. Watts also noted that he felt that a low tax rate has not enticed large companies to Eureka County in the past, but rather large companies are drawn to areas with a higher population due to a greater workforce pool in populated areas.

Different rate increases were discussed and analyzed using Mr. Mears excel program.

Crescent Valley audience member Tracey Mellard asked about the need for an increase. She inquired as to what the additional funds would be used for. Chairman McKay noted the varying entities that the County currently subsidizes through the general fund. He also mentioned the capital projects that are currently underway and planned for, such as the road and utility project(s). Chairman McKay reiterated the fact that the tax collected by residential property

owners would only go up 3% regardless of how much an increase is made to the tax rate.

Comptroller Todd noted the rules and guidelines set by the State of Nevada for a rate increase adding that the State needs to know by February 21st and that the Board needs to act today so that all deadlines can be met in a timely manner.

Crescent Valley audience member Jeremy Rice added that it is important that the Board get the details and information for a rate increase out to the public.

Commissioner Sharkozy noted that in the past a tax increase was not well received. He added that he plans to stay neutral on any decision to increase taxes.

2. Discuss current tax rate and consider any proposed changes to the tax rate, which must be submitted to the Nevada Department of Taxation by February 21, 2024. *Note: No actual change to the tax rate may be considered without a public hearing; this is simply to meet State requirements for reporting any proposed changes. (For Possible Action)*

Commissioner Plaskett motioned to increase the tax rate by \$0.20. It was seconded by Chairman McKay. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Sharkozy voted no.

3. Review tax allocation worksheet and provide direction related to allocation of the tax rate among specific funds for specific purposes. *Note: The proposed allocation of the tax rate must be submitted to the Department of Taxation. (For Possible Action)*

Comptroller Kim Todd recommended to the Board that the allocation of the tax rate to the RTC Fund and the Road Fund be increased. She noted that funds generated from the RTC Fund can only be used for paving and no water or sewer infrastructure can be paid from here.

Commissioner Plaskett motioned to accept the changes in allocation per Comptroller Todd's suggestion that include increasing the RTC Fund, the Road Fund and the General Fund. It was seconded by Commissioner Sharkozy. All in favor, motion carried 3-0.

Chairman McKay called for a recess at 11:44 a.m.

The meeting was called back into order at 12:15 p.m.

4. Conduct budget review with departments listed below including possible action or direction related to tentative budgets. *Note: The Tentative Budget is due to the Department of Taxation by April 15, 2024. All budgets are subject to revision before adoption of the Final Budget, which is due to the Department of Taxation by June 1, 2024. (For Possible Action)*
a. Crescent Valley Town Board **b.** Television District Board **c.** Natural Resources, Natural Resources Advisory Commission, Game Board, Diamond Valley Weed District, Diamond Valley Rodent District **d.** Sheriff's Office **e.** Public Works, Buildings/Grounds, Road Department, Regional Transportation Committee, Swimming Pool, Parks/Fairgrounds, Emergency Management, Opera House, Museum, Landfill, Planning Commission, Cemeteries, Airport, Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Eureka Town Fund, Crescent Valley Town Fund, Eureka Water & Sewer, Devil's Gate Water, Crescent Valley Water

Crescent Valley Town Board: Crescent Valley audience member Jeremy Rice appeared before the Board. Mr. Rice noted that they would like to increase the storage area, add some food service items, and update their current public address (PA) system as improvements to the community center. The cost for these items is indicated in the proposed budget. Comptroller Todd discussed some bids/quotes received for some of the mentioned items and what fund these items are budgeted from. Chairman McKay asked if some of the requested items could be paid for from this year's budget so that the items could be purchased sooner. It was agreed that this would be investigated.

Television District Board: Comptroller Todd noted that there is only one capital outlay project on Tank Hill budgeted for. Licensures and annual payments for these were discussed. Chairman McKay noted that he would like the TV Board to come and present their goals and objectives.

Natural Resources: Natural Resources Manager Jake Tibbitts appeared before the Board. He requested that \$20,000 be left in the Wildlife Enhancement Project Fund so that money is available as a match for possible grants. Commissioner Sharkozy asked about funding for the community Firewise program and if it will be continued. Mr. Tibbitts noted this program requires Federal authorization.

Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC): Mr. Tibbitts discussed the Natural Resource Multiple Use Fund and using this Fund to help fund a proposed public road inventory.

Game Board: Mr. Tibbitts noted that each year a budget is submitted to the State with the game received and with this revenue is generated. Otherwise, this budget remains the same.

DV Weed District: This budget has a small decrease. Mr. Tibbitts noted that he would like the ability to bring in a contractor and proposes to keep the contract service item.

DV Rodent District: Mr. Tibbitts said there has been a request by a landowner for this District to become more active. One suggestion included purchasing equipment that would be available to use by private citizens. Some discussion ensued regarding the dollar increase for various equipment purchases and how to help this District become more active in Diamond Valley. Mr. Tibbitts was in favor of cost share programs and/or providing equipment to incentivize property owners to do the work themselves.

Mr. Tibbitts provided an update on the Conservation District noting that it does not have a revenue source. He asked about a possible grant from the miscellaneous fund for support.

Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Jesse Watts appeared before the Board. The major increase to his budget is under Services and Supplies which is for contract or litigation services. Mr. Watts explained the need for this increase. He added that his staff, including him, have a right to legal counsel and if the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) does not cover possible future litigation then funds for this type of service, or coverage, needs to be budgeted for. Other areas that increased were animal control, with some discussion on who pays for spaying, and how animals are handled. Other areas including Public Relations, machine maintenance, the requirement that employees are required to have yearly mental health evaluations and wellness, grants available, and safety equipment were all discussed. Sheriff Watts noted he plans to purchase ballistic shields for use in patrol services which increased the safety equipment line item by quite a bit.

Public Works: Director Jeb Rowley presented his budget to the Board. He noted that the portion allocated to Contract Services is needed for NDF crews and professional services for building

assessments such as Lumos & Assoc. He stated that the funding for nuclear transportation was dropped. Mr. Rowley noted that under Buildings and Grounds 30 buildings are included in this portion of the budget and that the repair/maintenance cost vary greatly due to age and condition of each building. Under Road Department Mr. Rowley explained MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and how they are budgeted for. Various increases in were discussed. Under RTC Phase I and Phase II costs were discussed and how much the rollover amount would be for Phase I. Projects are normally split 60 40 between road and water/sewer. Swimming Pool: Mr. Rowley noted a 45% increase in patronage from the previous year. Parks/Fairgrounds: It was noted that the Crescent Valley Community Center expenses will come from this. Emergency Management: It was noted that there are three EOP plans up for renewal. Various grants were discussed. Equipment for the various fire stations in the County are covered from this portion of the budget. Opera House: Services and Supplies and other areas in this portion of the budget were decreased. Museum: No changes reported. Landfill: The subsidy for contract services for Olcese Waste Management was removed since it is at the end of its useful life. With this contract set to expire in July, there are discussions with the company regarding renewal terms and the fact that the subsidy is not part of any terms for a future renewal. Planning Commission and Cemeteries: reported no change. Airport: Fuel was increased noting that Ely has stated that they plan to add stops at the airport for their transport to Reno. LEPC and Eureka Town Fund: these are to remain the same. Crescent Valley Town Fund: Travel/Training increased. Eureka Water and Sewer: Funding for Testing and Permits was dropped because aggressive testing occurred the previous year. Devils Gate Water: Mr. Rowley noted that the contract services line item should be switched between Eureka and Devils Gate due to the number of tanks in each system. Crescent Valley Water: this Fund stayed close to the same as last year.

5. Review, discuss, and provide direction related to continued funding of vacant positions, proposed staffing levels, and new personnel requests from department heads. (For Possible Action)

Comptroller Todd discussed proposed new and vacant positions. Proposed new positions include a county manager and a casual shared employee among others. Discussion ensued regarding a shared position. Clerk Recorder Kathy Bowling asked about training for such a position if, for example, one department needs a janitor, and another need a person to take minutes? Sherriff Jesse Watts also asked about how a job description for a casual that is doing various jobs would be created in addition to what salary scale this position would be at? He suggested budgeting for a pool of hours allowing each department to be able to adjust the salary according to what the casual employee would be doing. It was agreed to create a bucket of hours that all departments would have access to.

A County Manager position and the base pay for this position were discussed. IT Director Misty Rowley noted that her request for an IT Assistant Director could be tabled for now.

A new contract technician position was discussed. Ted Buetel, District Attorney, noted that this person would help seek additional monies through writing grants. The DA also noted that the job description for a county manager could include this task. PW Director Jeb Rowley added that his office receives more notices of grant opportunities than he can handle. Sheriff Jesse Watts noted his agreement with the position however asked that the position reside under a department other than that of the District Attorney. It was discussed whether this position could be a contracted employee at which Comptroller Todd cautioned the Board against this idea as contracted employees are held to higher guidelines due to Federal requirements for contracted persons.

Sheriff Watts presented his request for two new deputy positions. Also discussed was a position for a county-wide emergency manager and funding for this position was discussed which could be funded utilizing grant money. Mr. Watts added that he felt this should be a full-time position outside of the Public Works Director due to the workload requirements. Mr. Rowley noted it would be difficult to separate this position from Public Works partly because a lot of the resources needed for this position come from public works.

A proposed full-time position request along with stipends was presented by Kenny Sanders, EMT Director. Linda Gordon, Senior Center Director, presented her request for a new ¾ employee mainly for coverage. And the Public Works requested a new full-time mechanic.

Comptroller Todd noted the overall cost for all proposed positions came to \$1.2 million including salaries and benefits.

6. Review, discuss, and provide direction to the Comptroller related to proposed cost of living adjustments and wage survey adjustments for Non-PERS and PERS employees effective July 7, 2024. (For Possible Action)

Comptroller Todd presented cost of living adjustments and wage survey adjustments per the wage survey previously conducted. If implemented as presented the total cost would be \$272,000, she noted. Various avenues were discussed, and it was noted that employees would not be negatively impacted by the results of the study. Clerk Recorder Bowling asked about the availability of the study to Elected Officials and noted that she has not reviewed the study. She questioned if the study correctly identified duties specifically to her office as they cover both Clerk *and* Recorder duties. Audience member Garney Damele noted the salary gap between elected and administration and felt that by implementing this study the gap would be significantly increased. Ms. Damele noted that Elected Officials aren't included in the study and their salaries are set by NRS. She asked if there was a way to decrease the salary gap between the Elected and the Administration? Sheriff Watts spoke in favor of the study and felt the suggested increases in wages should be implemented. Commissioner Plaskett motioned to approve the wage study salary suggestions in the amount of \$272,762.98 to be effective July. It was seconded by Commissioner Sharkozy. All in favor, motion carried 3-0.

7. Discuss and consider capital outlay requests from department heads, prioritize projects and purchases, and consider funding sources for all capital outlay scheduled for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. (For Possible Action)

Comptroller Todd presented a report outlining capital requests. She made note of the larger projects that will be reimbursed by grants including the RTC projects. Chairman McKay added that there has been discussion with the Ag Extension about a possible grant, or funding, that would be allocated to a Boys and Girls Club from them. Other items discussed included the building maintenance fund of which \$300,000 was allocated. Comptroller Todd went over all requests from each Department.

8. Discuss and consider any fund transfers that will be required to fund operating and capital expenses in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 and provide direction to the Comptroller to include these transfers in the Tentative Budget. *Note: The Tentative Budget is due to the Department of Taxation by April 15, 2024. All budgets are subject to revision before adoption of the Final Budget, which is due to the Department of Taxation by June 1, 2024.* (For Possible Action)

Comptroller Todd reported two transfers: a \$2 million grant to RTC and \$6.2 million grant to the Town of Eureka Water Fund. Commissioner Plaskett motioned to approve the transfers. It was seconded by Commissioner Sharkozy. All in favor, motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Public comment and discussion. *Notice: No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. Public comment may be limited to three (3) minutes per person. Public comment may be allowed on "Action" items, in addition to the two times specified on the agenda.*
(Discussion)

Chairman McKay called for public comment in Crescent Valley. Hearing none, he asked for comment in Eureka. Sheriff Watts commended the Board for approving an increase in employees' wages.

1. Consider items requiring action to be placed on the agenda for the next regular meeting. *Notice: The public is welcome to request agenda items for future meetings during the Public Comment period or may consult with one or more of the Board of Commissioners to request agenda items for future meetings.* **(Discussion)**

Comptroller Todd asked that employee per diem for meals be added to an upcoming agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

1. Adjournment of meeting.

Commissioner Plaskett motioned to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Sharkozy. All in favor, 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

Prepared and respectfully submitted by Garney Damele, Deputy Clerk.

Approved by vote of the Board this 7th day of May 2024.

/s/ Rich McKay

Rich McKay, Chairman

ATTEST:

/s/Katherine J Bowling

Katherine J. Bowling, Clerk

