

IN A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY COMMISSION AND A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH HELD ON APRIL 15, 2020 IN THE COUNTY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM IN ELY, NEVADA

The Following Were Present:

County Commission

Richard Howe, Chairman
Travis Godon, Vice-Chairman
Ian Bullis, Commissioner
Shane Bybee, Commissioner
Laurie L. Carson, Commissioner
Nichole Baldwin, Clerk of the Board

County Officials

Elizabeth Frances, Finance Director
Mike Johnson, IT Specialist
Tim Bunch, Human Resources Director (Zoom)
Desiree Barnson, Social Svc. Dir. (Zoom)
Mike Wheable, District Attorney

Also Present

George Chachas, George Town Media
Caroline McIntosh, Main Street (Zoom)
Caroline Townsend, Ely City Atty (Zoom)
Senator Pete Goiecoechea (Zoom)
Ms. Suzanne Featherston, Kinross (Zoom)

Chairman Richard Howe called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. District Attorney Mike Wheable led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE/SILENT INVOCATION

This was duly observed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Senator Pete Goiecoechea would like to see a “soft opening” of non-essential businesses and move them up to essential status in the Eastern Nevada rural counties. It would begin with restaurants, reducing their capacity by 2/3 in order to get people back to work with a sense of normalcy. He advised he had called Gov. Steve Sisolak and discussed this; however, there is no appetite to do this from that office. Senator Goiecoechea wants to look at winding down this current situation. Local governments are concerned about revenues, and he believes they will be asked to bear a bigger burden in the future. He added that the State “will be broke by July 1st” as our ending fund balances will not suffice. He anticipates a special legislative session in June to look at the budget and revenues. He noted the Governor is focused on unemployment and people getting stimulus payments. Senator Goiecoechea is looking forward to getting this passed slowly. He thanked the Board and wished them well.

Mr. George Chachas put in a request to appear on the agenda to ask waiving property taxes and building permits for taxpayers over age 70. He cited when the County waived fees for the Golf Course and also the new developments for “affordable housing.” He also brought up a County employee who was a Commissioner’s daughter; District Attorney Mike Wheable replied by citing a regulation that allows that employment. Mr. Chachas continued that the parking lot doesn’t have ADA access and forces people to face traffic; he wants a report at the next meeting. He also asked if the property tax sale will be put on hold; due to COVID-19

concerns people may not wish to gather to hold the sale, but then the property owners wouldn't get a break from paying their taxes. Next, he asked how many discrepancies he will need to bring up regarding the Building Inspector. He added that taxpayers have no idea of how their money is being spent at the Railroad. He feels that nepotism is running rampant. Mr. Chachas also asked if the Commission is going to do anything about a Victims' Fund, particularly citing the damage done to his property on High Street. Chairman Richard Howe asked Mr. Chachas to bring something new forward and to stop being repetitious.

COUNTY COMMISSION

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval to ratify the letter of 60 day suspension from Coach USA for the operation of the Ely Bus. Desiree Barnson, Social Services Director

Social Services Director Desiree Barnson appeared via Zoom and explained that Coach USA was going to shut down the bus. She's been working hard to prevent a lapse of service; she asked for ratification of the letter requesting a 60-day suspension. Commissioner Laurie Carson made a motion to ratify the letter of 60-day suspension from Coach USA for the operation of the Ely Bus as requested. Commissioner Shane Bybee seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval to hire temporary certified employees to operate the Ely Bus during the period of suspension with a full time temporary driver and dispatcher pursuant to discussions with DOT and Social Services Director Desiree Barnson, or to shut down the bus for the period of suspension. Desiree Barnson, Social Services Director & Tim Bunch, Human Resources Director

Director Barnson worked with Coach USA, which has furloughed its employees. She's trying to bring a couple of them over here to fill in the gaps in order to continue to provide bus service, as temporary hires through a program with NDOT. Finance Director Elizabeth Frances advised there are plenty of funds available in the budget; also, the County owns the vehicles, and the insurance has been cleared up in order to help make this possible. Three of the Commissioners felt this would be a good solution. Commissioner Travis Godon made a motion to hire temporary certified employees to operate the Ely Bus during the period of suspension with a full-time temporary driver and dispatcher pursuant to discussions with NDOT/Director Barnson. Commissioner Shane Bybee seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of a job description for Ely Bus FT Temporary Driver position. Tim Bunch, Human Resources Director

Human Resources Director Tim Bunch spoke via Zoom to the Job Descriptions that were handed out at today's meeting. He added that Director Barnson received this information from Coach USA and NDOT, and they made it compliant with White Pine County's policy. Commissioner Laurie Carson made a motion to approve the Job Description for Ely Bus full-time temporary driver position as requested. Commissioner Ian Bullis seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of compensation for the Ely Bus Driver position pursuant to DOT and Social Services. Tim Bunch, Human Resources Director

Director Bunch advised that Director Barson did all the work on this; he noted they currently make \$17.44/hr, and the closest they could pay is \$17.38/hr. Commissioner Ian Bullis made a motion to approve the compensation for the Ely Bus Driver position as requested. Commissioner Travis Godon seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of a job description for the Ely Bus FT Temporary Dispatcher position. Tim Bunch, Human Resources Director

Director Bunch stated this is more extensive because they're acting as an Operations Supervisor. He noted he had worded the Job Description to ensure they are full-time, temporary positions during the COVID-19 situation, or any other emergency situation. Commissioner Shane Bybee made a motion to approve the Job Description for the Ely Bus full-time temporary Dispatcher position as requested. Commissioner Laurie Carson seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of compensation for the Ely Bus Dispatcher position pursuant to DOT and Social Services

Director Bunch stated that this position currently makes \$24.60/hr, and the closest he could come to that is \$24.56/hr. Commissioner Laurie Carson made a motion to approve the compensation for the Ely Bus Dispatcher position as requested. Commissioner Shane Bybee seconded. Motion carried.

Discussion/For Possible Action to Approve Resolution 2020-27 to extend declaration of County Emergency until April 30th, consistent with the State of Nevada's extension of Emergency. Mike Wheable, DA

District Attorney Mike Wheable advised that after the last meeting, the Governor extended the State of Emergency until the end of this month; ours ends this week. We're here today to talk about extending it locally. He didn't feel it should be extended any longer, and hopes the Governor doesn't extend the time. Commissioner Travis Godon asked if Gov. Steve Sisolak does extend the time, is there anything that we can do? D.A. Wheable advised the County could undo the steps in our own Declaration. Commissioner Ian Bullis reminded D.A. Wheable that the Commission has sworn to uphold the Constitution and shouldn't have to follow those directives that are unconstitutional. D.A. Wheable advised that if we do anything contrary to the Governor's order and something bad happens, we'd be liable. Finance Director Elizabeth Frances stated emergency funding is available if we are in a State of Emergency; it may stop if we lift the Declaration. Chairman Richard Howe wants this agenda item on for the next Commission meeting when more

information is available and we could make a better decision. D.A. Wheable suggested we contact other counties and attempt to make a unified approach. Commissioner Laurie Carson met with Senator Cortez-Masto last Friday regarding CARE funding that is being set aside for the States; very little of it will be made available to the counties. She hopes that tying in funding from CDBG can help the stimulus packages to local governments. Commissioner Bullis stated that if we have to choose between overrunning people's Constitutional rights or receiving funding, he doesn't want to go down that road. Commissioner Travis Godon commented about the Executive Power to shut down funding to the States if the governors "get too cute and drag this out." Chairman Richard Howe felt the same as everyone else; that we need to get going again; he pointed out we aren't the same as Las Vegas, and we feel this differently. He added that the City of Ely has \$-0- revenues, and will be up against a wall. D.A. Wheable advised that the higher courts won't be siding with us because they have been catering to the governors. Commissioner Laurie Carson made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-27 to extend the Declaration of County Emergency. Commissioner Travis Godon seconded. Motion carried.

Richard Howe, Chairman
 Travis Godon, Vice Chairman
 Commissioner Shane Bybee
 Commissioner Ian Bullis
 Commissioner Laurie L. Carson

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Nichole Baldwin, Ex-officio Clerk of the Board

White Pine County
 Board of County Commissioners

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RESOLUTION NO. 2020-27

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, NRS 244 137 establishes the County's authority to regulate matters of local concern.

WHEREAS, Chapter 414 of the Nevada Revised Statutes authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to declare a state of emergency within White Pine County;

WHEREAS, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread among humans;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 was first detected in China and has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally including in the United States;

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic;

WHEREAS, Governor Steve Sisolak declared a state of emergency for the State of Nevada to respond to COVID-19 on March 12, 2020;

WHEREAS, the President of the United States declared the COVID-19 outbreak a national emergency on March 13, 2020;

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020 the White Pine County Board of Commissioners declared in Resolution 17 a State of Emergency for White Pine County through April 17, 2020;

WHEREAS, Governor Steve Sisolak in his Emergency Directive Order 10 issued on March 31, 2020 extended the state of emergency for the State of Nevada to respond to COVID-19 through April 30, 2020;

NOW THEREFORE, THE WHITE PINE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HEREBY DECLARES THAT THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN WHITE PINE COUNTY DUE TO COVID-19 STILL THREATENS THE HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE AND PROPERTY OF WHITE PINE COUNTY RESIDENTS.

Thus, the Board of County Commissioners directs that until 12:00 a.m. on May 1st, 2020 the provisions of Resolution 17 declaring an Emergency in White Pine County shall remain in effect.

1. That all residents and visitors to White Pine County inform themselves of and follow the orders and directives of the County Health Officer.
2. That all residents and visitors to White Pine County inform themselves and follow the Emergency Directives issued by Governor Sisolak.
3. That all County departments and offices suspend purchases and expenditures other than those necessary for operations.
4. That County department heads have emergency power to direct appropriate staffing levels in their departments, including setting work days, hours, and hours worked in a day.
5. That County department heads have emergency power to close or limit traffic into County buildings, offices or other County property consistent with public health directives designed to limit the spread of COVID-19.
6. That the Human Resources Director has emergency power to hire or delay in hiring staff to respond to the COVID-19 public health crisis, contingent upon the budgeting approval of the Finance Director.
7. That County department heads shall approve the use of existing paid leave of any type for employees who miss work time during the emergency period. Employees seeking to use leave have the absolute discretion to do so without fear of retaliation as long as their department or office can be staffed at the minimum level to provide essential government services.
8. That all provisions of the White Pine County Personnel Policy requiring a physician's authorization for sick leave be suspended, except that all employees, if any, who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must present a physician's authorization prior to returning to work.
9. That all County departments shall endeavor to reduce the number of staff working in County buildings. Departments heads are required to allow employees to take leave and/or work from home, if feasible.
10. That, consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements or by union consent, all County employees are authorized and encouraged to work outside their departments, job descriptions and traditional work hours to meet the needs created by the COVID-19 public health crisis and that all department heads shall endeavor to make their employees available to meet such needs.
11. That all County departments shall be allocated monies from contingency not to exceed \$20,000.00 upon request to the Finance Director and at the Finance Director's sole discretion, to purchase necessary supplies and equipment related to the COVID-19 public health crisis.
12. That the Emergency Manager is directed to seek emergency supplies and funding from our federal, state, and local partners.
13. That the all Advisory Board and Town Council meetings be postponed.
14. That the White Pine County Library be closed to all use not deemed necessary by its Director.
15. That the White Pine County Aquatic Center be closed to all use not deemed necessary by its Director.

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16. That the White Pine County Senior Center be closed to the general public but that meal service may be continued on a drive through or delivery basis only, using proper protocols consistent with public health directives designed to limit the spread of COVID-19.

IF ANY DIRECTIVE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DECLARED HEREIN IS IN CONFLICT WITH A DIRECTIVE, ORDER, OR DECLARATION OF ANY FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL AUTHORITY, THE PUBLIC IS ORDERED TO UNDERTAKE THE MORE RESTRICTIVE COURSE OF ACTION DIRECTED, ORDERED OR DECLARED.

INTRODUCED AND PASSED this 15th day of April, 2020

Approved:


Richard Howe, Chairman
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
White Pine County, Nevada

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board

Discussion/For Possible Action: Approval of Changes to the BOCC Preliminary Budget previously presented to finalize the FY2021 Tentative Budget Revenues and Expenses for all funds & departments including: Commission, Clerk, Recorder including special revenue budgets, Assessor including special revenue budget, Treasurer, Elections, Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, District Attorney including Victim Witness Services, Justice of the Peace-Ely including special revenue budgets, District Court I including special revenue budgets, District Court II including special revenue budgets,

Judicial related costs, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Detention, Bailiffs, Judicial Court Support, Sheriff including Administration, Detective, Patrol, Jail, Coroner, Dispatch and Task Force, Fire, Emergency Management, Economic Development, Buildings and Maintenance, Parks Maintenance, Public Health, Cooperative Agreements-Animal Control, Countywide Expenses, Library including Gift Fund, Airport Operating, Natural Resources, Transfers, Contingency, Agricultural District, Emergency Medical Services, Agricultural Extension, Social Services including donations fund, Road Department including Public Transit and RTC, Airport Capital Improvement, Capital Improvements, SB74 tax fund, Towns of Lund, McGill & Ruth, Senior Center, Industrial Park, 911 Fund, Tri-County Weed, Building & Planning, Golf Course, Aquatic Center including special revenue fund, China Springs, and Camp Success. Elizabeth Frances, Finance Director

Finance Director Elizabeth Frances advised that she has done as the Board requested and evaluated all General Fund accounts; she cited the spreadsheet provided. She reduced accounts by 14% and labeled some as “shouldn’t” and “can’t”, and brought some figures back to the FY2017-2018 actuals. Some things could be postponed until future fiscal years; also, she noted controversy over hearing the State say they will be passing unfunded mandates, which would cause “a world of hurt.” There followed some discussion regarding unfunded mandates being passed back to the State if we can’t afford them; it was noted that the services the State is required to provide, are the ones that they want us to pay for. Commissioner Ian Bullis was excited about the handouts provided today, however, because it seems we came in right at the number we’ve been aiming for. Director Frances noted there was a backup item that noted the changes and how they affect our balance. If we go with this, our ending fund balance will be at the required 25% and our expenditures will be down \$3.4 million; while we would have \$6 million for the ending fund balance we would still be meeting our financial goal. There is still more work to be done since more amendments may be necessary after hearing from the State. She’s been working with other fiscal officers across Nevada who are looking at other critical areas to be watched if our current State of Emergency continues on. She added that our cooperative agreement with the City could end up with the City being unable to pay if they don’t set their reserves aside. Certain tax revenues will be reduced, she added. The Board thanked Director Frances for all her hard work. Chairman Howe asked about the Sheriff’s Dept. and how we will sustain them; D.A. Wheable terminated the conversation. Commissioner Travis Godon asked if layoffs would be the next trigger to pull; Director Frances explained there are contributions out there that can be removed before we begin to cut staff. Eliminating non-essential services could be an option to save some funding, which could be reopened at a later time. She added we could also work with the Unions to do freezes or cutbacks. The Board felt we’re in a good position right now and we could make budget changes as we roll. Director Frances thinks that special revenue funds are

good, but she wants to change the SB74 fund as she noted briefly. She advised she had met with Public Works Director Bill Calderwood regarding capital improvements; he recommended cutting everything back except the new carpeting in the Library; removing the Courthouse steps; and hire a service to fix the steps instead of doing it internally. Director Frances advised she had advertised for a second Commission meeting in May at 9:15 a.m. for the Fire District, and at 9:30 a.m. to approve the budgets of White Pine County, Lund, Ruth, and McGill. Commissioner Laurie Carson made a motion to approve changes to the FY2020-2021 preliminary budget as presented and discussed. Commissioner Travis Godon seconded. Motion carried.

At 10:00 a.m., Chairman Richard Howe recessed the regular Commission meeting to hold a Special Meeting of the Board of Public Health. At 10:25 a.m. the regular Commission meeting was reconvened.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Travis Godon appreciated Dr. David Byun's guidance. He continued that we will have to make a choice, because we will have to move somewhere else, since this town "will be gone without a vaccine." Chairman Richard Howe agreed we can't continue at this rate. At the next meeting we will be discussing what is best for all the citizens of White Pine County. Commissioners Shane Bybee and Laurie Carson agreed with this.

Ms. Caroline McIntosh gave a "shout out" to Kinross/Bald Mountain Mine for their generous donation to the School District for \$7,800 and \$8,000 to the White Pine Ministerial Association for food. Ms. Suzanne Featherston, Kinross/Bald Mountain Mine, thanked Ms. McIntosh for her acknowledgment, and noted that feeding the hungry is a good place to start with helping at this point in time. Their mine is still operating and they're taking precautions, such as taking temperatures and social distancing on the buses.

Chairman Richard Howe noted that 78% of White Pine County have NOT responded to the Nevada Census that was recently sent out; we really need people to respond to that.

Mr. George Chachas reminded the Board he wants a refund for Business Licenses that were repealed, besides money for damages to his building on High Street. He also still hasn't received a copy of the resignation of a public official, which he had requested in the past. He's concerned about the poor sound system, as there's no excuse not to have mike stands available for the public to use. He noted he still has a hard time hearing certain people himself. He also has yet to receive a building permit for his property in town. He asked if the Building Inspector ever made it back from Eureka? On a more serious note he felt the Commissioners will take the brunt if the pandemic really comes to White Pine County, and cited corpses in refrigerated trucks because they can't be buried fast enough. He warned them to think of their community first.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:31 a.m., Commissioner Ian Bullis made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Shane Bybee seconded. Motion carried.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY OF WHITE PINE
STATE OF NEVADA

BY: 
CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:


WPC CLERK OF THE BOARD