

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

TUESDAY

9:00 A.M.

OCTOBER 24, 2023

PRESENT:

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

Catherine Smith, Chief Deputy County Clerk
Eric Brown, County Manager
Nathan Edwards, Assistant District Attorney

The Washoe County Board of Commissioners convened at 9:00 a.m. in special session in the Meeting Room of the Sparks Library, 1125 12th Street, Sparks, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, Chief Deputy County Clerk Cathy Smith called roll and the Board conducted the following business:

23-0703 AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

23-0704 AGENDA ITEM 4 Announcements/Reports.

Chair Hill thanked the Board members for their attendance and shared her excitement. She felt there would be great conversations and mentioned the esteemed guests in attendance. She thanked everyone for respecting processes and time. She acknowledged staff for their work in assembling the meeting room.

Commissioner Andriola thanked Community Outreach Coordinator Candee Ramos and the Office of the County Manager (OCM) team. She also thanked Division Director of Engineering and Capital Projects Dwayne Smith for his presentation in Hidden Valley. She said it was great to share the County's work and receive feedback.

Commissioner Clark shared he had met with Ross Kinson, the new Northern Nevada Central Labor Council president. He intended to donate discretionary funds to the Food Pantry and reported the Food Pantry helped approximately 150 families the prior month. He urged the Board to meet with Mr. Kinson and donate discretionary funds to the Food Pantry. He explained the Food Pantry served veterans and underemployed individuals facing high inflation. He said they did a great job helping the community and were seeking new facilities.

Commissioner Clark opined parking spots should not be reserved for the Board at offsite meetings. He stated the County facility had all the necessary technology for workshops. It did not make sense to him to move the meeting offsite. He wanted offsite meetings to have at least as much seating as the Chambers.

23-0705 **AGENDA ITEM 5** Approval of minutes for the Board of County Commissioners' regular meeting of September 19, 2023. Clerk. (All Commission Districts.)

There was no response to the call for public comment.

On motion by Commissioner Andriola, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion duly carried on a 5-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved.

23-0706 **AGENDA ITEM 6** Presentation and workshop facilitated by Tami Pyfer, Chief of Staff and Vice President of External Relations of UNITE, as an exercise in effective communication and conflict resolution. A primer on The Dignity Index will be given to provide insight on easing divisions in civil discourse.

All videos played for Agenda Item 6 are on file with the Clerk.

Tami Pyfer, Chief of Staff and Vice President of External Relations of UNITE, conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Harassment of students after election; More than 150 teachers rally; Depressive symptoms in US chart; photo(s) (2 slides); We're sick; "In the era of social media and partisan news outlets"; Rather than finding cooperative solutions; The Problem = Contempt; Tempers flare between Heber City mayor and council member; Contempt has become the language of political speech; A June 2022 University of Chicago poll; The Solution = Dignity; Same portions of the brain light up; Dignity Violation; Contempt; The difficulty of promoting dignity; Introducing – The Dignity Index; The Dignity Index; What does this look like; Level two; "As we gather this afternoon"; Level three; "You know, to just be grossly generalistic"; Level five; "And let me start off by acknowledging"; Examples of Scored Speech; "The collective West"; "We have voter apathy"; "We're now dealing"; "I think it's important"; "There are times when I look"; Utah Pilot Project: 2022 Mid-terms; Release Official Scores and Promote in Media; news articles; The Electrifying Effect; Applying the Index; Disagree Better; video; UNITE Founder Tim Shriver briefs; Prioritizing dignity doesn't mean with video; Nicki Nichols Gamble; "But how do you challenge views"; video; What's next; Phase 2: A National Dignity Movement; Dignity Index photos; video; "Reclaiming the American idea"; "Anger never persuades"; Take the Dignity Pledge; Dignity: The Foundation of a New Patriotism.

Ms. Pyfer shared she had visited Reno three times to discuss the Dignity Index project and was excited about events occurring there. She noted Utah was the project's birthplace and Reno was quickly becoming its secondary location.

Ms. Pyfer reported serving as an elected City Council member in Logan, Utah, for eight years, some of which were as City Council chair. She had served on the State Board of Education, first as an appointed official and then as an elected official. She served a total of 12 years as an elected official. She felt a kinship with the Commissioners and their work. She explained the Dignity Index could be applied to solve problems in alternative ways. She worked for the governor of Utah for seven years and was the education policy advisor in 2016. The work took an interesting and difficult turn when politics became central to her work in public education. She reported increased difficulties in schools shortly after the 2016 election and said many Hispanic students were harassed and asked to go home. She mentioned the governor, state superintendent, and herself issued a statement that bullying students because of their race was unacceptable. She was discouraged because third graders did not generate these ideas randomly; they were products of in-home conversations across the state. Things became more difficult after 2020. She said teachers were heroes for the first few months of COVID-19 (C19). Protests occurred three months later when teachers were concerned about safely returning to classrooms and were pleading for people to display grace. Her family felt this deeply and experienced differences in opinion. Her desire to change the dialogue escalated during that time.

Ms. Pyfer referenced the “Depressive symptoms in US” chart and said it depicted the effect of societal issues on students. The last data point on the graph was taken prior to C19. She asserted the toxic nature of political and public discourse impacted families and students. She noted the photo in the next slide showed Governor Gary Herbert, the previous governor of Utah, on the left and Tim Shriver on the right. Mr. Shriver was the Chair of the Special Olympics and a pioneer in the field of social and emotional learning. Ms. Pyfer shared a story about Mr. Shriver and Governor Herbert meeting at a conference. Governor Herbert spoke with Mr. Shriver about his philosophy on governing, which was being conservative in principle, moderate in tone, and inclusive in process. She thought everyone should share those last two qualities, regardless of their principles. Governor Herbert challenged her to meet with people who had different ideologies because there was something to learn from them. Ms. Pyfer displayed a photograph of her family, stating they all had differing political ideologies. Ms. Pyfer considered herself a moderate Republican and her elected offices had all been nonpartisan. She did not know her neighbors’ political affiliations growing up, which had since changed.

Ms. Pyfer shared a story about her daughter’s successful marriage to a partner with different political views. She reported More in Common was a group that worked globally toward depolarization.

Ms. Pyfer advised UNITE had been examining its potential role for the past few years. She noted contempt was the common denominator in all major political issues. She posited polarization would be solved by solving the contempt problem.

Ms. Pyfer discussed a council meeting that occurred in Orem, Utah, where a council member was berated for 20 minutes. She stated she could provide dozens of examples of environments that did not cultivate high levels of civility. She noted that author

Amanda Ripley had performed research on hate speech and the Rwanda genocide. Ms. Ripley believed political speech could be used to reduce the likelihood of violence.

Ms. Pyfer originally questioned dignity's usefulness in combating contempt. She became more of a believer in dignity as she and her team conducted more research. Much of their work was based on Dr. Donna Hicks, a global conflict resolution specialist. Ms. Pyfer reported that Dr. Hicks effectively used dignity in her work.

Ms. Pyfer believed people were born with inherent worth. She asserted dignity was different than respect or civility. She mentioned the work Dr. Hicks performed with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) machines and said social pain was a dignity violation.

Ms. Pyfer shared a story about being verbally assaulted, which left her shaken for a day and a half. She reported it was as painful as if someone had punched her. She mentioned Dr. John Gottman, a family therapist, who could tell within minutes if a marriage would survive. According to Dr. Gottman, eye-rolling was a major indicator of the marriage's success because it conveyed contempt. Ms. Pyfer said the opposite of contempt was dignity.

Ms. Pyfer announced the Dignity Index was launched the previous fall. She distributed a document, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She noted the Dignity Index was used to score language and speech in moments of disagreement. She clarified that the Dignity Index was not meant to stop disagreements, but to help people disagree better. She reviewed the Dignity Index scale.

9:46 a.m. Commissioner Clark left the meeting.

Ms. Pyfer initiated a group activity. She asked the Board to score examples of speech using the Dignity Index. She introduced Dignity Index Field Director Madeleine Jones, who assisted in explaining how the speech examples were scored.

Ms. Pyfer noted the Index did not attempt to stifle free speech; contempt attempted to stifle free speech.

Ms. Pyfer pointed out Dignity Index Field Director Preston Brightwell on the "Utah Pilot Project: 2022 Mid-terms" slide. She reported that students were hired to be trained on scoring speech using the Dignity Index.

Ms. Jones shared her educational background and the experiences that led to her participation in the Dignity Index project.

Ms. Pyfer explained the students experienced a six-week pilot that had attracted local media attention. She opined people moved away from political parties due to their unappealing rhetoric and mentioned a report published earlier in the year. The

report indicated that 25 percent of Americans identified as Republican, 25 percent identified as Democrat, and 49 percent identified as Independent or unaffiliated.

Ms. Jones reviewed the “The Electrifying Effect” slide. She explained how she created Students for Dignity with Mr. Brightwell.

Ms. Pyfer said she received invitations to present from various groups, including school districts, higher education institutions, and attorney groups. She pointed out current Utah Governor, Spencer Cox, on the “Disagree Better” slide. She mentioned he was the Chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), and his initiative was called Disagree Better.

Ms. Pyfer tried to play a video but there were technical difficulties.

10:08 a.m. **The Board recessed.**

10:13 a.m. **The Board reconvened with Commissioner Clark and Assistant District Attorney Nate Edwards absent.**

Ms. Pyfer shared her desire to speak with Nevada Governor Joe Lombardo about the Dignity Index.

10:14 a.m. **Assistant District Attorney Nate Edwards returned to the meeting.**

Ms. Pyfer played a video. She said when constituents saw elected officials participating in better problem-solving, it impacted the entire community. She reviewed Building Skills for Dignified Disagreement.

Ms. Pyfer stated she was invited to a launch in Atlantic City to discuss using the Dignity Index to disagree better. She noted Braver Angels was a partner organization she worked with and that the Dignity Index would be highlighted in two upcoming NGA meetings.

Ms. Pyfer asserted the Dignity Index was not about abandoning beliefs or passion. She said using dignity would help people get farther along in accomplishing their goals. She played a video. She shared a story about a colleague’s remarks that campaigning on the Dignity Index would be unwise. Ms. Pyfer suggested to her friend that people should only vote based on a candidate’s ability to display dignity and recommended starting a movement based on this.

Ms. Pyfer discussed a documentary called *The Abortion Talks*. She played a video featuring Tom Rosshirt, Chief Strategist of the Dignity Index. She reviewed the “Phase 2: A National Dignity Movement” slide. She noted they were building an artificial intelligence tool that could determine if a piece of speech was scoreable on the Dignity Index and provide a score, if so. A colleague would present the tool at a conference the following year. She said her team would be releasing scores on public and political speech

at the national level next year. This would help voters identify if candidates were motivated to solve problems. She mentioned the scores would be completed by a large national scoring panel, not by students.

Ms. Jones explained that her student group empowered students to voice their opinions. She said they were expanding and training students to code speech on multiple university campuses. Ms. Pyfer hoped to start a chapter at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).

Ms. Pyfer reviewed the Dignity Phrases and played a video. She invited the Board to visit the website and join the movement. She advised that she occasionally sent out newsletters.

Chair Hill commended Ms. Pyfer's presentation and thanked Commissioner Andriola for making the Board aware of Ms. Pyfer and her work. She said committing to the effort could be transformational.

Commissioner Andriola thanked Ms. Pyfer for explaining the importance of dignity. She opined everyone loved their Country and wanted to embrace humanity. She expressed appreciation to Ms. Pyfer for sharing her tools and knowledge.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Ms. Pyfer for her 12 years of service as an elected official. She commended Ms. Pyfer on providing historical context and including mental health implications. She shared a story that occurred in the Chambers with her daughter and reflected on the value of using the Dignity Index.

Chair Hill recited Rule 9.5.1 from the Washoe County Board of Commissioners Rules of Procedure Handbook and suggested they add dignity language to the Rule. She mentioned the Board was supposed to review each other and remarked she would work with staff to see how they could use the Dignity Index to help hold each other accountable.

10:49 a.m. **The Board recessed.**

10:52 a.m. **The Board reconvened with Commissioner Clark absent.**

23-0707 **AGENDA ITEM 7** Strategic Planning recap and updates to the Board: This is a workshop item. The purpose of the Strategic Planning Workshop is to discuss prior matters from previous Workshops and possibly give direction regarding strategic objectives for the current Fiscal Year 2023 and possible Fiscal Year 2024 objectives of the Washoe County Commission. Topics of discussion include the following from previous Strategic Planning Workshops: Regionalization of Dispatch/Emergency Management Services/Fire, Climate Resilience, Equity, Election System, Housing, Master Plan Update, Infrastructure and Facilities Scorecard Update.

All PowerPoint slides for Agenda Item 7 are on file with the Clerk under Agenda Item 8, Minute Item 23-0708.

County Manager Eric Brown conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Update; Implementation Plan – 8 Parts; Retreat Agenda.

Manager Brown explained the value of changing the setting for strategic planning meetings. He said they found that occasionally meeting in different, more intimate settings, and inviting department heads for their feedback had been very helpful. He reported an agreement was reached in January to deliver frequent, smaller Strategic Plan updates to the Board instead of infrequent, large updates. He advised that the Board could recommend changes to how strategic planning information was shared. He stated the purpose of the meeting was to engage in dialogue, not merely to receive presentations.

Manager Brown shared that several topics related to the County's Strategic Plan were shared in January. The Board had recently approved an Interlocal Agreement allowing the City of Reno, the City of Sparks, the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority (REMSA), and Washoe County to implement a computer-aided dispatch (CAD) platform together, which allowed for more uniform emergency medical services (EMS) and fire operations. He reported all jurisdictions approved the Interlocal Agreement, and they were currently in the implementation process, with Washoe County taking the lead.

Manager Brown stated Sustainability Manager Brian Beffort was hired during the current fiscal year to address the County's climate resilience. He was pleased with the progress and complimented Mr. Beffort for doing a fantastic job. A presentation on green recovery was given in May and another presentation was planned for December to discuss updates.

Manager Brown informed that Elizabeth Jourdin, Human Resources (HR) Manager of Organizational Effectiveness, gave the Board a presentation in June regarding priorities around equity. He noted they were focusing on addressing language access issues in the County and updating facilities for compliance. He stated the work would be underway for quite some time.

Manager Brown explained there was a lot of progress in the Registrar of Voters (ROV) Office. He was working with ROV Jamie Rodriguez and her team to ensure their consultant's recommendations were being implemented. They were coordinating closely with the Nevada Secretary of State's (SOS) Office.

Manager Brown updated the Board on housing, stating the Board had approved a project earlier in the year for the Cares Campus, which was underway. The project consisted of 50 units of permanent supportive housing (PSH) on the west side of the campus using Home Means Nevada funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He noted Assistant County Manager (ACM) Dave Solaro gave the Board a

presentation in August on available County parcels and said community discussions were occurring on how to maximize those parcels.

Manager Brown stated the Washoe County Planning Commission (PC) unanimously approved the Master Plan Update earlier that month, which would be presented to the Board in November for review and potential approval.

Manager Brown announced that a presentation about the Facilities & Technology Infrastructure scorecard update would occur at a Board of County Commissioners' (BCC) meeting in January. The strategy was to reduce overwhelm at singular meetings, as well as report on benchmarks and ask for input as needed.

Manager Brown said the 70-page Elections Group report was completed in June. The implementation plan was divided into eight sections. The first section related to staffing and organizational structure, which had been completed. As recommended by the consultants, the office reached full staffing in September, ahead of schedule, and new staff were trained. They were ensuring roles and responsibilities were clear as they moved to the next implementation phases. Sections two and three were underway and related to ballots and elections workers, respectively. He explained that a component of those sections involved finalizing standard operating procedures (SOPs), which had been lacking in the past few elections since election formatting had changed. They were being assisted by an outside consultant but most of the work was performed by County staff. He reminded the Board that technology was closely coordinated with Nevada's SOS Office. He explained this was part of their top-down initiative, which focused on voter registration system creation and election day tallying procedures. He relayed the new top-down platform would not be in place for the presidential preference primary (PPP) in February. He advised the SOS was attempting to bring all 17 Nevada counties on the platform and noted Clark County was already on it. The SOS informed the County the platform would be available by March 1 for the primary elections in June. He said many activities were being coordinated with the SOS to prepare for that. He pointed out the Elections Group report identified that the ROV Office needed additional space, to which the County agreed, especially since every voter would receive a mail-in ballot. He said current facilities were not set up with that in mind and were not adequate, which would be discussed later in the meeting when potential capital improvement projects (CIPs) were addressed. He said there was not enough time to change the ROV's space prior to the primary elections in June or the general election in November. He opined that the County needed to be ready for it following the November elections. He noted certain SOPs were being prioritized, such as PPP preparation. He mentioned the PPP would be a good trial run since it just consisted of the presidential candidates for both parties. He stated some SOPs had to be done in conjunction with the SOS, and some had to be done by the SOS. For that reason, some SOPs would take longer to develop and implement. He said the Board could find more detailed insight into the plan's tactics on the Office of the County Manager's (OCM) website, in the Elections section. He also noted there was a PowerPoint presentation on the website that explained how the Elections Group recommendations were approached. He stated more detailed line items and tactics were being updated monthly. There were over 100 of these color-coded items.

Chair Hill expressed appreciation for the transparency Manager Brown and his team displayed when following up on items from the last strategic planning retreat and for continuing to update the Board. She was pleased that the Elections Group report and the County’s progress on it were online.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Penny Brock stated she was intimidated and thought the meeting did not accommodate the public. She felt it was important that the public make comments about the Strategic Plan and expressed concern about the lack of PowerPoint presentations and staff reports. She opined people could not appropriately advise staff. She inquired about the consultant Manager Brown referred to in his update about the Elections Group report. She said the Board did not vote to move forward with the Elections Group contract. She asked that any staff reports or PowerPoints be emailed to her.

Commissioner Garcia said it was her first year as a Commissioner, and it was incredible to see how each goal was met throughout the year at various Board meetings. She was particularly impressed with the CAD regionalization for EMS and fire and the many agencies involved. She asserted it would improve the area for many decades to come. She acknowledged staff and their work to ensure the PC approved it.

Assistant District Attorney (ADA) Nate Edwards said there were a lot of acknowledgments given regarding the Master Plan and the CAD regionalization effort. He mentioned staff worked very well together and he wanted to recognize Deputy District Attorney (DDA) Jennifer Gustafson for doing a great job.

There was no action taken on this item.

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Chair Hill indicated Agenda Items 8, 8A, 8B, and 8C would be taken together.

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23-0708 **AGENDA ITEM 8** Washoe County Strategic Planning Priorities: including but not limited to possible direction to staff, on the following matters:

All PowerPoint slides for Agenda Items 8A, 8B, and 8C are on file with the Clerk under Agenda Item 8, Minute Item 23-0708.

Public comment for Agenda Items 8, 8A, 8B, and 8C was heard concurrently; see Agenda Item 8C for the public comment relevant to this item.

Chair Hill asked Erica Olsen, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of OnStrategy, to outline the ground rules and strategy for the day.

Ms. Olsen wanted to orient everyone to that day's retreat style. She advised the meeting's purpose was to discuss which strategic moves the Board wanted to see, specifically around the topics of seniors, mental health, and facilities. She noted the focus would be on the "where" and the "what," which involved policy, goals, and vision. She mentioned it would feel purposefully undone because they were looking for the Board's guidance. Staff would return later with a more definitive direction. She said the desired outcome for the topic of seniors was to find the Board's top priorities. For mental health, they were looking for Board feedback on the County's role and if the County should take a leadership role. She announced Judge Egan Walker would be joining the meeting that afternoon. The Board would also be asked to provide direction regarding capital improvement projects (CIP) exceeding \$5 million.

There was no action taken on this item.

23-0709 **AGENDA ITEM 8A** Senior Population: Discuss current county programs, determine areas of need and opportunities for impact by clarifying senior the population in the county, growth rate comparison to nation overall, and overview of cross-departmental programming within the Washoe County organization.

All PowerPoint slides for Agenda Items 8A, 8B, and 8C are on file with the Clerk under Agenda Item 8, Minute Item 23-0708.

Public comment for Agenda Items 8, 8A, 8B, and 8C was heard concurrently; see Agenda Item 8C for the public comment relevant to this item.

Erica Olsen, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of OnStrategy, said Interim Director of the Human Services Agency (HSA), Ryan Gustafson, would talk to the Board about high-level direction and background before opening up the conversation.

Mr. Gustafson conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Discussion Flow; Senior Center History; Senior Population in Washoe County; Services & Locations; Key Stats for FY23 (Unduplicated Individuals); Key Stats for FY23; Budget for Seniors (HSA Only); Needs & Gaps; Proposed Solutions; Top Priorities for Services to Seniors.

Mr. Gustafson said the workshop's goal was to engage in more discussions rather than just receive presentations. He explained the goal of senior centers nationwide was to connect seniors to each other, foster relationships, and provide services, case management, and resources. He noted a resource fair took place at the Sparks Senior Center that morning, with nearly 100 seniors in attendance.

Mr. Gustafson reported Washoe County's senior population was higher than the national average. He stated there would be a rapid population increase over the next 20 years and said planning services was critical.

Mr. Gustafson referenced the map on the “Services & Locations” slide. He stated Washoe County had nine senior centers and meal sites. Ms. Olsen asked Mr. Gustafson to orient everyone to the map. Mr. Gustafson described the map.

Mr. Gustafson reviewed the “Key Stats for FY23 (Unduplicated Individuals)” slide, clarifying the statistics were specifically unduplicated counts. He said the number of seniors served with home-delivered meals had fluctuated due to COVID-19 (C19), as they saw an increase in home-delivered meals during the pandemic. He noted the Homemaker program allowed seniors to stay in their homes securely and safely. He mentioned seniors had begun being tracked when they called in asking for specific services.

Mr. Gustafson informed that the “Key Stats for FY23” slide did not refer to unduplicated individuals. He said they were very proud that over 350,000 meals were delivered to senior homes in fiscal year 2023 (FY23). He explained that “impressions” were the views they received throughout the Senior Falls Prevention campaign.

Mr. Gustafson stated the “Budget for Seniors (HSA Only)” slide referenced the budget from HSA specifically and did not encompass the entire County budget. He noted the HSA budget had increased from about \$8.5 million. Chair Hill clarified the slide did not include seniors being taken care of at the Cares Campus. Mr. Gustafson confirmed that information was not depicted in the slide; it would be shown in the next fiscal year (FY) since the Cares Campus had recently been incorporated into the HSA. He explained that Adult Day Health was a Daybreak Program, and said the slide represented the budget at the time it was prepared, which would change the following year.

Mr. Gustafson referred to the “Needs & Gaps” slide and said when they had prepared this information, they collected feedback from all departments to determine needs and potential opportunities. They synthesized the information into key themes and areas. A top area of focus was senior isolation, which was almost uniformly reported across each department. He reviewed each area of focus. He said there was an opportunity to increase services surrounding fitness and exercise. He reported a potential increased need for services related to eyesight and hearing for seniors at the jail. He thought it was important to assess the most strategic locations for caseworkers and navigators. He explained they took the opportunity to tour senior centers in other Northern Nevada locations. He opined there was value in providing computer classes and workshops related to technological education. He said senior relocation was discussed and mentioned seniors did not always have the resources to move easily. There were situations where seniors left items behind because it was too difficult to obtain necessary assistance. Multiple departments had mentioned this issue.

Mr. Gustafson referred to the “Proposed Solutions” slide and said the proposed solutions were suggested by departments and work groups during needs identification. He reviewed the proposed solutions and mentioned there were many examples of seniors being unable to stay in their residences due to rapid lease and pricing changes. As a result, they were exploring longer-term leases with price locks. He stated the County had to partner with the community to explore strategic transportation for seniors at

the community level, not just as it related to Washoe County. Regarding Technology Education, he noted the possibility of creating a computer lab, educational classes, and other viable options. He noted the purpose of the PowerPoint presentation was to provide history and discuss needs at the department level. He invited discussion from the Board about its priorities for senior services and proposed solutions.

Chair Hill was impressed with the proposed solutions and loved their multijurisdictional and multi-departmental nature. She stated it was a complex web but provided great opportunities for service improvements.

Ms. Olsen suggested that each Commissioner state their top priorities after clarifying questions were addressed.

Chair Hill felt there was an opportunity for a bill draft request (BDR) to address advocacy with the State to lower age limits for Medicaid waiver services. She asked Mr. Gustafson if that was a possibility. Mr. Gustafson affirmed it was discussed as a possible solution. Chair Hill asked Mr. Gustafson to keep the Board informed on the matter. She observed mental health and housing were top issues throughout the community and said they had been working on housing since the last strategic planning meeting. She felt there were opportunities for Washoe County to work with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to request grants. She explained community grants were given for transportation. She did not like to see competition in that space but felt it could be helpful to discuss.

Manager Brown asked Chair Hill to provide more information about the RTC community grants. He asked if the grants were competitive, to which Chair Hill confirmed. Chair Hill stated the County had nonprofit partners who requested the grants. She said one grant provided transportation to low-income residents and seniors, regardless of age, to attend doctor appointments. She clarified the grant provided funding for vans and people. She thought better collaboration might be achieved through those grants and pondered if the County should apply for them.

Vice Chair Herman mentioned issues with care quality and cited meals as an example. She saw a lot of areas for improvement and suggested adding Meals on Wheels for veterans. She opined veterans did not usually sign up for services so the County should seek them out. She remarked that some individuals did not apply for services due to poor food quality. She mentioned the jail and Job Corps were training people to cook quality meals, to which she could attest. She recommended County participation in their programs. She stated the Senior Center needed work and she thought 2,700 home-delivered meals sounded like a small number relative to the population. She said when people experience hardship, the County should provide quality nutrition. Mr. Gustafson noted they had been working with their food vendor to improve quality as a result of similar feedback. He acknowledged that an issue with soup shortages was brought up a few months prior. They doubled the amount of soup to ensure it would not run out before lunch. They were also exploring different dessert options and reinstating “goodie bags,” which were easily transportable. He noted there was positive feedback from seniors. He stated quality of food

and disbursing meals were very important and required continuous feedback and work. He clarified the statistic Vice Chair Herman mentioned, advising there were 2,700 independent seniors, which explained the 351,000 meals since those seniors received multiple meals per day. The number had decreased because individuals started to return to the congregate sites after the height of C19. He advised the number fluctuated throughout the years.

Vice Chair Herman suggested that individuals delivering meals be trained to perform health checks on seniors, as necessary.

Commissioner Garcia referenced the “Needs & Gaps” slide. She stated senior isolation was a top priority and had been of concern to her all year. She noted that other areas of focus, and many of the County’s direct services, helped combat senior isolation. She referenced the “Budget for Seniors (HSA Only)” slide and asked how many funding streams were directed to mental health services for seniors. Mr. Gustafson noted that mental health was addressed in multiple ways. He stated mental health would be discussed later and said he could delay that topic, if necessary. Chair Hill affirmed the items were agendized together so postponing the conversation was unnecessary. He explained that a major purpose of community and senior centers was to combat isolation, which could mean fostering interaction with other seniors or paid staff. He asserted home deliveries and visits could also help combat isolation. He explained that 42 percent of people at Our Place and the Cares Campus were over 55. Mental health services were offered at those programs. For several months, he discussed strategies for bringing mental health services into the senior centers with Cara Paoli, Division Director for Adult and Senior Programs. They recognized that some people would not reach out proactively for mental health services but would utilize them if they were readily available. He stated it was hard to pin down the services to a specific number because many programs helped combat isolation and isolation was connected to mental health concerns.

Commissioner Garcia thanked Mr. Gustafson for his hard work and wanted staff to know their work was appreciated. She said he was doing a great job as Interim Director.

Commissioner Garcia mentioned the growth projections for individuals over 65 over the next 20 years. She said that need accompanied growth and 1 out of 4 Washoe County residents over 60 reported being moderately to highly isolated. She mentioned another alarming piece of data was that Washoe County’s suicide rate was twice the national average. She brought this topic up in relation to the budget because she believed Washoe County should prioritize targeted interventions and programming for seniors in its budgetary decisions. Mr. Gustafson opined that all facets must be considered. He stated the current need for more resources would continue to grow over the next 20 years. He said services, locations, staffing, and planning were critical.

Commissioner Garcia said she personally wanted to bring continued exposure to the topic and thought there was an opportunity to examine national programs and best practices in other areas. She posited it was important to know about these programs

and initiatives, even if they were expensive. She opined investing was necessary because the problem would continue to expand due to rapid population growth.

Chair Hill thought working with the State was a possibility and relayed that the State believed it was best to deliver mental health services at the local level. She noted the State recognized Washoe County's work and she said other Nevada counties desired to model Washoe County.

Commissioner Andriola thanked everyone for their hard work. She said it was amazing to see the growth and asked for clarification of the definition of "senior." Mr. Gustafson stated the presentation defined seniors as over 65. He acknowledged the statistics regarding the Cares Campus and Our Place might have caused confusion, as they included individuals over the age of 55. He informed that the age group was included because he and his team felt it was statistically significant.

Commissioner Andriola highlighted population growth increases and mentioned the number of service locations was intertwined with the lack of transportation. Mr. Gustafson explained new locations necessitated increased transportation. He reported that new locations were needed and it was necessary to be strategic by considering who was utilizing the services. They had to determine where people came from to use the services so they could plan accordingly.

Commissioner Andriola mentioned caseworkers and navigators and asked if proposed solutions to elder abuse could be addressed proactively with education and programs. She explained it was common for seniors to be targeted and thought filling technical gaps with education could be helpful, as it would prepare seniors with tools to avoid scams. Mr. Gustafson reported they had some data regarding impressions and acknowledged the senior population was a target. He opined that continuing to research outreach strategies was important because being proactive meant the information had to reach the intended audience. He stated knowing effective methods to reach key populations was critical and that those methods would continue to evolve.

Commissioner Andriola mentioned family support. She said some people who looked to help seniors did not know where to start or did not know which services were available. She asserted there was an opportunity to educate and support families because she did not see that occurring in the County. Mr. Gustafson agreed and said lack of family was an issue, as well as the inability to locate family members. He noted identifying family members or other individuals interested in serving was a common practice in the child welfare system.

Manager Brown asked if the current nine locations had been fully utilized. He mentioned the only location he regularly visited was the Senior Center on Ninth Street. Mr. Gustafson responded that the locations were not fully utilized. Manager Brown spoke to Commissioner Garcia's point about programming. He explained he was trying to identify the key points of focus and declared finding best practices was important. He noted they were trying to create services that were attractive to seniors who visited the centers

and opined that was not happening. Mr. Gustafson appreciated the feedback and asserted programming was multifaceted. Locations needed visual appeal, an inviting atmosphere, and activities for seniors of different age groups and with different interests. He remarked there would ideally be concurrent activities and he recognized the need for more robust programming.

Manager Brown commented that seniors were a difficult group to conduct outreach to. He was not sure how to balance outreach to seniors and opined the answer could be situationally dependent. He was not sure if it was better to go to them or encourage seniors to visit the centers. Mr. Gustafson said both actions were necessary. He explained visiting seniors might be necessary to encourage them to visit the senior sites.

Manager Brown noted he and Community Outreach Coordinator Candee Ramos had been working with the State to establish digital navigators. He explained the navigators would not be used exclusively for seniors and mentioned similar successful models in St. Louis and Kansas City. He mentioned digital navigators helped people with various actions such as acquiring affordable broadband and showing seniors how to use it. This helped alleviate unnecessary travel and costs for seniors.

Manager Brown said demographics at the Senior Center on Ninth Street had changed within the last six months and he was not sure why. He asked if Mr. Gustafson and his team felt they had clear direction to address the senior programs versus the homeless programs. He inquired where the overlap was and how it impacted the County's support of those groups. Mr. Gustafson stated one challenge was that the populations were not exclusive of one another. He mentioned that 42 percent of the Cares Campus and Our Place populations were over 55 years old. He asserted it was not possible to separate the two populations. He explained they wanted to invite seniors to visit the Senior Center and interact with one another. He commented that the homeless population was visiting the Senior Center. He announced there was a campus being quickly built down the road that had quality resources. He advised the solution required getting people to the right place at the right time. He mentioned the tents outside the County complex and noted he did not want to dissuade people from visiting the Senior Center. He acknowledged the Senior Center could use a refresh because people wanted an inviting atmosphere. He reported he did not have data or information that explained the demographic switch but declared they wanted to provide people with the appropriate resources.

Chair Hill asked if the Westbrook Community Center was a new location for congregate meals. Mr. Gustafson confirmed it was relatively new. Chair Hill mentioned the County had added new locations and applauded the staff for opening new resources to the community. Mr. Gustafson relayed that it was a work in progress because the population could differ in growth per region. He advised that changing needs had to be continually monitored.

Chair Hill stated she had some personal experience with senior navigators and said they made recommendations to improve quality of life. She thought it was important to understand they were caseworkers that helped seniors navigate a complex,

multijurisdictional system. She thought it was an exciting idea and was glad Manager Brown was exploring it with staff.

Vice Chair Herman asserted her district was different than most. She commented she knew Gerlach was well taken care of and there were good people there. She declared there were a lot of hungry seniors in Cold Springs. She posited the biggest problem was transportation and opined that was why more seniors were using Meals on Wheels. She suggested that seniors might visit senior centers on a regular basis if they had more information. She contended the County needed to focus on that region.

Ms. Olsen summarized the key discussion topics.

Mr. Gustafson affirmed it was no accident that the first point of discussion was isolation because mental health impacted all other areas. He wanted to ensure it continued to be a top priority.

Commissioner Andriola spoke to Manager Brown's point about the overlap between homeless services and senior services. She pondered if there was a non-discriminatory way to identify helpful services for homeless seniors. She acknowledged that additional policies might need to be established and felt defining those populations was important. She said Washoe County was not the only area dealing with these circumstances and thought innovative solutions should be explored. She mentioned Commissioner Garcia's point about best practices. She opined that seniors might be intimidated by senior centers. She thought outreach, programming, family support, and partnerships would be helpful, and believed bringing youth and seniors together was a powerful opportunity for both groups.

Mr. Gustafson asserted that there was a need to strengthen partnerships across the community. He thought there were many community organizations that Washoe County could partner with.

There was no action taken on this item.

12:13 p.m. **The Board recessed.**

1:00 p.m. **The Board reconvened with Commissioner Clark absent.**

23-0710 **AGENDA ITEM 8B** Mental Health: Definition and discussion of current county programs and summary of identified service gaps. Staff is seeking guidance regarding the county's role and responsibilities, paths forward including community and state partnerships, and recommendations for future actions.

All PowerPoint slides for Agenda Items 8A, 8B, and 8C are on file with the Clerk under Agenda Item 8, Minute Item 23-0708.

The Honorable Judge Egan Walker displayed the following website during this item: <https://www.prainc.com/gains-leveraging-sim-dei/>.

Public comment for Agenda Items 8, 8A, 8B, and 8C was heard concurrently; see Agenda Item 8C for the public comment relevant to this item.

Chair Hill welcomed Judge Walker. Judge Walker thanked the Board for the opportunity to present and shared his hope to assist the Board with its duties.

Judge Walker warned that his message was difficult. He reassured the Board the message would end positively, as he believed local solutions existed. He stated professional organizations would advise that suicide rates had risen about 30 percent since 2000. He said that was an astounding climb over 20 years. He announced almost one-third of United States (US) adults currently reported symptoms of depression or anxiety, and it was estimated that 1 in 25 adults had a serious mental illness. He noted calculations showed 13 million Americans had a serious mental illness. He posited solutions existed locally because the federal government was experiencing issues. He had a great affinity for the State government but did not think it had solutions for Washoe County. He opined the County owned the problem and would be able to fix it.

Judge Walker told a story that he said depicted self-discovery, self-reflection, shame, and pathos. He worked in the District Attorney's (DA) Office many years ago, where his specialty was crimes against children. In the winter of 1998, he responded to the death scene of an infant who had eight siblings, all living in a bus next to a mobile home in Sun Valley. Judge Walker met one of the siblings, a four-year-old named Jeffrey. He met Jeffrey again in his courtroom in 2022, where Jeffrey was a defendant. Jeffrey told Judge Walker he had been in jail for one year after being honorably discharged because he was waiting for a treatment bed. When Judge Walker asked him why he did not complain, Jeffrey responded that he was safer in jail than on the street. After that, Judge Walker's Chief Judge recommended that he handle mental health issues. Since then, his professional life has been influenced by Jeffrey and his deceased sibling.

Judge Walker stated citizens' needs were not being met. He asked the Board to consider the amount of money spent on Jeffrey and his family, who had each been in the County's jail and accessed mental health services. He felt that both he and the community failed the family. He mentioned the 2006 *New Yorker* article, "Million-Dollar Murray" by Malcolm Gladwell, which was about Murray Barr. Mr. Barr had accumulated more medical expenses in Washoe County than any other Nevadan at that time. Judge Walker said he was shocked when he realized the article was about the Reno area. He reported millions of dollars were spent on both Mr. Barr and Jeffrey's family.

Judge Walker defined "serious mental illness" as one or more mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders resulting in serious functional impairment that substantially interfered with or limited one or more major life activities. He said the definition was well accepted and many citizens fit that diagnosis, which was not a moral failing. He noted it had to be treated as an illness.

Judge Walker mentioned Tiger Team meetings he participated in at Rancharra, which consisted of group brainstorming between private and public sector employees. He reported a principle emerged, which was that mental health was a Washoe County problem that would be fixed by Washoe County. He opined they could not wait for the State or federal government to fix it. He said he could not ask directly for money at the Nevada Legislature. He volunteered to testify on behalf of Washoe County and provide evidence to seek additional funding. He advised Washoe County needed any funding the State could provide, but the County must solve the problem.

Judge Walker informed that some of the Tiger Team visited Miami-Dade County, Florida, in November 2022. The homeless count was 1,200 out of 6 million people total, while Washoe County's homeless count was 1,800. He noted Miami-Dade County had a population five or six times larger than Washoe County's. He announced Miami-Dade County had no officer-involved shootings in the prior 12 months. He said they were using the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). He reported the philosophy they used was to stop using the jail as the mental health triage and treatment facility of choice. He explained they targeted services to individual needs and decriminalized mental health while still prosecuting crimes. He noted there was potential in ensuring people experiencing psychotic episodes had their needs met instead of sending them to jail. He commended Washoe County's jail, Sheriff, and officers for the service they provided. He stated that 60 percent of the jail's population were on psychotropic medication. He advised when people were released from a dysfunctional system where their mental health was untreated, they got worse and were more likely to commit criminal offenses.

Judge Walker wanted to convey optimism and declared that if Miami-Dade County could perform improvements in 20 years, Washoe County could do it in 2 years. He and his colleagues were very motivated. He believed solutions involved redirecting current funding and stated he wanted to partner with the County.

Chair Hill commended Judge Walker for his service to the community. She stated she believed the County was agreeable to partnering with him.

Assistant County Manager (ACM) Kate Thomas conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Discussion Flow; Washoe County Behavioral Health Efforts; A Comprehensive Service Array System; What is Going Well; Key Stats for FY23; Community Feedback; Needs & Gaps; Possible Solutions; County's Role & Possible Priorities.

Ms. Thomas explained that she and Judge Walker developed a think tank, the Tiger Team, to address mental health. She advised that many County departments dealt directly with mental health situations. She worked with staff every budget cycle to discuss additional resources and actions that were needed. She said the common denominator was mental health. Until resources were strategically directed, resources would be pushed down the line.

Ms. Thomas announced she would first address the current state and define the County's existing role, then review the identified problems. She informed she was a convener, not an expert. She mentioned community feedback regarding the purchase of West Hills Behavioral Health Hospital. She said the Board's desired direction would be discussed.

Ms. Thomas referred to the "Washoe County Behavioral Health Efforts" slide and said Behavioral Health Program Coordinator Dorothy Edwards had an important role that was limited in scope. She mentioned the Human Services Agency (HSA) performed prevention work that was partially funded by the State. She noted the Children's Clinical Services Team also did some preventative work by providing assessments for children who were in, or in danger of entering, the child welfare system. She believed the Mobile Outreach Safety Team (MOST) was started in 2003 because the County needed a resource for police response to mental illness. The program had grown in the past few years. MOST conducted early intervention to avoid emergency room (ER) visits. Clinicians rode along with law enforcement to provide crisis intervention services. She declared MOST was the center of preventative services in the County.

Ms. Thomas explained that 988 was a system that allowed people to call, go somewhere, or have someone come to them if they were having a mental health crisis. The service provided a mental health professional and a peer versus law enforcement response to behavioral health situations. She noted Mental Health Court provided some wraparound services and said the Mental Competency Court streamlined the return to competency. She mentioned the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Program was a partnership with the State that provided certain wraparound services. She observed the Department of Alternative Sentencing (DAS) housed the Support in Treatment, Accountability, and Recovery (STAR) program, which provided stabilization and classroom scenarios. She reported that each department had started to triage and provide resources they saw as necessary to their programming.

Ms. Thomas said Residential & Inpatient were services typically provided by the State. On August 23, the Board unanimously voted to purchase the West Hills Behavioral Health Facility, which spurred a lot of community input. She posited the policy that would be set by County Manager Eric Brown's office and the Commission would be transformative. She stated West Hills would fill a gap in the region. She said if SIM was implemented correctly, the West Hills infirmary could serve as a resource location. People could be diverted there rather than the jail, which was being used as the region's largest mental health provider. She expressed excitement to visit Miami in December and said she would view Miami-Dade County's facility to observe the physical infrastructure, which was not open in April. She mentioned CrossRoads was a peer-led alcohol prevention program with housing. She explained Quest Counseling was a provider that helped with mental health services.

Ms. Thomas referenced the "A Comprehensive Service Array System" slide and stated Washoe County was already in the business of providing mental health services. She said its services had the best intentions but were somewhat fractured. The goal was a

comprehensive service array system, which Washoe County could achieve using evidence-based best practices. She explained the Nevada System of Care was based on youth, which the State had been working on for about 20 years. She knew they were making strides but were not there yet. She reported competitive reimbursement rates would help Washoe County more easily recruit and retain providers, which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Ms. Thomas reviewed the “What is Going Well” slide. She announced they were celebrating medication-assisted treatment (MAT) use in various capacities at the court. The County budgeted for 34 mental health counselor positions and 30 were filled as of the previous week. She explained the “Community Feedback” slide and said the community recognized mental health was a County problem that needed a County solution. She asserted that the “Million-Dollar Murray” story continued to be reflected in the community. She reported the closing of West Hills was a significant blow and noted those services were not very lucrative in the community. She mentioned a conversation with Reno Behavioral Healthcare Hospital about long-term structural needs to find out how West Hills could fill the community’s gap. She said other jurisdictions were attracting graduates from the County’s university system because Washoe County did not have all the right tools to attract and retain those individuals. She posited that providing intervention services to elementary-age children might be helpful and stated prevention could sometimes occur too late. She asked if resources should be allocated to that area.

Ms. Thomas stated the most important consideration was the County’s role. She said many individuals contributed to the items presented in the “Needs & Gaps” slide. Many departments provided feedback that mirrored community feedback. She claimed that no one thought the County should be doing everything and asked who should be doing what. She announced it was important to provide mental health services early, at the time of arrest. She mentioned staff mental health and said responding to certain situations was hard on staff, especially when they knew they had limited resources available. She advised recognizing that staff mental health was a component of the discussion was necessary for staff to do their best work.

Ms. Thomas referenced the “Possible Solutions” slide. Erica Olsen, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of OnStrategy, said each solution could be discussed at length. She asked Ms. Thomas if she would frame the County’s potential roles.

Ms. Thomas reported that the Tiger Team sessions revealed the popular opinion that Washoe County should take ownership of the mental health problem. Owning the issue meant charting a course for legislative changes. She stated it was important to understand statutory requirements and other specifications before examining solutions. She noted the discussion was different than the senior discussion because the mental health issue was more intangible.

Commissioner Andriola asked Judge Walker to specify the solution he mentioned in his presentation. Judge Walker clarified that he was referring to SIM, which he regarded highly. SIM was utilized by Miami-Dade County and other jurisdictions. He

described it as a system for triage at its highest level. It involved addressing people's needs while avoiding jail as a treatment for mental health issues. SIM built interventions at various levels by plugging existing resources into those levels. It did not create new services or funding needs but instead redirected those resources in more effective and holistic ways. He had requested a new full-time equivalent (FTE) during the Tiger Team meetings. He invited the Board to attend a mental health summit in January, which would discuss SIM and current resources.

Commissioner Andriola mentioned Judge Walker's comment that Washoe County could accomplish its goal within two years and agreed there was already a satisfactory framework. Judge Walker thought Washoe County could model existing systems. He explained how Miami-Dade County successfully repurposed a jail to utilize for mental health services.

Commissioner Andriola asked if proper funding would allow for SIM implementation within two years. Judge Walker confirmed and mentioned the Sheriff and courts were agreeable. He said getting hospitals on board was the next step and noted the savings SIM could offer the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO).

Commissioner Andriola pondered the value of creating multiple FTEs. She said it was an aggressive objective for one FTE and recommended including an administrative staff.

Commissioner Garcia informed she had been struggling with SIM for the past three years. She noted the difficulties of parenting, especially after COVID-19 (C19) made educational and social services more challenging. She shared an experience about meeting a mother in Las Vegas who had adopted a child. She said despite their differences, both parents had similar concerns about their children's mental health needs.

Commissioner Garcia agreed that hospitals needed to be a part of the conversation since ERs played a major role in the mental health conversation. She stated the nonprofit and private sectors were pitching in as much as possible. She asked what the State's role was during the Tiger Team meetings and how it had evolved since.

Ms. Thomas relayed she could not speak on behalf of the State but confirmed it was involved in the Tiger Team meetings. She said the State was deeply committed and commended it for recognizing its services needed improvement. She remarked on the State's recognition that Washoe County could help until Statutes were changed. She mentioned the State was also clarifying its role.

Commissioner Garcia mentioned that different regional jurisdictions met in 2021 to define homelessness and housing. She asked if jurisdictions ever joined together in Nevada to determine unique areas of participation and wondered if that was a possible next step. Ms. Thomas acknowledged it was a possibility and cited MOST as an example. MOST was originally State-funded before being funded locally. Commissioner Garcia

posited the system was messy because it was so intertwined. She looked forward to seeing what Washoe County's role would be and did not think it could be defined that day.

Manager Brown announced that during Tiger Team meetings, State representatives were clear they wanted a competent mental health leader who had the confidence of other agencies. He thought the State knew Washoe County had the capability based on its previous collaborations during C19. He informed of his monthly meetings with the hospitals and said they wanted to see the County move forward. He explained he was the one who slowed down certain progress due to the County's revenue status. He had asked many department heads not to take additional positions. Judge Walker stated he trusted Manager Brown to make administrative decisions.

Vice Chair Herman commended all the hard work done to bring solutions forward.

Chair Hill explained she asked Manager Brown to implement the FTE. She agreed with Commissioner Andriola regarding the creation of an administrative team and thought they should appeal to the State government.

Commissioner Andriola asserted Washoe County could lead and said an FTE plus one supportive staff was ideal. She posited the short-term investment would yield a long-term solution that more efficiently utilized resources.

Commissioner Garcia said she knew various experts could advise on how to move forward with bill draft requests (BDRs).

Ms. Thomas announced Washoe County department heads were incredibly talented and could be utilized as great resources. She thanked the departments for their continued collaboration.

Ms. Olsen reviewed the Board's discussion.

There was no action taken on this item.

2:03 p.m. **The Board recessed.**

2:05 p.m. **The Board reconvened with Commissioner Clark absent.**

23-0711 **AGENDA ITEM 8C** Facilities: Establish direction and determine priority based on provided feedback and summary of needs.

All PowerPoint slides for Agenda Items 8A, 8B, and 8C are on file with the Clerk under Agenda Item 8, Minute Item 23-0708.

Assistant County Manager (ACM) Dave Solaro conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Discussion Flow; Large Capital Needs (as of Oct. 2023).

Erica Olsen, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of OnStrategy, explained the discussion's purpose was to identify two large capital projects, also known as capital improvement projects (CIP).

Mr. Solaro informed the Board several large projects had been identified through the CIP, the master planning process, and programmatic needs assessments across all 24 departments. He offered to provide background and information on the items, as necessary. He said the list order was randomly generated and stated building was not the solution to every problem. He explained the list consisted of approximately \$1 billion worth of capital construction. Since the money to complete all projects did not currently exist, they wanted to identify staff priorities. This would provide a focus on funding solutions and resource allocation. He said certain factors would be identified, such as risks, addressed needs, and available funding, for the two identified priorities. The other items would not be ignored. He welcomed the Board to suggest items that were not on the list.

Commissioner Garcia asked if the first three items on the "Large Capital Needs (as of Oct. 2023)" slide already had completed architectural plans. Mr. Solaro responded that the downtown judicial center (DJC) had a Master Plan that encompassed the needs identified prior to COVID-19 (C19). He stated information was still being gathered about the contents of the West Hills Behavioral Health Hospital facility, but they knew it needed to be a mental health hospital. There were some developed plans for a tuberculosis (TB) clinic, which had its own funding. Approximately 30 percent of the schematic design was completed for the detention center infirmary/mental health (DCIMH) item, which included program development, a conceptual building layout, and identified spaces.

Commissioner Garcia asked how long the DJC and DCIMH had been discussed. Mr. Solaro answered the DJC had been discussed for the past 10 to 15 years. He said the original courthouse was built in 1872 and it had since been added to. The DCIMH had been discussed over the past 10 years.

Commissioner Andriola reported it was difficult to identify two priorities due to each item's unique factors and said additional information might help. She suggested the regionalization of sewer and wastewater facilities (RSWF) be added to the list. She thought the subject was critical and recommended staff examine a model that developed a multijurisdictional approach. She opined it would help the region capitalize on streamlined efficiency and effectiveness. She admitted that RSWF impacted her district the most. She said it was important to all districts but critical to the Spanish Springs area.

Chair Hill asked if each Commissioner could select three items instead of two. She thought the DJC, the West Hills/TB clinic – rehabilitation (WHTC), and the DCIMH were most important. She said the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) could

be partnered with for the DJC and the DCIMH. She reported speaking with some members of the Nevada State Assembly who represented the region. She noted they wanted to provide financial support for the DJC and were curious to see if the County prioritized it. She wanted to move forward with the WHTC, especially since it was so new. She agreed with Commissioner Andriola that RSWF was a regional issue.

Mr. Solaro stated Chair Hill mentioned projects that might help other areas discussed that day. He said they had to focus and solve the right problems and agreed each Commissioner could list three items.

Commissioner Garcia also wanted to name three items. Her top priority was the WHTC because it would fill the acute care gap and had the highest sense of urgency. She said the DJC and the DCIMH were tied to the mental health crisis. She said the DJC would touch many lives. She knew the DCIMH was tied to the County's Master Plan.

Ms. Olsen clarified with Mr. Solaro that the items not selected would not be ignored. Mr. Solaro explained knowing the County's priorities would facilitate productive conversations with department heads.

Chair Hill echoed the same top three priorities that Commissioner Garcia listed. She saw those items addressing forthcoming public safety needs. She said the North Valleys Library needed to be a regional focus eventually because the community would appreciate a place to come together.

Commissioner Andriola thought the WHTC and the DCIMH should be combined since they both focused on mental health. She selected the DJC and the Senior Center as the next priorities.

Vice Chair Herman announced her top selection was RSWF because it was critical. Her second choice was DCIMH, and her third choice was roadway infrastructure rehabilitations (447/34) (RIR).

Ms. Olsen noted the Board's top three priorities were the first three items listed in the PowerPoint, and that the Senior Center, RIR, and RSWF were also mentioned.

Mr. Solaro reiterated that each item was identified for important reasons. All items provided benefits to Washoe County citizens, but there was not \$1 billion to do them all at once. He appreciated the feedback and discussion. He said the information would help them make choices in a timely fashion.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Penny Brock was not present when called to speak.

Mr. John Doe mentioned that people had power. He thanked the WCSO and everyone else who took an oath to protect and serve people. He thought everyone could agree that people surviving through the winter was important. He said maintaining mental

health was difficult for homeless citizens and that politicians worked for the people. He recommended the use of a truck to distribute blankets to people sleeping outside. He was thankful for his house and his bed. He opined the community was as strong as its weakest link. He thanked everyone, including hospital workers, and said he was just a regular guy who did not think keeping people warm at night cost much.

County Manager Eric Brown thanked the Commissioners and asserted that staff got the direction they needed. He said the provided guidance would be incorporated into strategic planning. He noted budgeting would begin in a month and the meeting would help establish financial priorities. He thanked the presenters and department heads and reported that no progress could be made without them. He thought it was important they heard the Board's discussion.

There was no action taken on this item.

23-0712 **AGENDA ITEM 9** Public Comment.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Gary Schmidt provided documents that were placed on file with the Clerk. He announced he was there to discuss Gerlach and mentioned he was a longtime property owner and former resident of Gerlach. He said the Gerlach General Improvement District (GGID) was attempting to engage in commercial, industrial, and residential real estate development on surplus property in violation of Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 318 and its County charter. He declared it was also in violation of the Master Plan's character statement and that most of the community did not support it. He referred to the five-page memorandum he distributed. He said his attorney advised him that he could easily seek injunctive relief, but he wanted to go through the administrative process first. He stated the GGID was in clear violation of its charter by attempting to engage in the development of its surplus property. He noted State law and the charter mandated surplus property be auctioned. He read the last paragraph of the memorandum's summary.

23-0713 **AGENDA ITEM 10** Announcements/Reports.

Vice Chair Herman suggested reviewing the County's mission and vision, based on comments made over the years. She suggested the mission include the word "diligently." She recommended replacing the "leadership force" with "leaders" because some people were offended by the use of the word "force."

Erica Olsen, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder of OnStrategy, asked if Vice Chair Herman's recommendations could be explored in another Board meeting. Chair Hill agreed and recommended incorporating the suggestions into forthcoming discussions about the Board rules, the Dignity Index, and Board governance self-reviews.

Vice Chair Herman suggested reviewing the County's guiding principles.

Commissioner Garcia expressed her support for Chair Hill’s suggestion to incorporate a self-assessment tool. She looked forward to the conversation and thought self-reflection was important.

Commissioner Andriola expressed thanks to County Manager Eric Brown and Ms. Olsen for the meeting. She looked forward to self-evaluation discussions as well. She appreciated the direction provided in the meeting.

Chair Hill applauded staff and said it had been her favorite strategic planning workshop. She commended the Board members for the work they did and noted she was looking forward to facing next year’s challenges with them.

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2:42 p.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

ALEXIS HILL, Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

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

*Minutes Prepared by:
Kendra DeSoto-Silva, Deputy County Clerk*