

**WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION
RENO CITY COUNCIL
SPARKS CITY COUNCIL
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

JOINT MEETING

MONDAY

8:30 A.M.

JULY 10, 2012

PRESENT:

Bob Larkin, Washoe County Commissioner, Chairman
Bonnie Weber, Washoe County Commissioner, Vice Chairperson
John Breternitz, Washoe County Commissioner
David Humke, Washoe County Commissioner
Kitty Jung, Washoe County Commissioner

Robert A. Cashell, City of Reno, Mayor
David Aiazzi, Reno City Councilmember*
Dwight Dortch, Reno City Councilmember
Dan Gustin, Reno City Councilmember
Pierre Hascheff, Reno City Councilmember*
Jessica Sferrazza, Reno City Councilmember
Sharon Zadra, Reno City Councilmember

Geno Martini, City of Sparks, Mayor
Mike Carrigan, Sparks City Councilmember
Ed Lawson, Sparks City Councilmember
Julia Ratti, Sparks City Councilmember

ABSENT:

Ron Schmitt, Sparks City Councilmember
Ron Smith, Sparks City Councilmember

The Washoe County School District Board of Trustees
was not present at the meeting.

The Commission and Councils convened at 8:30 a.m. in joint session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada, with Sparks Mayor Geno Martini presiding. Also present were Washoe County Clerk Amy Harvey, Washoe County Manager Katy Simon, Washoe County Legal Counsel David Creekman, Reno City Clerk Lynnette Jones, Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger, Reno City Attorney John Kadlic, Sparks City Clerk Linda Patterson, Sparks City Manager Shaun Carey and Sparks Attorney Shirle Eiting.

12-633 AGENDA ITEM 3 – PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment (three-minute time limit per person)-(Additional Public Comment on specific agenda items will be limited to three-minute time limit per person after each agenda item and must be related to the specific agenda item.) Comments are to be addressed to the Chair of the meeting and to the Reno and Sparks City Councils, Washoe County School District Board of Trustees and the Washoe County Commission as a whole.

James Kozera spoke in favor of a ballot initiative being placed on the upcoming November election in support of senior services.

Sheila Sobellevery stated her support for the ballot initiative concerning senior services and urged the entities to vote for such an initiative.

12-634 AGENDA ITEM 4

Agenda Subject: “Approval of the Agenda – July 10, 2012.”

There was no public comment on this item.

On motion by Reno Councilmember Gustin, seconded by Reno Councilmember Zadra, which motion duly carried with Sparks Councilmembers Smith and Schmitt and Reno Councilmember Aiazzi absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

12-635 AGENDA ITEM 5

Agenda Subject: “Approval of minutes – April 2 and April 19, 2012 Joint meetings.”

There was no public comment on this item.

***8:35 a.m.** Reno Councilmember Aiazzi arrived.

On motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Reno Councilmember Gustin, which motion duly carried with Sparks Councilmembers Smith and Schmitt and Reno Councilmember Hascheff absent, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved.

12-636 AGENDA ITEM 6

Agenda Subject: “Presentation by Washoe County Senior Services Department on impacts of the growing population of senior citizens in Washoe County.”

***8:40 a.m.** Reno Councilmember Hascheff arrived.

Grady Tarbutton, Washoe County Senior Services Director, conducted a PowerPoint presentation, which was placed on file with the Clerk. The presentation highlighted the Washoe County Senior Services Purpose and Mission, mandates, mandated services, challenges, methodology, demographics, increasing demand, sources and uses, project output by option, Senior Services Flow Chart, continuum of care, cost of long-term care, and the \$1.2 million plan and the \$2.4 million plan.

Commissioner Jung inquired about legal services for senior citizens and how that could be augmented or changed based on the anticipated additional revenue. Mr. Tarbutton explained that the plan would be to restore staffing for the Senior Law Project back to the 2007 staffing level. He said the Senior Law Project helped senior citizens remain independent, and also worked closely with social workers to deal with any social issues that may arise.

Commissioner Jung asked for clarification on the cost of medication monitoring and the re-hospitalization phenomenon found in the senior citizen population. Mr. Tarbutton stated there were many visiting nurse programs within the community that were based upon Medicare eligibility. His office assisted individuals with chronic conditions who took many medications, which was challenging. He said a nurse would educate the citizen and family on managing those medications. Upon discharge from a hospital, he said the stabilization of the person was critical and home-healthcare assisted with that stabilization. Mr. Tarbutton indicated that the County had a 30-day re-hospitalization rate for individuals on Medicare equating to about 20 percent of the patients. He said there were no federal policies, but projects such as "Transitional Care" offered potential revenue for communities to establish programs in order to prevent that phenomenon.

Commissioner Jung inquired on the average caregiver for senior citizens and the impact without any continuums. Mr. Tarbutton replied that a caregiver would be a woman over the age of 45 with teenage children. He explained that the DayBreak Program, which was a nursing home alternative, provided a place where families could bring senior citizens with a nurse on staff to handle medication situations. The DayBreak Program allowed the caregiver to continue their employment and also continue to provide care for the individual.

Commissioner Humke said page two of the staff report indicated that the County was unable to leverage some federal funds because of limited staffing and restrictive authority. He asked which federal grants the State restricted the County's ability to apply for. Mr. Tarbutton explained that staff had been working with the State on several projects, but it had taken a local initiative to drive those proposals. One proposal was the Veterans Directed Home and Community-Based Services. He said there were 55,000 veterans in the County, but the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center only provided in-home service to about 100 veterans in northern Nevada. Because veteran's benefits were an entitlement, he said veterans were under utilizing the

resources. Since 2007 there were opportunities in place for the State, who had the only authority to submit an application to the federal government, to begin the Veterans Directed Home and Community-Based Services program. Mr. Tarbutton remarked that the County did not have the authority to submit those grant applications. He indicated there were different structures that allowed certain regulations under the Older Americans Act where local communities did the planning, the implementation and the grant application for such programs. However, since the County had begun to work with the VA, he said the State was now able to submit an application.

Commissioner Humke said there were several references made to the Capital Improvement Project (CIP's), but questioned why the Senior Center could not be upgraded. He said the value of the potential \$0.02 tax increase would go into staff functions and asked if there would be any CIP's. Mr. Tarbutton agreed that CIP's were essential and needed to be part of the planning. In moving forward with the proposal, he said if staff was added the facility would need to change and believed that would be the time to review CIP projects. He said a ballot measure passed in 1996 was broadly stated and suggested the wording for the proposed ballot initiative be similar so funds could be used for that purpose.

Reno Councilmember Sferrazza inquired on the sites that closed for the congregate meal program. Mr. Tarbutton replied that a senior housing complex closed due to a lack of volunteers. He said staff was scheduled to meet with the Reno Housing Authority, who were also having difficulty retaining volunteers. Councilmember Sferrazza asked how many individuals were currently enrolled in the DayBreak Program. Mr. Tarbutton said between 45 to 60 people a year were served in that Program, but he did not have the specific numbers.

Councilmember Sferrazza asked if the County had the ability to impose a higher rate with the Government Services Tax (GST) and, if so, what would that tax generate per year. Katy Simon, County Manager, replied that the County had the authority to impose up to a 1 percent increase in the GST on depreciated value of motor vehicles which would generate approximately \$8 million per year. Councilmember Sferrazza asked if that was within the County Commission's discretion. Ms. Simon stated up to 1 percent was currently within the County Commission's discretion, and noted it was currently in place in Clark County. Councilmember Sferrazza asked if that rate would affect the Property Tax cap. Ms. Simon indicated that the Property Tax cap would not be affected by that rate.

Reno Councilmember Gustin asked if advising citizens came under the Senior Law Project or the Aging and Disability Resource Center. Mr. Tarbutton stated advice was provided through both facilities. Councilmember Gustin said the information being circulated in another community was lacking and asked how successful was disseminating that information and/or placing individuals in the correct program. Mr. Tarbutton said within the available resources, as many people as possible would receive advice including outreach events such as SeniorFest. Councilmember Gustin said if that information was disseminated, accepted, understood and acted upon, he asked how that

would change the amount of service, and would it help with the dollar amount presented in the presentation about the effect on the County and State. Mr. Tarbutton said staff was asking the State to allow the County to use local tax dollars for a Medicaid match to potentially provide additional staff through that process.

Sparks Councilmember Ratti clarified that the staff report was the best thinking to date on the proposed \$1.2 million or \$2.4 million to be allocated, but it did not list all the services that would receive the allocated funds. Mr. Tarbutton said that was logical; however, except for the CIP's, based on the needs of the community, the proposal was close. Councilmember Ratti said ballot initiatives should be as broad as possible so there was flexibility in the event there were federal programs that came about which may show a better use of the resources. Mr. Tarbutton stated that was correct.

Councilmember Ratti said if the \$1.2 million was received, it would bring the department back to the 2007/08 staffing level and would allocate a part-time employee to the Sparks Senior Center. She questioned what was being proposed for the Sparks Senior Center. Mr. Tarbutton confirmed that it would be a part-time employee for the Sparks Senior Center, but there were other options being discussed with the City of Sparks for that staffing. In 2007, Councilmember Ratti said the Sparks Senior Center was staffed full-time and, even with the \$0.01 or \$0.02 proposals, it would still be necessary for the City of Sparks to contribute in order to keep that Center open. In meeting the goals of the community, Mr. Tarbutton said there would be flexibility on how the proposed funds would be spent.

In response to the call for public comment, Dr. Larry Weiss, The Center for Healthy Aging CEO and Transitional Care of Northern Nevada Executive Director, spoke on caregiving responsibilities and a County study that had been completed concerning employees who were caregivers. He re-emphasized the facts and figures presented in the PowerPoint presentation including that 20 percent of the senior citizen population lived on \$5,000 per year. He said a \$2.4 million ad valorem tax or GST source of funds would equate to about \$6 per person. Dr. Weiss asked if the elected bodies were willing to spend such a small amount on their senior citizen population.

Anita Ritter spoke on the need to increase funding for senior services. She said implementing programs to help in the present time would mitigate the impact for long-term services.

Reno Councilmember Hascheff said by either raising the tax by \$0.01 or \$0.02 the services provided could be increased. Based on the projections, he asked if that still met the needs. Mr. Tarbutton explained that the data was provided on how the \$2.4 million would be spent, but without a more exhaustive study, he could not provide the real needs since those needs were greater than what was proposed.

Reno Councilmember Zadra said with limited County staffing it would be difficult to identify all the available resources to help with funding. With increased

staffing, she asked if the region could secure additional federal dollars. Mr. Tarbutton said that would be based upon the individual needs.

There was no action taken on this item.

12-637 AGENDA ITEM 7

Agenda Subject: “Discussion and possible action on recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding possible advisory ballot question(s) to ask voters whether and how to increase funding for senior services in Washoe County, including consideration of requests from the Reno City Council and Sparks City Council concerning same.”

Katy Simon, County Manager, indicated that charts had been provided in the staff report to show that the General Fund was about 80 percent of what it was in Fiscal Year 2007/08, but the Senior Services Fund was 100 percent funded. She said there were still challenges in the other County departments with many other critical needs that would all prefer to have more funding for services. She pointed out in Fiscal Year 2012/13 the General Fund subsidy to the Senior Services Fund had been increased and provided about \$930,000 of General Fund subsidy support. Since 2003, the County had used a citizen-led prioritization process confirmed with citizen surveys. She explained that the County allocated the funding based on those priorities, with the first priority being Public Safety and second being Judicial/Health and Social Services.

Ms. Simon noted that options for possible advisory ballot questions were offered in the staff report. She said NRS 293.482 applied to advisory questions and stated that voters needed to know the implications and impacts of an advisory question. She said the advocates proposing a ballot question did not want impacts to be on existing funding and for it to be outside the Property Tax cap. One option presented was to have an advisory question to ask the voters if the Legislature should be requested to authorize an exemption to the Property Tax cap for the purpose of increasing the ad valorem property tax rate. Another idea was to use the Government Service Tax (GST) since that would generate \$8 million per year. Ms. Simon indicated that the County Commission would be adopting a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that had an 80 percent reduction in infrastructure investment versus what that was five years ago.

Reno Councilmember Sferrazza asked if the GST had to be on the ballot to be enacted or had to increase by a full 1 percent. Ms. Simon stated it did not have to be on the ballot to be enacted, and did not have to go up a full 1 percent. Because of the States programming, she said the State Department of Taxation requested the County provide them at least 60 days notice if there was a change. Councilmember Sferrazza asked on the average amount if it did increase by a full 1 percent. Ms. Simon said the formula was based on the depreciated value of the vehicle and then applied a percentage to that amount, but it was difficult to estimate the average cost and age of a vehicle. The last time that was reviewed, the amount estimated was based on information from the State and currently the vehicle the State used, cost-wise was about \$25,000 and then

depreciation of three years was applied, which estimated to a \$50 to \$52 per year increase. Ms. Simon said a 1 percent increase would equate to a 25 percent increase on the tax itself since it was currently at 4 percent.

Sparks Councilmember Carrigan stated that the Sparks City Council intended not to take the \$0.02 and stay inside the Property Tax cap, but would go to the voters to see if they wanted to raise their property tax by \$0.02. If the voters agreed, that would be taken to the Legislature as a collective body and request a law be written to go \$0.02 outside the Property Tax cap.

Commissioner Breternitz said the County Commission had the inability by vote to enact a \$0.02 increase that would take the tax rate over the cap. He thought the resolution documents were unclear on whether there was reference to seeking clarification from the public if they wanted the elected officials to seek an exemption from the Legislature. He asked if there were examples where the Legislature granted those exemptions. Councilmember Carrigan stated he was unaware of any, but he said it could still be requested of the Legislature.

Andrew Clinger, Reno City Manager, replied there was currently \$0.02 exempt from the Property Tax cap for State Conservation Bonds and believed that was from a ballot question.

In consideration of the resolutions that were passed by the Cities of Reno and Sparks about this issue, Commissioner Breternitz asked if there were any polls or surveys to prioritize senior services funding as the specific area the bodies designated as the recipient for this funding. He also asked why senior services were identified as being allocated the additional increase. Sparks Councilmember Lawson explained that the City of Sparks had an active senior citizen population who were vocal to the Council on their concerns. He said the polls stated a need, and he felt an advisory question would give the choice to the entire population without being a segmented decision. Sparks Councilmember Ratti gave credit to the advocates who came forward and asked for a tool. She felt an advisory question aimed toward senior services had a better opportunity to pass.

Councilmember Carrigan stated that the Resolution was requesting the County place an advisory question on the November ballot. Commissioner Breternitz said the polls conducted by the County indicated that public safety, children services, senior services and infrastructure were priorities, which was a glimpse for some of the key needs in the community. He was concerned about identifying just one issue.

In response to a question from Commissioner Humke, Ms. Simon explained there were several components to the Senior Services Fund and one was the ad valorem tax of \$0.01, which was restricted and dedicated to senior services. There were also State and federal grants and a General Fund subsidy, which subsidized senior services. When the ad valorem tax was passed, she said the intent was that it would fund senior services; however, that had not been the case. Ms. Simon said Figure 2 in the staff

report indicated the total Senior Services Fund and, Figure 1 was in relation to the General Fund, but the exact amount of the General Fund subsidy went up and down every year. For instance, in Fiscal Year 2011/12 the subsidy was \$234,000, but in response to many concerns and constituent requests, that subsidy was increased to about \$930,000 for Fiscal Year 2012/13. Ms. Simon said with those combined resources, the Senior Services Fund had remained about the same while other sources had been dramatically reduced.

Commissioner Humke said initiatives had been discussed such as combining the Senior Services Department with social services efforts that took place within the Senior Services Department. Since those initiatives were underway, he felt this was a premature request by senior service advocates. Ms. Simon said in the work completed by the Senior Services Department on their strategic plan, one of the initiatives brought into the County's work plan was to consolidate the Social Services functions under one agency allowing for more resources in human services to prevent citizens from falling into at-risk categories.

Reno Councilmember Aiazzi stated it was not so much a shortfall, but an increase in the population. He said if the County had the ability to raise the GST why not take that out of the Legislative hands and have the ballot question ask if the County should raise a portion of the GST to fund senior services. Then if approved, the County Commission could enact that increase, which was outside the Property Tax cap. If the Commissioners wanted to prioritize, he said a quarter of a percent could be allocated to senior services, a quarter percent to public safety, etc. Councilmember Aiazzi said it was important to note that the other entities trusted the County Commission to continue to fund senior services at the current level.

On advice of the District Attorney's Office, Ms. Simon added there were a couple of technicalities with the question that was being debated. The GST could not be enacted by a special elective tax and it could not be a binding question to enact GST, it had to either be an advisory question or do nothing and just have that imposed by the County Commission. Because this was not enacted by special elective binding vote, the ballot question could not legally restrict the uses and, as an advisory question, would be guidance from the voters to the County Commission.

In response to the call for public comment, Martha Gould supported the concept of an advisory question and the GST. She said if the County Commission did not move to improve senior services there would be greater problems in the future.

Connie McMullen said this was the right thing to do at the present time and supported an advisory question going before the voters.

Donna Clontz said there were several choices in front of the policy makers and summarized those options. She said more funding was needed for senior services in a way to be counted on and sustainable.

Anita Ritter spoke on her support for an advisory ballot measure. She discussed the options that Senior Services Director Grady Tarbutton was exploring to expand County resources in regard to senior services.

Mac Rossi stated that senior services was a high priority and urged the Councils and the Commission to place an advisory question on the November ballot.

Nancyann Leeder spoke on behalf of her late father, Charlie Pacheco, who was instrumental in implementing the Senior Citizens Center. She said he thought the services were important and necessary and she indicated that the senior citizen population in the County was increasing, which made for a greater need for services. She said an advisory question would allow the community to voice their opinion on an increase in the tax and establish a relatively dependable source of funding.

Barbara Devers voiced her support of an advisory question and, as a taxpayer, welcomed the opportunity to decide which programs used her tax dollars.

Amy Harvey, County Clerk, stated that Joan Milligan, Bev Dummit and Raynell Holtz submitted public comment cards supporting an advisory question.

Sparks Mayor Martini asked if a motion or recommendation was being requested from the elected bodies to be sent to the County Commission.

Reno Councilmember Hascheff said the staff report requested a discussion about the advisory question on whether it be a GST or the exemption route. He asked if there was any discussion at the County level to place two advisory questions on the ballot. Ms. Simon said the Board had options for a ballot question that included those two items; however, the more confusing the question, the more likely it would not pass. She said the Board had a special meeting scheduled for July 16, 2012 in the event a conclusion was not met for the exact wording of a ballot question during the Commission meeting this afternoon. Councilmember Hascheff said the County had completed some community surveys where public safety and infrastructure needs were high priorities. Ms. Simon replied that the Board conducted a citizen survey every two years and the most recent from January 2011 listed public safety as the highest priority. Councilmember Hascheff said those were all important needs, but if senior services had a chance of passing on a ballot question, then that would make sense.

Councilmember Carrigan said if a GST was placed on the ballot with no guarantee those funds would go to senior services, as a voter, he would vote against that question. He suggested a \$0.02 property tax, outside the cap, and then going to the Legislature.

Reno Councilmember Dortch said there could be a ballot question that dedicated \$0.03 within the Property Tax cap to senior services to cover the \$0.01 that currently was being funded through the General Fund.

Commissioner Weber disagreed with the approach suggested by Councilmember Dortch. She believed the voters had the right to an advisory question about senior services and would support the GST concept.

Councilmember Dortch said if the County was sincere those would be dedicated funds, he questioned why Commissioner Weber would be opposed to the \$0.03 being dedicated from property taxes as long as that was made up with the GST, and guaranteeing the constituents sustainability.

Councilmember Ratti commended the County Commission for recognizing the need for senior services and prioritizing senior services for General Fund dollars. She acknowledged that keeping the General Fund steady had not necessarily reduced the impact on senior services. She felt there were pros and cons for the GST options and the ad valorem outside of the Property Tax cap and discussed those variations. She encouraged the Commission to meet the needs of the senior citizens and place a question on the ballot.

Councilmember Sferrazza supported the GST option and asking the voters for their opinion. She said this was a local decision and felt senior citizens were core services that needed to be funded. Sparks Mayor Martini agreed and recommended the GST option.

Councilmember Aiazzi stressed that something needed to be placed on the ballot. Councilmember Zadra supported and recommended the GST option for an advisory ballot question.

Sparks Mayor Martini stated that the Commission had been given recommendations. Reno Mayor Cashell agreed with all the support and recommendations for the GST option.

There was no action taken on this item.

12-638 AGENDA ITEM 8 – PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda Subject: “Public Comment (three-minute time limit per person)-(Additional Public Comment on specific agenda items will be limited to three-minute time limit per person after each agenda item and must be related to the specific agenda item.) Comments are to be addressed to the Chair of the meeting and to the Reno and Sparks City Councils, Washoe County School District Board of Trustees and the Washoe County Commission as a whole.

Bev Dummitt stated that the advisory question should be kept simple when placed on the ballot.

Sparks Councilmember Carrigan requested that the County Commission table agenda items 18 and 19 on the July 10, 2012 Commission agenda since those had not been fully vetted with the joint bodies.

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10:30 a.m. There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Jung, seconded by Reno Councilmember Zadra, which motion duly carried with Sparks Councilmember Smith and Schmitt absent, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:

ROBERT M. LARKIN, Chairman
Washoe County Commission

AMY HARVEY, County Clerk
and Clerk of the Board of
County Commissioners

ATTEST:

ROBERT A. CASHELL, Mayor
City of Reno

LYNNETTE R. JONES, City Clerk
City of Reno

ATTEST:

GENO MARTINI, Mayor
City of Sparks

LINDA K. PATTERSON, City Clerk
City of Sparks

*Minutes Prepared by Stacy Gonzales,
Washoe County Deputy Clerk*