

**IN A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WHITE PINE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON JULY 15, 2020 IN THE COUNTY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM IN ELY, NV**

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
Susan Lujan, Deputy Clerk

Present via Zoom

Senator Pete Goicoechea, Geri Wopschall, Kara Ringueberg, Lacey Merritt, Loren Stephey, Marietta Henry, Allan (last name not provided)

County Officials

Mike Johnson, IT Specialist
Lori Romero, Library/Senior Ctr. Admin.
Elizabeth Frances, Finance Director
Bryan Pyle, Deputy District Attorney
Mike Wheable, District Attorney
Dr. David Byun, Public Health Officer

Also Present

Nathan Robertson, Ely Mayor
George Chachas, George Town Media
Kay McMurray, Ely Times
Daren Kunz
Matt Walker, WBR Hospital CEO

Chairman Richard Howe called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Commissioner Ian Bullis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE/SILENT INVOCATION

This was done, with a special moment observed for former Airport Manager Lance Gale.

At 9:00 a.m., Chairman Richard Howe recessed the regular Commission meeting and relinquished the gavel to Board of Public Health Chairman Dr. David Byun. In due course, Chairman Byun adjourned the Special Meeting of the White Pine County Board of Public Health and returned the gavel to County Commission Chairman Richard Howe. Chairman Howe reconvened the regular Commission meeting.

UNTIMED ITEMS

DISCUSSION/UPDATE FROM SENATOR PETE GOICOECHEA ON THE 31ST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE

This item was tabled.

DISCUSSION/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: THAT THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER BRING BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH BOARD ANY ITEMS THAT DEAL WITH EVENT CANCELLATIONS AND TIGHTER RESTRICTIONS THAN STATE MANDATES SO THAT THE PEOPLE OF WHITE PINE COUNTY ARE PROPERLY REPRESENTED BY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Commissioner Travis Godon advised that while there have been many rumors circulating regarding the basic County Fair, meetings are coming up and have been held with a general consensus to find a good middle ground between Constitutional rights and the health crisis. We can vote on this, he noted, but we also need to understand that we must work together going forward, and try not to repeat the July 4th situation. Commissioner Ian Bullis agreed with this. Chairman Richard Howe advised that this Board has agreed, based on input from Chairman Dr. David Byun, that we will be having updates at every meeting from the Board of Public Health. District Attorney Mike Wheable advised that sometimes things have to happen in order for a Board to meet; and while as a Board there are some things we can revoke, we can also hold special meetings, which we've done in order to not put everything on the shoulders of our Public Health Officer. He feels that with the direction of the Public Health Officer, the Clerk and District Attorney can do something to ratify the orders, etc. Chairman Howe noted this Board should be the deciding factor, even if it's an emergency meeting to hold prior to any action being taken. D.A. Wheable prefers to hold emergency meetings; he cited the 4th of July event and noted it wasn't in the purview of this Board to cancel the Horse Races event, it's actually the Ag. District 13 advisory board that makes those decisions. He added that when we do get a new Public Health Officer these things should be discussed and clarified. Commissioner Godon agreed, noting his concern is having "a check of powers," so everyone should be on the same page. Commissioner Shane Bybee felt the public should be made part of these discussions; Commissioner Bullis agreed with D.A. Wheable that emergency meetings should be held prior to any actions being taken. This agenda item was for discussion only.

DISCUSSION/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION/APPROVAL TO SEND A LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR AND OTHER APPLICABLE STATE AGENCIES OPPOSING THE CLOSURE OF THE HONOR CAMP

Commissioner Travis Godon received a call from the Honor Camp, in that the State is looking to close that down. He advised they help out the community by doing different things; firefighting, helping seniors, cut firewood, shovel snow, etc. Commissioner Shane Bybee noted these things always seem to be pulled out of the rural counties, and we need to take a firm stand on this. Commissioner Ian Bullis felt we should include a list in the letter we send of all the things they do to help us, plus the number of employees who are currently working over there; we need to stand up on their behalf as well. Commissioner Laurie Carson had heard some of those employees will be going to the prison and others to Carlin. Commissioner Carson made a motion to send a letter to the Governor and other State agencies opposing the closure of the Honor Camp. Commissioner Bullis seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION/APPROVAL TO APPLY FOR A \$50,000 GRANT THROUGH THE STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE FOR COURT PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY WITH A MATCH OF \$13,381.57 TO PURCHASE A PORTABLE JAVS SYSTEM TO CONDUCT JURY TRIALS AT THE BRISTLECONE CONVENTION CENTER; THIS REQUEST IS ELIGIBLE FOR CARES ACT FUNDING

WPC Clerk Nichole Baldwin advised this was on during the last meeting, but she didn't get the opportunity to talk about it. She explained that the jury trials need to go to a bigger venue; there's no way to provide audio/visual for the attorneys to have their photos, videos, etc. available for the jurors to observe the evidence, for example. This is all due to the need for social distancing. She continued that the State Justice Institute has this grant program; she is required to forward this to the Nevada Supreme Court prior to actually submitting it for approval. We will need to come up with the match; she had discussed this with Finance Director Elizabeth Frances, and since it's eligible for CARES Act funding, perhaps we should add it to our requests for funding in the next agenda item. Finance Director Elizabeth Frances cautioned the Board that for anything they approve through the CARES Act, they must be willing to take out of the General Fund. If the Governor stays true to what he's saying, she explained, we will have to find funds to cover those needs we have identified. Commissioner Ian Bullis advised that as long as we have the funding, he's fine with that; he does see how we will have to preserve the jury trials, etc. Clerk Baldwin continued that she has the full support of District Court to proceed with this request. Commissioner Travis Godon made a motion to approve application for a \$50,000 grant for Court pandemic response and recovery for a portable JAVS system to conduct jury trials at the Bristlecone Convention Center, as requested. Commissioner Ian Bullis seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION/APPROVAL OF DIRECTIVES FOR ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR CARES ACT FUNDING

Finance Director Elizabeth Frances cited a handout she provided this morning and explained this is an evolving situation; she's receiving more information as to what is or isn't suitable for CARES Act funding. She noted from the list what could be covered for businesses in our community, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the quote for the Tourism & Recreation Board, including the cleaners and sanitation systems. After talking with Ms. Marietta Henry she found that the Horse Races aren't eligible for CARES Act funding, since they aren't non-profit. She noted there are specific regulations attached to those monies, involving much paperwork and monitoring/auditing books; and we can hire consultants to assist us with those tasks. She suggested hiring an independent CPA who could provide consulting services to ensure we are in compliance with everything; also, that if we do receive this money, to ensure we don't have to pay it back. There will be some incremental costs involved in getting someone to take on the Public Health Officer's position; she believes we should be able to add that to the list as well. She needs this Commission to begin consideration of putting a high level overview on how we are going to be spending the CARES Act funds; she would like to do an analysis, from a financial perspective, to see where we could possibly draw the funds, in case the Governor withdraws our funding. District Attorney Mike Wheable felt that if we can clearly show

that we are spending monies for items directly related to COVID-19--traceable expenditures--then we should be at lower risk; still, we would have to see where unbudgeted expenses could be drawn from if necessary and paid nevertheless. Director Frances advised that we are allowed to transfer monies we receive to another local government entity, such as to the Hospital, etc. Chairman Richard Howe felt we could pool resources with the City of Ely in order to address some of those issues. During the discussion, Commissioner Laurie Carson felt hand sanitizer stations would be appropriate to add into our facilities; also, D.A. Wheable noted changing some of the finishing features in the new Courthouse to copper surfaces would be in line with this, since "bacteria dies within 2 hours on copper surfaces," so we could install copper doorknobs, etc. Chairman Howe asked each Commissioner to review this list and select the top 10; those will be reviewed during the next meeting, on July 22nd. This item was for discussion only today.

PUBLIC COMMENT

WPC Assessor Burton Hilton (via Zoom) advised that the State will be adding more water basins to be taxed during the next fiscal year; Long Valley and Newark Valley are being added, he noted. He provided a brief history of the trend of the Nv. Div. of Water Resources adding special assessment fees on the landowners throughout the County and the State of Nevada; this will be coming up next year, for the Board's information.

Ms. Kim Haslem thanked the Board for putting the Honor Camp on today's agenda, and asked how urgent we would be to write the letter, since at this point the Honor Camp IS closed. Chairman Richard Howe advised the letter will be written today and sent off as quickly as possible to the State, informing them of our support for the Honor Camp. District Attorney Mike Wheable felt the letter should be sent to the Governor, NDOC Director, the Senate, and Assembly, for maximum impact.

Mr. George Chachas advised the Board needs to turn up their volume, since no one can hear them speak. He cited the new parking lot design doesn't have ADA requirements at the Convention Center, and the walkway wasn't put back to keep pedestrians off the street. He asked who designed, approved, and inspected it; he added the Tourism & Recreation Board isn't leaving a good impression in the downtown area, and projects need to be done right the first time. He cited lack of ingress/egress at Avenue D by the Holiday Inn, noting it's too narrow for emergency vehicle access; the City of Ely has failed to address this. There's also no ADA access along the VanCamp junkyard; the County needs to hire engineers and inspectors who know what they're doing. He cited the Eureka trip made by our Building Inspector, whereupon Chairman Richard Howe advised this is being repetitious. Mr. Chachas continued that this Board has the responsibility to stop discrimination with respect to how the newspaper doesn't run all the ads requested. He asked how many discrepancies he must point out that the Building Inspector has made, as he does selective work "under color of law." Time was called.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:47 a.m., Chairman Richard Howe entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Ian Bullis made the motion; Commissioner Travis Godon seconded. Motion carried. Chairman Howe also reminded everyone of the special meeting at to be held with the Commission and Road Department at 3:00 p.m. today.

WHITE PINE COUNTY BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH
STATE OF NEVADA

BY: 

CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:



WPC CLERK OF THE BOARD